

**Report on Outcome Measures and Oversight Activities of the Independent
Living Transition Services Program**

Department of Children and Families
Office of Family Safety

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Report on Outcome Measures and Oversight Activities of the Independent Living Transition Services Program

Overview

The requirement to submit this legislatively mandated report is a result of the passage of the Laws of Florida 2006-194 which became effective July 1, 2006. This report provides information about work products and activities regarding three topics of the Florida Independent Living Transition Services program as specified below:

1) outcome measures, 2) Departmental oversight, and 3) rule promulgation. The majority of activities described in this report has occurred during the period February 1, 2007 through December 2007 except as otherwise noted.

Authority

Section 409.1451(6), F. S.

“The Department shall prepare a report on the outcome measures and the Department's oversight activities and submit the report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the committees with jurisdiction over issues relating to children and families in the Senate and the House of Representatives no later than January 31 of each year. The report must include:

(a) An analysis of performance on the outcome measures developed under this section reported for each community-based care lead agency and compared with the performance of the Department on the same measures.

(b) A description of the Department's oversight of the program, including, by lead agency, any programmatic or fiscal deficiencies found, corrective actions required, and current status of compliance.

(c) Any rules adopted or proposed under this section since the last report. For the purposes of the first report, any rules adopted or proposed under this section must be included.”

2006-2007 General Appropriations Act (Conference Report on House Bill 5001 – Page 84 and 85):

For the funds in Specific Appropriations 355, 357 and 361, The Department of Children and Families is required to establish, in coordination with community-based care lead agencies, minimum standards for the Independent Living Transition Services Program. The Department has been directed to include these minimum standards in Department contracts with community-based care lead agencies by July 1, 2007. In addition, the Department, in coordination with community-based care lead agencies, has been directed to develop measures for assessing lead agency performance in meeting these minimum standards by July 1, 2007 and begin monitoring lead agency performance in accordance with these requirements by Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

Outcome Measures for Community-Based Care Lead Agencies

As part of the development of the outcome measures for the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies, the Department has implemented the “Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist” (available at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/indliving/>) in coordination with the Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC). In partnership with the Community-Based Care agencies, the Department has collected data on youth skills and development for youths in foster care, ages 13 through 17, and young adults formerly in foster care, ages 18 through 22, in the areas of:

- Life Skills
- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Department of Correction or Juvenile Justice
- Case Plan, Aftercare, and Transitional Services

This collection of data was an unprecedented achievement. Over 6,700 surveys were completed and the data were collected for an analysis at a statewide and Community-Based Care lead agency level. For youths in foster care, ages 13 through 17, eighty percent (80%) of eligible youths were surveyed. Of young adults formerly in foster care, ages 18 through 22 who are still receiving some type of continued services, a survey rate of about eighty percent (80%) was achieved; for young adults formerly in foster care who are not receiving services the survey results were at about forty percent (40%).

The results of the survey are included in this report and are also available to the public at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/indliving/>. The Department intends for the Independent Living Survey to be conducted annually to collect data on progress and outcomes for the Department and Community-Based Care providers. As this is the first year for the survey, the results will be the baseline data for the outcome measures the Department will develop and use in subsequent years to evaluate the performance of the lead agencies.

As required by proviso language of the 2006-2007 General Appropriations Act, effective July 1, 2006, the Department was directed to establish minimum standards and to develop measures for assessing lead agency performance on the Independent Living Transition Services Program in fiscal year 2008- 2009. The implementation of the Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist indicates that the Department and its Community-Based Care Providers must work together to improve the services available and delivered to Florida’s youth in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care. The Department’s next step is to develop, implement, monitor, and report the measurable outcomes directly related to performance regarding the Independent Living Program on the state, Community-Based Care, and Circuit level.

Additionally, the Department is currently working with the Community-Based Care providers, ILSAC, Connected by 25, Florida's Children First, Inc., and other advocates and community members to revise and improve the survey in order to ensure that it is capturing the information needed to provide reliable data for the outcome measures.

