



OFFICE OF THE CHILD ADVOCATE

Nathan Deal
Governor

Ashley Willcott, J.D., CWLS
Director

February 14, 2014

RE: Office of the Child Advocate
Letter of Introduction

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you as the newly appointed Director of the Office of the Child Advocate ("OCA").

First, a little bit about myself. I have served as an attorney for parents in juvenile court dependency (abuse and neglect) and delinquency proceedings, a Guardian Ad Litem representing children, a Judge Pro Tem in Dekalb County Juvenile Court, and now and for years, as a Special Assistant Attorney General representing the Department of Human Services/Department of Family and Children Services. I love what I do and am honored to be appointed to this position. Together, we have an amazing opportunity to serve our children who have some of the greatest needs.

As you are aware, one of the legislative mandates of the OCA is to provide independent oversight of agencies responsible for providing services to abused and neglected children, or those whose domestic situation requires intervention by the State. This includes investigating and seeking the resolution of complaints by or on behalf of children concerning agency actions and providing periodic reports to the Governor and General Assembly.

I believe that a major responsibility of the Office of the Child Advocate is to raise the bar and work together on higher expectations for our child-serving agencies. This includes questioning practices in cases investigated by the OCA; analyzing the current practice and policies of state agencies whose work impacts the lives of children and families; using data to design deliberate measures to make the child welfare and juvenile justice systems better; ensuring that parents are held responsible for their actions or lack of care of children; and engaging all stakeholders to ensure that everything that can be done to protect children at risk is done. I look forward to working on all of these issues together.

To this end, if there is anything I can do for you, including research and information regarding child welfare in our State, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email at awillcott@oca.ga.gov.

Best regards,

Ashley Willcott

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Office: 404-656-4200

270 Washington Street, SW, Suite 8101, Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Fax: 404-656-5200