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CHILD ADVOCATES BEGINS NEW SERVICES STATEWIDE TO SERVE CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

INDIANAPOLIS—Child Advocates is honored to announce that on Monday, May 2, it will officially begin new services as the single point of entry for youth and families who wish to explore eligibility for certain state-funded home and community-based mental health services.

Indiana's Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA) chose Child Advocates at the beginning of 2022, as its first, single statewide access site for DMHA's [High Fidelity Wraparound program, called the Children's Mental Health Wraparound \(CMHW\)](#). The program offers support and services to Hoosier children and youth who face serious mental health or behavioral challenges. For the first time, families will call just one phone number—211—which streamlines and starts the process to determine whether their child is eligible for the Child Mental Health Wraparound program.

“For nearly forty years, we have been a voice for children and youth who face the trauma of abuse and neglect, and we will continue those critical services,” says Child Advocates CEO Cindy Booth. “But our commitment to standing up for justice and equity for children will now extend to ensuring that children and youth and their families—including those in underserved communities—have access to the mental health support they need.”

Child Advocates just completed training and hiring for the new Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA) services and will manage all incoming referrals for the CMHW program in all of Indiana's 92 counties and assist youth and families with the application process. The wraparound services require that children be on Medicaid, or be eligible for Medicaid, which funds the program. Child Advocates will also conduct outreach to connect with thousands of children and youth who may not be accessing the program.

The Child Mental Health Wraparound (CMHW) program is an evidence-based process that provides a comprehensive, holistic, youth and family-driven way of responding when children or youth experience serious mental health or behavioral challenges. It involves a committed team comprised of family, friends, community, and professional supports to collaboratively develop an individualized plan of care. The team creates a plan of care that includes resources, talents, and strengths to address the underlying needs of the youth.

“It all goes back to mission, vision, and values, and Child Advocates aligns with our organization in those areas,” says Tanya Merritt-Mulamba, clinical quality improvement specialist at DMHA,



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discussing why it chose Child Advocates for the work. “Child Advocates also embodies years of expertise in standing up for children’s rights in the child welfare system through legal services and a race equity program that addresses disparities in care for children of color. We want to do a better job at reaching racially diverse and LGBTQ populations and their families for critical mental health services and support.”

The new process makes it easier for families to seek help for mental health services for their children as they call just one phone number, 211. Child Advocates will receive referrals for some families after they call and will schedule meetings to help guide them through the application process.

Child Advocates CEO, Cindy Booth says, “We cannot wait to help serve more children in need and their families and direct them to support that can be life-changing.”

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About Child Advocates: Child Advocates offers vital programs and services for vulnerable children and youth statewide through a race equity lens. We serve children and youth who have experienced abuse and neglect in the child welfare system, and we advocate for racial equity in child welfare and our communities to create a future where all children thrive, and race does not predict their life outcomes. Learn more at childadvocates.net.