At this time, Community-Based Care providers, ILSAC members, and other community members have reviewed and provided input in the modification and revision of the Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist for the annual collection of data. This refined tool will be implemented to collect data for calendar year 2008.

Department Oversight

Programmatic

For calendar year 2007, the Department's oversight of the Independent Living Program was a two-part system. The Department's Contract Oversight Unit was responsible for monitoring the compliance of Community-Based Care agencies with s. 409.1451, F.S. and 65C-31, Florida Administrative Code. With the exception of OurKids of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Inc. (Circuits 11 and 17) and ChildNet, Inc (Circuit 17), the Contract Oversight Unit conducted annual monitoring of the Independent Living Program in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Unit in an integrated review for fiscal year 2006-2007 (OurKids and ChildNet were monitored by an independent contractor as mandated under Chapter 2006-30, Laws of Florida). The Contract Oversight Unit selected youth eligible to receive Independent Living Services and young adults formerly in foster care who are receiving services and conducted a file review to determine that the requirements of Florida Statute and code were met.

Additionally during calendar year 2007, the Quality Assurance team monitored the compliance of Community-Based Care providers with Independent Living standards using a three tier review process. This process was used during the monitoring of the Community-Based Care agencies for the fiscal year of 2006- 2007. As part of the three tier system of Quality Assurance, Community-Based Care lead agencies were required to develop and implement a Quality Assurance Plan that was reviewed and approved by the Department. Each Quality Assurance Plan specifically identified Independent Living Services compliance standards in case reviews. At Tier 1, the Community-Based Care agencies reviewed a sample of cases, submitted quarterly data to the Department for analysis, and conducted an on-going review of quality improvement activities.

At the Tier 2, the Department of Children and Families was responsible for verification of content, reliability and effectiveness of the community-based care quality assurance plan and for monitoring of cases for compliance with state and federal standards. Table 1 lists the outcomes of the Department's programmatic monitoring of Independent Living services of 17 of the 19 Community-Based Care lead agencies, including programmatic deficiencies and corrective action plans required by the Department.

Table 1: Contract Oversight Results of the Independent Living Program by Community-Based Care Lead Agency

Circuit	CBC	Contract	Identified Areas of Deficiency (Specific to IL Services)	DCF Response (Specific to IL Services)
1	Families First Network	AJ475	None	
2, 14	Big Bend CBC	BJS01 and BJP26	None	
3, 8	Partnership for Strong Families	CJ409	Some standards for Independent Living awards are not met	Determined not to be out of compliance
4 (Clay and Baker)	Clay & Baker Kids Net, Inc.	DJ994	None	
4 (St. Johns)	Family Integrity Program	DJ933	Road-to-Independence files not complete	Corrective Action Plan
4	Family Support Services of North Florida	DJ977	No documentation of 6 month Independent Living Meetings	Corrective Action Plan
5	Kids Central, Inc.	PJH04	Improvement needed in the management and oversight of subcontracted Independent Living Services (Repeat Finding)	Corrective Action Plan
7	Community Partnership for Children	NJ195	Independent Life Skills are not provided at required timeframes	Corrective Action Plan
9	Family Services of Metro- Orlando	GJ160	Requirements for Road-to-Independence not met (Repeat Finding)	Corrective Action Plan
10	Heartland for Children	TJE01	Independent Living files lack documentation	Corrective Action Plan
6, 12	Sarasota YMCA	QJ4B5 and QJ6B6	Area of concern of one file missing documentation	No Corrective Action Plan required as the record was available electronically
13	Hillsborough Kids Inc.	QJ7A0	None	
15	Child and Family Connections	IJ698	None	
18	CBC of Seminole	GJ245	Independent Living files lack eligibility requirements	Corrective Action Plan
18	CBC of Brevard	GJ246	Road-to-Independence records missing eligibility requirements.	No Correction Action Plan required as documentation issues were corrected
19	United for Families	ZJG84	Independent Living files lack documentation	Corrective Action Plan
20	Children's Network of SW Florida	HJM46	None	

The Family Safety Quality Assurance system used by the Department is currently under re-alignment and review, but will continue to require assessment of Independent Living services. The current quality assurance plan will require an integrated review of cases with Independent Living services requirements as part of the overall case reviews beginning in February 2008.

