



**Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
November 10, 2022, 10:00 AM
Governor's 2nd Floor Conference Room**

1700 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007
A general meeting of the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
was convened on **November 10, 2022**, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (18)	Members Absent (10)
Angela Ducey, Chair	Brad Snyder
Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair	Darlene Newsom
Director Maria Cristina Fuentes	Kate Brophy McGee
Colleen McNally	Rachel Mitchell
Berisha Black	Leslie Y. Reprogle
Claire Louge	Lorrie G. Henderson
Ginger Ward	Terry M. Crist
James Molina	Torrie Taj
Janet Garcia	Warren H. Stewart
Jeffrey James Taylor	Zora Manjencich
Katie O'Dell	
Kathryn Ptak	
Mark Upton	
Director Mike Faust	
Obed Escobar	
Paul Mulligan (Proxy for Richard Yarbough)	
Ryan Young	
Staff & Guests (7)	
Kainoa Spenser	Governor Doug Ducey
Amy Peep	Hannalee Donoso
Olivia Christiani	Traci Faust
Campanella White	

Call to Order

- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, called the Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment (CSFE) meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. with **18** members and **7** staff/guests present. She announced that this meeting is particularly bittersweet because this will be the last for her and **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, serving in these roles.

Roll Call

- **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, conducted a roll call of the Council with a quorum met.

Approval of Minutes

- **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, requested a review of the **November 8, 2022** meeting minutes.
 - **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** moved to accept the **November 8, 2022** minutes.
 - **Ginger Ward** seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed with no dissenting votes at 10:11 a.m.

Opening Remarks

- **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, reviewed the procedures of the Council meeting and announced that the meeting was available on the GOYFF website in listen-only mode for the public and Council Members who were unable to attend in person.
- **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, began by thanking the Council for eight years of service and giving her the opportunity to be co-chair. She emphasized that each meeting has been an opportunity to learn despite having been working in the field for over 30+ years. She has witnessed great collaboration between the people and organizations as a result of the Council. She expressed gratitude toward **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** for her leadership and programming both on this Council and in the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith, and Family (GOYFF). **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, thanked **First Lady Angela Ducey** for spearheading the improvements seen in the child welfare system and for all of the work she has done over the last eight years.
 - **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, took the opportunity to announce the National Adoption Day event on Saturday, November 19, 2022. The event is open to the public.
- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, expressed gratitude to everyone for their service and commitment to the Council on CSFE. Specifically, she recognized what an honor it has been to serve alongside **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, and how grateful she is to have had her agree to sit beside her eight years ago.
- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, stated that CSFE's primary focus has been to identify and prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and how by working together, we can have the largest impact on children and families in Arizona. She emphasized the importance of their faith-based partners who are oftentimes the first line of support for families. She believes the council will be in great hands moving forward.
- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, introduced **Governor Doug Ducey** to say a few words..
- **Governor Doug Ducey** reflected on the accomplishments of the council over the last eight years, stating members have made an immense difference in the lives of the children and families they serve, highlighting how the State of Arizona has served as a model for collaborative efforts (i.e. with faith-based partners). He thanked **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, and **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, for all they have done and ultimately, the overall success of the Council.
- **Governor Doug Ducey** announced the new co-chairs. **Colleen McNally** and **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes**. He stated he has the utmost faith that the new co-chairs will continue the legacy and move the work of the Council forward.
 - **Governor Doug Ducey** explained that with **Colleen McNally's** leadership, the Juvenile Justice System has improved tremendously. He thanked her for the example she has set, specifically as a Superior Court Judge for the State of Arizona.
 - **Governor Doug Ducey** explained that he is elated that **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** will be continuing in this role, emphasizing the importance of her institutional knowledge, specifically within the realm of child welfare that has contributed to the continuous transition and longevity of the Council.

