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***Office of Adoption  
and Child Protection***

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**Annual Report  
2010**



*Executive Office of  
the Governor*



CHARLIE CRIST  
GOVERNOR

# Office of the Governor

THE CAPITOL  
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December 31, 2010

To the People, Governor, Members of the Legislature, and Executive Department Heads of the State of Florida:

We are pleased to present to you this fourth Annual Report of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection. As directed in Florida Statutes, Subsection 39.001(7)(c)5 a-f, this report provides an update of the activities of the Office, as well as a summary of data pertaining to adoption rates and the issue of child abuse and neglect in our state. Also included are recommendations by state agencies for the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the promotion of adoption and the support of adoptive families.

Not long ago, the people of the State of Florida took notice of the lack of a comprehensive statewide approach and plan to keep our children out of the foster care system by preventing child abuse and neglect before it ever occurs in the first place, or safely placing them with a permanent family in a timely manner if reunification fails, and then supporting our adoptive families who have just committed to a life changing experience. The people realized that many of our state agencies find it very difficult to sustain a high priority on primary prevention and permanency efforts because department administrators frequently need to shift their employee's focus in response to crises and needs for intervention. To address this concern of the people, our legislature in 2007 created the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection with the responsibility of agency oversight and establishing a clear focus and statewide direction among local child welfare agencies, pertinent stakeholders and the general public with regards to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the promotion of adoption and the support of adoptive families.

The main objective of the Office is to empower our communities and strengthen Florida's families before any abuse or neglect occurs so our children never have to experience foster care. If we fail to accomplish this, then our primary focus is to make certain that a child's time in our foster care system is as temporary as possible. With a sense of urgency, Florida's foster children must be safely placed with permanent families, either through safe reunification with their biological families or by placing them into loving, nurturing and supported adoptive families. While we have limited state resources with which to work, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection has been able to provide an array of tools and structures that is allowing our state to make considerable progress on behalf of our children. In other words, a functioning and effective system of addressing prevention and permanency that has been configured by the Legislature is effectively addressing child well-being in our state.

Embracing the vision that Florida's highest priority is that children in our state are raised in healthy, safe, stable and nurturing families, the Office has assembled a five-year state plan with the desired results to reduce child maltreatment before it occurs, increase timely adoptions and improve the permanency of adoption. Under the leadership and direction of Dr. Barbara Foster, our Deputy Chief Child Advocate, significant progress has been made this past year with the development and implementation of our legislatively mandated five-year state plan on prevention and permanency. Adhering to the outline presented in our 18-month statewide plan released in 2008, the Governor's 32-member Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council and its 12 workgroups, in collaboration with our 20 local planning teams comprised of almost 600 individuals from across our state, crafted Florida's five-year plan on prevention and permanency that was launched July 1<sup>st</sup> of 2010. One major feature of our plan is the incorporation of the so

called *Five Protective Factors*, as researched and developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, which are proven to reduce child maltreatment and improve child well-being through strengthening families and empowering communities. These protective factors can be readily embraced and incorporated cost effectively into already existing state and local efforts related to child well-being with potentially significant results.

The Governor's *Explore Adoption* marketing campaign highlights our children in state care, who are the hardest to place for adoption through a wide array of marketing materials. Early in the year, we obtained new funding, drawn from the almost \$10 million federal adoption bonus that Florida received through the Increasing Adoptions Act, to continue broadcasting this message and raise public awareness statewide regarding the benefits of foster care adoption. As a result of this campaign, we have seen a sustained increase in the number of inquiries to our adoption helpline (1-800-96-ADOPT). In addition, our interactive and user friendly "Explore Adoption" website ([www.AdoptFlorida.org](http://www.AdoptFlorida.org)) is being visited by more and more people each and every month. The "Explore Adoption" marketing campaign has received numerous local, state and national awards including an Emmy Award from the Suncoast Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Complimentary to these efforts, this past year the newly formed Florida Association of Heart Galleries, Inc. has also made significant progress in uniting Florida's 15 local Heart Galleries as they enhance and improve their efforts to recruit adoptive families through child-specific awareness.

For fiscal year 2009-10, Florida finalized 3,368 adoptions, or about 18% of the number of children in out-of-home care. Since January of 2007, nearly 14,000 children have been adopted out of our foster care system and into permanent and loving families. Through the Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, Florida was once again recognized as a leader nationwide and received an additional almost \$6 million from the federal government in adoption bonus money, and was best among the states in completing adoptions in a timely manner. Our Governor has been very effective in raising the public's awareness of adopting our children from state care, and our Department of Children and Families has instilled a sense of urgency that permeates our adoption process. Ultimately, however, it is our community-based system of care and our lead agencies that have rallied the multitude of Floridians who have answered the call and opened their hearts and homes to our children in care.

Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet, which is administered from the Office, has also made great strides this year with their Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System (CYCISS), which will promote increased efficiency among state agencies and improved service delivery to our children and their families. This initiative was launched and is hosted at the Northwest Regional Data Center with the full participation of all eight state agencies represented on the Cabinet. This groundbreaking achievement is the result of the strong leadership of our Lieutenant Governor Kottkamp and the unprecedented cooperation and collaboration amongst the Cabinet agencies. Also, after much deliberation and discussion, the Cabinet has identified 4 priority child well-being indicators that will become the focus of our state in improving the lives of Florida's children and their families. Cross-agency teams are being convened for each headline indicator, with the task of developing and monitoring a plan of action to turn the indicators in a positive direction. In addition, an initial Children's Budget has been produced and a matrix created that merges state resources spent with the child well-being indicator framework. As a result, efficiencies of service can be identified and taxpayer dollars can be better aligned to effectively support the healthy growth and development of Florida's children. When compared to other states that have fully funded and staffed Children's Cabinets, what we have accomplished in Florida with little staff and no funding is a testimony to our committed statewide partners who have given so much of their time and efforts. Finally, we were one of six Children and Youth Cabinets nationwide to receive technical support from the Children's Cabinet Network, which is managed by the Forum for Youth Investment, to help us effectively transition to a new Governor and administration.

Earlier in the year, the Office exercised its statutory authority to establish a direct-support organization to assist the state in carrying out its purposes and responsibilities regarding the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the promotion of adoption and the support of adoptive

families. To raise money and make expenditures for the benefit of and in a manner consistent with the goals of the Office and in the best interest of the state, this tax exempt, non-profit entity was incorporated under the name, "The Trust for Florida's Children, Inc." The Board of Directors of the Trust, after handling start-up procedures, is now actively engaged in seeking out potential fund raising and grant opportunities.

In this past year, the people of our state have been challenged by a rather poor economy, but despite this and other significant challenges in their lives, many Floridians have seen opportunity and seized it for the good of our children. The private initiative and passion for children around our great state is noticeable and their singular efforts, if they ever were to cease, would create a tremendous, if not overwhelming, burden on government. True passion can only be comprehended by people, not programs or institutions, and therein lays the dream of child well-being. Recently, Florida has progressed from a state-based system of care to one that engages our communities to embrace our children and ensure positive outcomes for their well-being. Our next noble venture, and no doubt our greatest challenge, will be to transition one final time into a more fundamental, family-based framework of care where Florida's families are enabled and empowered to do what they could and should do for their own children. These children will then have the unobstructed opportunity to reach their goals, live their dreams and realize their unique purpose in life. This is a challenge we are motivated to achieve because Florida's families and their children deserve no less. Our task is daunting but not impossible. With the support and direction of the people of Florida, great things can and will be accomplished.

The staff members of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection are to be commended for all their hard work not only to produce this report, but also for their selfless efforts to help make Florida a better place for our families and children. To these staff members much was given and much was expected, and they exceeded all expectations. Our gratitude goes out to our Governor Charlie Crist for his leadership and dedication to and support of the vision that Florida is a place where families and their children can thrive. We also appreciate those citizens, Florida's taxpayers, who will take the time to review this report in order to more effectively participate in our collective decision-making process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Kallinger", with a small dot at the end of the signature.

Jim Kallinger  
Chief Child Advocate

# Child Advocacy in the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection

## Chief Child Advocate

- Chief Child Advocate – Director of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection.
- Governor's liaison to state agencies and other state governments on issues related to child abuse prevention, promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families.
- Special advisor to Governor and Legislature on child abuse prevention, promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families' issues.
- With minimal personnel and resources, administers and staffs the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet and Florida's EMMY and ADDY award winning *Explore Adoption* public awareness campaign.



## Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency

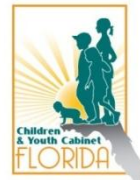
- **Statutory Charge:** Establish a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect...developing a plan of action for better coordination and integration of the goals, activities and funding pertaining to the promotion of, support of adoptive families and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect in order to maximize staff and resources at the state level. (§39.001, FS)
- **Vision:** Florida's highest priority is that children are raised in healthy, safe, stable, and nurturing families.
- **Mission:** To serve as a blueprint that will be implemented to provide for the care, safety, and protection of all of Florida's children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.
- **Agencies and organizations at the table:**



1. Executive Office of the Governor, Chairman
2. Agency for Health Care Administration
3. Agency for Persons with Disabilities
4. Agency for Workforce Innovation
5. Child Advocacy/ Community Philanthropy
6. Child Day Care Centers
7. Children's Advocacy Centers
8. Children's Services Councils
9. Circuit Courts
10. Community Alliances
11. Community Based Care Lead Agencies & Providers
12. Community Mental Health Centers
13. Department of Children and Families
14. Department of Corrections
15. Department of Education
16. Department of Health
17. Department of Juvenile Justice
18. Department of Law Enforcement
19. Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council
20. Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet
21. Guardian ad Litem programs
22. Local Children's Cabinets
23. Local Foundations
24. Local Law Enforcement Agencies
25. Multi-Disciplinary Child Protection Teams
26. Parents with Adopted Children
27. Physicians
28. Prevent Child Abuse Florida
29. Private/ Public Programs with Expertise in Child Abuse Prevention Programs
30. Private/ Public Programs with Expertise in Maternal and Infant Health Care Private/ Public Programs with Expertise in Working with Children/ Families of Children who are Sexually, Physically or Emotionally Abused, Abandoned or Neglected
31. School Boards
32. State Court Administration
33. University Researchers

## Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet

- **Statutory Charge:** Ensure that the public policy relating to children and youth is developed to promote interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order that services designed for children and youth are planned, managed, and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the children's self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life. (§402.56, FS)
- **Vision:** All children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential.
- **Mission:** To ensure that the public policy of Florida relating to children and youth promotes interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order for services designed for children and youth to be planned, managed and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health and quality of life of all children and youth in Florida.
- **Membership at the table:**



1. Lt. Governor, Chairman
  2. Chief Child Advocate, Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection
  3. Commissioner, Department of Education
  4. Director, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
  5. Director, Agency for Workforce Innovation
  6. Secretary, Agency for Health Care Administration
  7. Secretary, Department of Children and Families
  8. Secretary, Department of Juvenile Justice
  9. State Surgeon General, Department of Health
  10. Statewide Director, Guardian ad Litem Office
  11. Attorney General (or designee)
  12. Chief Financial Officer (or designee)
  13. Florida Supreme Court (or designee)
  14. Senate President (or designee)
  15. Speaker of the House (or designee)
- Current Governor's Appointees Representation**
16. Chairman, Early Learning Coalition of Duval
  17. Executive Director, Juvenile Welfare Board, Children's Services Council of Pinellas County
  18. Physician and Professor, University of Miami, Mailman Center for Child Development
  19. President, Early Childhood Initiative Foundation in Miami and "University Scholar for Early Childhood Development and Readiness" at the University of Florida
  20. President, Uhlfelder and Associates



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## **PART 1 - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ADOPTION AND CHILD PROTECTION**

### **The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection**

During the 2007 Legislative Session, HB 1309, sponsored by Representative Bill Galvano and Senator Ronda Storms, was approved and sent to the Executive Branch for signature. On 12 June 2007, the Governor signed into law the bill creating the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection, effective 1 July 2007. The duties and responsibilities of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection are enshrined in Section 39.001, Florida Statutes (§39.001, FS), entitled *Proceedings Relating to Children*. To view these statutes, please refer to <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/>. The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection was created, within the Executive Office of the Governor, for the purpose of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families and prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection has a dedicated staff of four, including Jim Kallinger (Chief Child Advocate), Barbara Foster, Ph.D. (Deputy Chief Child Advocate), Cyndee Odom (Special Projects Manager), and Christina Pacelle, MSW (Executive Program Support). Together, this team has the passion and expertise to create efficiencies and achieve remarkable results.

With minimal personnel and resources, the Office administers and staffs the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet and Florida's EMMY and ADDY award winning *Explore Adoption* public awareness campaign. During the 2010 Legislative Session, the Joint Sunset Committee met and discussed the future of the Office. One of the committee members stated that the State's investment in the Office most likely yielded the greatest return on investment in all of state government. No changes to the Office were recommended as a part of the joint legislative sunset review process.

#### **Chief Child Advocate**

On 1 July 2007, former State Representative Jim Kallinger was appointed as Florida's first Chief Child Advocate. On matters that relate to the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect, the promotion of adoption, and the support of adoptive families as defined in §39.001(7)(b), FS the duties and responsibilities of the Chief Child Advocate include assisting in rule development, acting as the Governor's liaison with state agencies and other state governments, working to secure funding and other support, developing strategic programs and funding initiatives, advising the Governor and Legislature, and developing public awareness.