In accordance with Chapter 2006-30, Laws of Florida, a programmatic monitoring pilot has been established in the following communities: OurKids of Miami-Dade/ Monroe, Inc. (Circuits 11 and 17) and ChildNet, Inc (Circuit 17). Chapin Hall Center for Children, a research and development center of the University of Chicago is under contract through 2009 to provide programmatic monitoring. Chapin Hall's responsibilities are to: analyze and recommend new outcome measures and monitoring tools to best determine quality of performance of lead agencies, compare pilot performance to that of other lead agencies, and to report to state leaders and alliances.

At this time, the Chapin Hall reports have not directly commented on the performance and compliance of OurKids of Miami-Dade/ Monroe, Inc. and ChildNet, Inc. in regard to Independent Living services. The next report from Chapin Hall will be received in February 2008 and is expected to contain information on Independent Living compliance.

Fiscal Oversight

As required by Section 409.1451(5), F. S., each community-based care lead agency submitted a plan to the Department addressing the following major components for the population of young adults formerly in foster care. These plans contain the following elements:

- The number of young adults to be served each month of the fiscal year;
- The number of young adults who will reach 18 years of age who will be eligible for the plan;
- The number of young adults who will reach 23 years of age and will be ineligible for the plan or who are otherwise ineligible during each month of the fiscal year;
- Staffing requirements and all related costs to administer the services and program;
- Expenditures to or on behalf of the eligible recipients;
- Costs of services provided to young adults through an approved plan for housing, transportation, and employment; reconciliation of these expenses and any additional related costs with the funds allocated for these services; and
- An explanation of and a plan to resolve any shortages or surpluses in order to end the fiscal year with a balanced budget.

Additionally, during calendar year 2007, an Independent Living Specialist was funded in the headquarters' Family Safety Program Office. Budget staff were available to provide assistance as needed. This staff person provides technical assistance and training to Community-Based Care lead agency Independent Living Coordinators. A one to two

day training event is held each quarter, as financially feasible. On-site technical assistance visits are scheduled as requested and as staff resources are available. The Family Safety Program Office staff also provides technical assistance to the Contract Oversight Unit in the monitoring of the Community-Based Care lead agencies.

Program office staff collaborated with members of the Independent Living Advisory Services Council and other stakeholders to augment the capacity of the headquarters program office to provide best practice and policy training. Connected by 25, the Eckerd Family Foundation, and Florida's Children First! representatives along with federal representatives and staff from other state agencies have provided training and technical assistance to Community-Based Care lead agencies.

The Office of Family Safety monitors the percentage of Chafee and Education Training Vouchers spent by each of the Community-Based Care lead agencies and are available to answer questions on a statewide and lead agency level in terms of fiscal expenditures, and the number of young adults formerly in foster care receiving payments using the Interim Child Welfare Services Information System (ICWSIS). Fiscal monitoring of the Community-Based Care lead agencies occurs and was provided by an independent contractor.

The Public Consulting Group provided fiscal oversight and monitoring for all Community-Based Care lead agencies that are not county government entities during February 2007 through December 2007 with the exception of OurKids of Miami-Dade/ Monroe, Inc. and ChildNet, Inc. Abel & Associates performs fiscal monitoring and administrative monitoring tasks for the Community-Based Care lead agencies of OurKids of Miami-Dade/ Monroe, Inc. and ChildNet, Inc. As Independent Living funds are part of a standard contract award amount to the Community-Based Care agencies, a separate monitoring of this money was not conducted, but an overall fiscal assessment of each organization was conducted.