Special Recognition

- **Governor Doug Ducey** gave special recognition to **Director Mike Faust** for the dedication he has shown over the last eight years to keeping children safe and serving families. He stated that prior to the beginning of his administration, the child welfare system was broken. **Director Mike Faust's** efforts leading the Department of Child Safety (DCS) have resulted in monumental improvements. He stated that he will be recommending to his successor, the Governor-elect, that **Director Mike Faust** continue in this role. The

state has been fortunate to have him thus far and would be lucky to have him moving forward. **Governor Doug Ducey** emphasized the fact that **Director Mike Faust** developed systemic, data-driven improvements to protect those who need it most.

- **Governor Doug Ducey** told the story of when he offered **Director Mike Faust** the Chief Operating Officer (COO) position for the State of Arizona and how he said *no*, explaining that he wanted to remain in child services. It was a unique and unforgettable occurrence for **Governor Doug Ducey**. However, content with the decision as his passion for child safety is unmatched.
- **Governor Doug Ducey** recognized **Traci Faust**, emphasizing the importance of a loving and supportive spouse.
- **Governor Doug Ducey** stated that since 2016, the number of children in foster care has declined by 30% all while maintaining safety as the number one priority. The state has also safely reunified nearly 45,000 children with their biological parents, as well as connected nearly 27,000 children to safe, permanent, and loving homes through the adoption process.
- **Governor Doug Ducey** presented **Director Mike Faust** with an award in appreciation for his service and dedication to protecting and empowering children and families statewide.

Special Recognition / Update from DCS

- **Director Mike Faust** thanked **Governor Doug Ducey** for his award. He believes a true conservative is someone who uses their power to help the powerless instead of using that power over people. He noted that declining the COO position was the hardest professional decision he has had to make thus far in his career.
 - He commends **First Lady Angela Ducey's** fierce advocacy and support for child safety.
- **Director Mike Faust** stated that he is blessed and thankful to lead 2,800 people who work at DCS. These individuals are people who have dedicated their lives and careers to this work. **Director Mike Faust** emphasized the role of the caregiver (i.e. kinship families, foster families, and group home providers) and how it would be impossible without their involvement and support.
- **Director Mike Faust** commended the partnership and collaboration across sister agencies (i.e. GOYFF) stating that these are integral for the process to be as effective as possible because everyone is serving the same families and children. He provided a metaphor; not collaborating is similar to two parents parenting simultaneously but separately. He also made it a point to recognize how they have improved partnering with parents and families. Particularly throughout the reunification process.
 - **Director Mike Faust** shared his personal story regarding being removed from his childhood home and not being able to go back.
- **Director Mike Faust**, upon reflection, stated Arizona's child welfare system was no doubt the worst. From 2004 to 2015 Arizona's foster care was double the 49th placement. A 93% growth over a ten and half year period, going from 9,544 kids to 19,044 kids. In order to reduce this number, they had to start at the beginning, at the hotline. Upon improvement, it started at 33,245 open investigations (4,000 per month) and they were able to reduce that number to 6,000. Since the beginning of 2022, DCS had averaged approximately 9,000 open cases.
 - After the open investigations were at a manageable number, adoption and reunification were used to reduce the foster care population. The emphasis on reunification came later. In 2016, an average of 1,077 kids a month would enter the state's care. Over time, they were able to reduce this number. However, **Director Mike Faust** noted that the system is not perfect and not without struggles. It is an inherently fallible system serving a broken community. Today, they have safely reduced the foster care population, sitting at 39% with just under 19,000 kids under the age of 18 and 11,385 kids in out-of-home care.
 - **Director Mike Faust** reviewed the accomplishments of DCS that are less recognized, such as creating a new computer system that reduces the carbon footprint left across the state and settling a class action lawsuit mid-pandemic.
 - **Director Mike Faust** noted that despite the benefit of recognizing previous accomplishments, those are in the past. Children and families need individuals focused on today. **Director Mike**

Faust stated that it is important to not accept equilibrium and that this system, like most, prefers to stay in comfortable positions.

