

Professional Development Leader - State Deborah Smith, MSW

Deborah Smith earned her bachelor's degree and MSW from the University of Oklahoma School of Social Work in 1998.

She started employment with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services as a child welfare specialist in McClain County. She then served in McIntosh County and was promoted to child welfare supervisor. She went on to serve on the Child and Family Services Review Team.

She returned to Oklahoma County and worked as a Child Welfare Field Liaison while also serving as a social work practicum instructor to more than 20 students. By 2009, she served as Program Administrator for the Assistant Division Director and later the child welfare director for the state of Oklahoma.

One of her greatest challenges involved the child welfare class action litigation filed in 2008. She was a key member of the team preparing for the February 2012 trial, but was called upon to create a plan for improving child welfare services when Oklahoma made the decision to settle the case. In less than 90 days, the plan was created that became the Pinnacle Plan.

Ms. Smith currently serves as the Regional Program Manager for the Children's Bureau, Region 7 office out of Kansas City, MO.

She is responsible for oversight of child welfare programs in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. She and her husband have five amazing grown children and three precious grandchildren.

She will forever be grateful to the families and children who taught her to love the work; the many mentors and students who taught her how to serve; the child welfare leadership team and child welfare workforce who committed to improving the system; to her family for their support; and to the lifelong friends she made along the way in Oklahoma.