The Chief Child Advocate serves as the Director of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection, and is also the Chairman of the Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. He is a member of Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet as defined in statute, and was appointed by the Lt. Governor to serve as Chairman of the Children and Youth Services Information Sharing Committee. The Chief Child Advocate serves on the Department of Children and Families' Task Force on Fostering Success and is a member of the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care.

### Highlighted Activities of the Chief Child Advocate During 2010

- For the third year in a row, participated in the National Governor's Association Policy Academy on Safely Reducing the Number of Children in Foster Care. Florida was one of six states that met throughout the year to discuss ways to maximize state resources and implement best practices to prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their home, and to achieve timely permanency for those children currently in state care. The Policy Academy set a benchmark for the participating states to commit to safely reducing the number of children in state care 50 percent by the year 2020. Florida set their goal of 50 percent by the year 2012.
- Attended the Florida Digital Government Summit sponsored by Government Technology Magazine which allowed Information Technology leaders and Chief Information Officers from across agency and institutional boundaries to share ideas and identify best practices. These conferences provide solutions and analysis on management and policy decisions that can be applied to Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System.
- Attended seminar sponsored by Governing Magazine to discuss how governments can improve customer service and citizen engagement in an effort to produce better outcomes for citizens. Provided opportunity to explore Information Technology solutions to more effectively engage and encourage citizen interaction with government in the area of adoption promotion and support of adoptive families.
- Continued dialogue with delegates from the Virginia Assembly and the office of Virginia's Governor regarding Florida's successes in child welfare, and best practices and policies related to public adoption. Discussed the possibility of convening a summit with state leaders from Florida, Virginia, Colorado and Texas to continue and enhance the dialogue around public adoption and child well-being.
- Worked with the Children's Cabinet Network, managed by the Forum for Youth Investment, to develop a strategy to ensure the viability of Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet and its initiatives through the transition to a new Governor and administration. Florida was one of six states chosen nationwide to receive technical support from this organization, which included a survey and interviews with key cabinet stakeholders, a cabinet assessment and orientation document, a message platform and cabinet brochure, and strategy sessions for implementation. Attended the national meeting in Washington D.C. with other Children and Youth Cabinet leaders to begin charting plans and timelines for technical support.
- Accompanied the Governor to the Clearwater Aquarium for an adoption event with Winter the Dolphin whose story of rescue and adoption gained nationwide attention. Also, participated in the *Explore Adoption* Mother's Day event with the Governor at the Governor's Mansion.
- Along with the Ron Sachs Communications team, presented to the Governor the EMMY Award that the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection received for their *Explore Adoption* public awareness campaign.
- In seeking funding and support for the Office and its responsibilities; assisted The Trust for Florida's Children, Inc. members with their objectives, worked with the Florida Head Start Association to form an advisory council to qualify for a federal grant, worked with executive and legislative leadership to determine the appropriation of Florida's adoption bonus awarded through the federal Increasing Adoptions Act, explored opportunities with the Department of Children and Families to capture funding from the Community Based Child Abuse Program (CBCAP) for initiatives of the Office, continued the partnership with the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds and sought various other state and federal grant/appropriations opportunities.
- Traveled statewide to represent the Governor and visit the facilities of various stakeholders involved with child welfare including non-profit organizations, community-based care lead agencies and service providers.
- Established and continued a partnership with the Florida A&M School of Law and their Legal Clinic. Law students are drafting proposed legislation on policy issues of importance to the Office. They are then prepared to assist in moving the proposed legislation through the political process if any of these issues assume a priority status with the administration.

