

Governor Carney Signs Executive Order Making Delaware a Trauma-Informed State

Order will mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences, build resilience

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WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor Carney on Wednesday signed Executive Order [#24](#) making Delaware a trauma-informed state. This Order provides direction for the Family Services Cabinet Council to help mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and build resilience in children, adults and communities.

ACEs can include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; household dysfunction, including substance abuse, untreated mental illness, or incarceration of a household member; domestic violence; and separation/divorce involving household members.

“We have children and families in Delaware who are affected by trauma in their lives, and we need to do everything we can to support them,” said **Governor John Carney**. “Addressing these issues as a community will help Delaware become a stronger and healthier state. The Family Services Cabinet Council will remain vigilant about this issue and work with many partners across the state to create trauma-responsive communities.”

The Executive Order was motivated by the work of the Family Services Cabinet Council – a cabinet-level group [reestablished](#) by Governor Carney in February 2017 that coordinates public and private services for Delaware families. This Executive Order will direct the Family Services Cabinet Council to develop tools for training state employees and community partners on the impact of exposure to ACEs, to promote ACE awareness, and to improve services and interventions for children and families exposed to trauma.

The Family Services Cabinet Council will work to identify gaps in available services, or service capacity, along the prevention and early intervention-treatment continuum for children and their caregivers statewide. The members also are charged with developing a comprehensive plan focused on early intervention for children and their caregivers exposed to adverse childhood experiences in order to help prevent abuse and neglect, and remedy the impact of it.

First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney is also committed to creating an environment that gives Delaware children a chance to succeed, and was present for the signing.

“You know, the word ‘trauma’ sounds like bad news, but what we’ve learned about brain science, about the impacts of childhood experiences, is actually very good news - because now, we can do something about it,” said **First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney**. “We can act on what we know - to prevent and mitigate the effects of trauma, and to build on the strengths of every child, every family, and every community. Trauma-informed care is a pre-requisite, to any effective strength-based strategy.”

The Executive Order also will direct state agencies that provide services for children and adults to integrate trauma-informed best practices, including trauma-specific language in requests for proposals and in service contracts with the state, when appropriate.

“The executive order signed today by Governor Carney demonstrates his commitment to making Delaware a trauma informed state,” said **Josette Manning, Secretary of the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families**. “I, along with my fellow agency heads who serve on the Family Services Cabinet Council, welcome this opportunity to improve the quality of services we provide to all Delawareans. We know that many of the children and families in Delaware have experienced trauma and toxic stress in their lives. We also know, based on years of research, that exposure to toxic stress can actually impact a child’s brain development and has been linked to higher rates of physical, social and emotional issues in adulthood. By focusing, as a state, on minimizing trauma and by helping people who have experienced trauma build resilience, we will improve the physical, social and emotional health of our children and families.”

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