Public Consulting and Abel & Associates provided financial oversight to ensure integrity regarding the lead agency's fiscal operations. The independent fiscal monitors provided an on-going analysis of administrative, accounting and internal controls of the lead agencies and provided recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their accounting systems and financial processes. This fiscal oversight and administrative monitoring will continue with OurKids of Miami-Dade/ Monroe, Inc. and ChildNet, Inc. by Abel & Associates.

Public Consulting Group determined the fiscal risk level and administrative oversight needed by each of the Community-Based Care lead agencies. Additional information was considered by Public Consulting including: invoice submittal, turnover of critical positions, accessing lines of credit, independent audit information, financials not being submitted to the Board of Directors, and other concerns. Table 2 lists the risk level for each of the agencies: green (acceptable fiscal management), yellow (concerns with fiscal management) and red (significant concerns with fiscal management). This risk level corresponded to the intensity of fiscal oversight provided to each Lead Agency.

Circuit	CBC	Contract	Risk Level
1	Families First Network	AJ475	Green
2, 14	Big Bend CBC	BJS01 and BJP26	Green
3, 8	Partnership for Strong Families	CJ409	Green
4 (Clay and Baker)	Clay & Baker Kids Net, Inc.	DJ994	Green
4	Family Support Services of North Florida	DJ977	Green
5	Kids Central, Inc.	PJH04	Yellow
7	Community Partnership for Children	NJ195	Green
9	Family Services of Metro-Orlando	GJ160	Yellow
10	Heartland for Children	TJE01	Green
6, 12	Sarasota YMCA	QJ4B5 and QJ6B6	Green
13	Hillsborough Kids Inc.	QJ7A0	Green
15	Child and Family Connections	IJ698	Red
18	CBC of Seminole	GJ245	Green
18	CBC of Brevard	GJ246	Green
19	United for Families	ZJG84	Green
20	Children's Network of SW Florida	HJM46	Green
green (acceptable fiscal management), yellow (concerns with fiscal management) and red (significant concerns with fiscal management)			

The contract with Public Consulting Group ended December 31, 2007, and the Department is in the process of transitioning the fiscal and administrative monitoring of the Community-Based Care lead agencies to an internal function.

ChildNet's (Circuit 17) fiscal oversight was conducted monthly by Abel & Associates. In September 2007, the specific purpose of the monitoring was to assess procedures and controls regarding Road-to-Independence (RTI) Payments. Abel & Associated recommended that segregation of duties would enhance the controls with the generation of payment and the mailing of payments, but did state that the controls over the RTI payments were adequate.

Additionally in November 2007, Abel & Associates monitored ChildNet's program compliance of the Independent Living Program to their Policy and Procedure, #CN003.035, and noted that good controls were in place over the quantitative aspects of the Independent Living/ Road-to-Independence Program.

In regard to OurKids (Circuit 11 and 17), Abel & Associates sampled 2007 Chafee Program/ Independent Living payments monthly and concurred that invoices were paid appropriately.

Specific oversight to the OurKids Independent Living/ Road-to-Independence program was conducted by Abel & Associates in June 2007. One issue was noted wherein invoices lacked a “paid” stamp. Additionally, in June 2007, Abel & Associates reviewed Our Kids’ policies and procedures on Independent Living Services #175-80 and Road-to-Independence (RTI) Scholarship Program Funds Policy #175-99. Abel & Associates noted that many of the cash disbursement procedures and processing control elements were absent and that in the case of “Road-to-Independence (RTI) Scholarship Program Funds Policy #175-99” the policy was outdated.

Adopted or Proposed Rules Under Section 409.1451, F.S.:

A revision of administrative rule, 65C-13, is currently nearing completion. This revision contains requirements and standards for foster homes and Independent Living Transition Services. This rule contains provisions governing delivery of services to youth in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care. Rule 65C-13, Substitute Care of Children, also provides licensing guidelines for young adults formerly in the custody of the Department, who choose to remain in their foster home, and “normalcy” requirements for youths living in foster homes (s.409.1451(3)(a)(3)).