- **Director Mike Faust** explained that they set an audacious goal of 90% of kids placed with families, and of that, 65% - 70% of kids will be with kinship families. Today, 70% of kids in out-of-home care are already finding permanency with their extended family members. Of that, 54% are reunified with their biological parents and the remaining 16% find guardianship or adoption with aunts/uncles/grandparents.
 - **Director Mike Faust** noted that it is hard to recruit foster families when the foster care system is not in crisis because when it is not in crisis, people do not hear about it. He emphasized that it doesn't matter if there is a crisis or not, the need for families will always exist because not all kids have the opportunity to go home.
- **Director Mike Faust** discussed permanency and National Reunification Day. He talked about his own personal experience relating to not being able to reunify with his family, as well as the unhealthy coping mechanisms that developed as a result. He also talked about his faith journey throughout this process as well.
 - **Director Mike Faust** noted the presence of **Ryan Young**, President of the Youth Empowerment Council, at the meeting. **Director Mike Faust** stated that it is difficult for kids to be kids and even more difficult if they do not have the necessary supportive relationships to thrive.
- **Director Mike Faust** stated that there is still a lot of work to do and a lot of progress to be made. He also recognized the support and love he has received from his wife, **Traci Faust**, and stated he is ready to continue in this role, if asked, by the new administration.
- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, mentioned the work currently underway with the DCS Welcome Center and urged the Council to continue reaching out to the community for their support.

Special Recognition

- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, expressed her gratitude towards **Colleen McNalley** and **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** for agreeing to stay on as co-chairs of the council moving forward.
- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, specifically recognized **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** for the role she has played both with the council and as a part of GOYFF. **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** is someone who she has come to rely on, finding the level of knowledge she holds impressive, and overall, considers her a great partner to have by her side.
- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, presented **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** with an award for her dedication to serving vulnerable Arizonans.
- **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, introduced **Colleen McNally** as the new co-chair of the council.
 - **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, noted that despite **Colleen McNally's** retirement, she agreed to continue in this role with the council.
- **Colleen McNally** thanked **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, for the introduction. She noted that it is difficult to leave the work that you are passionate about because there will always be work to be done. However, she stated that you must trust that others will take this on, and trust that the shared values will be expressed and elevated in the community. She also recognized the importance of partnering with the community such as with churches, non-profits, and caregivers.
 - **Colleen McNally** thanked **Kathryn Pidgeon, Co-Chair**, for all of the work she has accomplished throughout her career.
 - **Colleen McNally** recognized the leadership of **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, and her ability to bring together so many community partners. She thanked her for her involvement with Family Reunification Day over the years.
 - **Colleen McNally** thanked **Governor Doug Ducey** and **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**, for their dedication to serving Arizona children.
- **Colleen McNally** introduced **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes**.
- **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** spoke on her first experience meeting **First Lady Angela Ducey, Chair**. She mentioned the three-branch approach when deciding who to incorporate within the council. Those

branches include faith-based, DCS, and the judiciary. She emphasized the need for lived experience and thanked **Ryan Young** for his participation in the council.

- **Jeffrey James Taylor** made a quick comment regarding the leadership of **Governor Doug Ducey** and **Director Mike Faust** and the example that they set. Specifically, in regard to his personal experiences.

Future Meeting Date

- **Colleen McNally** announced that the next meeting will be on January 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the Executive Tower. The meeting will be offered in a hybrid format and council members are welcome to attend in person or virtually.

Adjournment

- **Colleen McNally** thanked everyone for being part of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn.
 - **Paul Mulligan** moved to adjourn.
 - **Director Maria Cristina Fuentes** seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed with no dissenting votes and the meeting adjourned at **11:14 a.m.**

Dated 16 of November 2022
Governor's Council on Child Safety and Family Empowerment
Respectfully Submitted By:
Amy Peep
GOYFF