



The Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services Overview

The Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services was created as the state's lead child welfare agency by the 2016 Mississippi Legislature, separating it from the Mississippi Department of Human Services. In May 2016, Governor Phil Bryant signed Senate Bill 2179, establishing MDCPS as an independent agency with its commissioner serving as a member of the Governor's cabinet.

Andrea Sanders was appointed Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services on November 9, 2020, by Gov. Tate Reeves. Commissioner Sanders came into this position and thoughtfully assessed the agency and the employees of the agency for strengths and areas needing improvement. Together with the Senior Leadership Team, MDCPS strives to keep Mississippi's children safely in their own families and communities. When that is not possible, we are committed to finding permanency for children as quickly as possible. We intend to become a place to come for help, led by experts who minimize trauma to children and families through sound practices and personal engagement.

At MDCPS, we understand that there may be times when parents and families need additional support and resources to strengthen their families. The philosophy of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS) is Family-Centered Practice. Family-Centered Practice identifies family strengths, support systems, and community services that will assist families in acquiring the resources, taking action, making decisions, and developing the skills they need to safely take care of their children and reduce the risk of future maltreatment. Family-Centered Practice is working with families, both formally and informally, across service systems to enhance the families' capacity to care for and protect their children. It focuses on the needs and welfare of children within the context of their families and communities. Family-Centered Practice recognizes the strengths of family relationships and builds on these strengths to achieve optimal outcomes. Family-Centered Practice includes a range of strategies, including:

- Advocating for improved conditions for families;
- Supporting the families;
- Stabilizing those in crisis;
- Reunifying those who are separated;
- Strengthening families; and
- Connecting families to the resources that will sustain them in the future.

Mission Statement

We will protect children, support families, and encourage lasting family connections.



Andrea Sanders, Commissioner

Before assuming her current responsibilities, Sanders served as General Counsel and Principal Deputy Executive Director for the Mississippi Department of Human Services. During her tenure at MDHS, she led an agency initiative to rehabilitate the subsidized childcare program. In 2005, Sanders completed a Juris Doctorate at the Mississippi College School of Law while raising two small boys. Andrea also holds a master's degree in Social Work from Tulane University, has worked as a clinical therapist with families, children and adolescents, and as a hospital administrator in both the public and private sectors.

"I accepted the role of Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services on November 9, 2020, a day that forever changed my life and the life of my family, as this is the greatest challenge I have ever encountered. I did not accept the position lightly, knowing that the work would be difficult and that the stakes are high.



Our mission is to protect children and strengthen families, which includes standing in the shoes of the parent for just under 4,000 live souls. Each day I strive to develop, encourage, and inspire a workforce of professionals who directly serve children and families or support those who do. Every day I throw on my CAPE (core values of Compassion, Accountability, Professionalism, and Excellence) and I challenge my staff to do the same. Our work is too important to not give it our all each and every day. It is truly a new day at MDCPS, and I implore my fellow professionals and all Mississippians to lock arms with us to protect our children by investing in Mississippi families."

Andrea A. Sanders

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