



Building a Case for Change

For immediate release

For more information contact: Sarah Lee at 206.898.2025 or sarah.lee@partnersforourchildren.org

SEATTLE – After three years of service as executive director, then as chief researcher, Mark Courtney, PhD, is leaving Partners for Our Children to return to the University of Chicago School Of Social Service Administration and serve as Faculty Associate of Chapin Hall Courtney will continue to serve as an advisor and resource for Partners for Our Children.

“Mark has built a solid foundation here, and I look forward to helping take Partners for Our Children to the next level,” Executive Director Benjamin de Haan, PhD, said. Dr. de Haan was named to the post of executive director in April. “Our partnerships -- with the Department of Social and Health Services, the University of Washington School of Social Work and the private sector -- will continue to be central to our work to improve the lives of children in our state’s child welfare system.”

“This was a difficult decision to make, but it’s the right thing to do for my family,” Courtney said. “However, I’m leaving Partners for Our Children in good hands, and Ben de Haan and I have already been talking about how we can work together in the future.”

“We’re saddened to see Mark leave because he’s greatly contributed to the knowledge base about child welfare issues in our state as well as nationwide,” said UW School of Social Work Dean Edwina Uehara, who also is a POC Board member. “But at the same time, we understand his family needs, and we’re fortunate he will continue to work with Partners for Our Children. We wish him the very best.”

Partners for Our Children will institute a national search for a new research director, according to de Haan.

Partners for Our Children was founded in 2007 as a collaborative effort of the UW School of Social Work, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services and private funders. Since that time, POC’s research has helped DSHS learn more about the extent of poverty and the basic needs of the families in the child welfare system, explore ways to safely bring children home to their families more quickly, and evaluate whether a new casework practice model adopted by the state improves

outcomes for children and their families. POC's research is also playing an important role in a legislatively mandated effort now underway to explore whether changing the way services for children are contracted, measured and evaluated improves results for children and families in Washington State's child welfare system.

###