## Highlighted Activities of the Chief Child Advocate During 2010

*Continued*

- Worked with Florida’s Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children office to explore the integration of technology associated with the Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System to enhance data exchange and collaboration with other states throughout the adoption process.
- Made presentations at various summits and conferences around the state, including:
  - Florida Head Start Association Leadership Conference - presentation on Florida’s Children and Youth Cabinet and the work that has been initiated on key headline indicators for child well-being.
  - Department of Juvenile Justice - Faith and Community Symposium – presentation on the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative of Florida’s five-year plan on prevention and permanency.
  - Florida Healthy Families Conference – panel discussion on how to effectively influence policy makers and their decisions.
  - Florida Coalition for Children board meeting –a demonstration on a technology solution and opportunity to enhance customer service operations when dealing with adoption promotion and support of adoptive families.
  - Florida’s Faith Leader Roundtable – spoke and presented at the summit of faith leaders from around the state, convened by the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection, to explore ways to better engage our faith communities in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, promotion of adoption and the support of adoptive families.
  - Presented demonstrations of the Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System to: the Florida Chief Information Officer Council, the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, the Task Force on Fostering Success, and the Gabriel Myers Work Group, as well as conference calls with Louisiana’s Children and Youth Cabinet, the Health Department of Harris County, Texas and the Governor’s Office of Virginia.
- Attended the strategic and tactical planning seminar on children’s issues convened at the Collaborative Lab of St. Petersburg College.
- Hosted a seminar on “Results Based Accountability” to prepare agency staff and designated workgroups for a project of the Children and Youth Cabinet.
- Worked with The Trust for Florida’s Children, Inc. to develop a partnership with the Pearson Foundation to launch a “We Give Books” campaign for Florida’s foster children.
- Met with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to discuss their definition of child maltreatment as a public health issue and their proposed approach to address the problem.
- Met with Legislators and presented to Legislative budget and policy committees regarding the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection, funding for the *Explore Adoption* public awareness campaign, Florida’s Children and Youth Cabinet initiatives and other child welfare policy issues.
- Worked with the Governor’s legal office and staff from the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee to draft rules for the Office, pursuant to rulemaking provisions in statute.
- Participated in press conferences, bill signings and other media events, including radio and television.
- Spoke at numerous events and press conferences, including:
  - *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* event to kick-off National Adoption Month.
  - Children’s Week Advocacy Dinner.
  - Junior League Day at the Capitol with foster children.
  - Kids Only Town Hall Meeting.
  - Launch of the Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System.
  - National Adoption Day event at the Florida Supreme Court.
  - Read for the Record at Astoria Park Elementary School.
  - Governor’s Cabinet meeting.
- Witnessed adoption ceremonies around the state where multiple adoptions were finalized in the same day, and had the opportunity to meet with many new adoptive families and discussed their experiences with the adoption process.
- Interacted with many concerned citizens and local leaders from across the state to listen to their issues and ideas, and then conveyed those messages into appropriate state and interstate discussions.

## Deputy Chief Child Advocate

The Deputy Chief Child Advocate designed, coordinated and led the development, implementation and monitoring of Florida's two major plans for prevention and permanency:

- *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: January 2009 – June 2010*
- *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

Along with the Chief Child Advocate, the Deputy Chief Child Advocate met and worked with over 800 people (e.g., legislators, state agency heads and their leadership, Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet, foundations, circuit-level planning teams, and many others) to craft the five-year efforts for preventing child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promoting adoption and supporting adoptive families.

The Deputy Chief Child Advocate serves as the Governor's appointee to the Child Care Executive Partnership. The Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP) is an innovative, public/private partnership program that was created by the Florida Legislature in 1996 to help employers meet the needs of a growing segment of their workforce – working parents. This program leverages a relationship between businesses and families that want to work and succeed. The mission of the CCEP is to promote public private partnerships to ensure that the children of Florida are provided safe, high quality, developmentally appropriate and enriching child care while parents work to remain self-sufficient, strengthen their families, and build a stronger workforce.

The Deputy Chief Child Advocate represents the Executive Office of the Governor on the Interagency Trauma-Informed Care Workgroup. Tasks undertaken by the workgroup include providing an entry level Trauma-Informed Care resource that educates, identifies consistent "Trauma Terminology" and can be enhanced to meet the needs of specific populations served in Florida. As the representative to the workgroup, the Deputy Chief Child Advocate conducted presentations and provided education and information materials related to:

- Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet strategic plan, initiatives and headline indicators.
- Opportunities and roles of the agencies for supporting and strengthening families.
- Ways to use the *Five Protective Factors* to build resilience in Florida families.

Additionally, the Deputy Chief Child Advocate represents the Executive Office of the Governor on the (ECCS) Statewide Multi-Agency Team. ECCS stands for the federally funded State Maternal and Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative implemented by the Department of Health. The purpose of ECCS is to build and integrate early childhood service systems that address the critical components of access to comprehensive health services and medical homes; social-emotional development and mental health of young children; early care and education; parenting education and family support. ECCS efforts involve a broad range of public and private agencies and organizations, parents and communities who share the goal of promoting the health and well-being of children from ages 0 to 5 and to strengthen families.

### Highlighted Activities of the Deputy Chief Child Advocate During 2010

The Deputy Chief Child Advocate conducted various workshops and provided other supports around the state to promote the work of and educate stakeholders on office-related initiatives in 2010. Excluding plan-based work covered in other sections of this report, these include:

- Attended a meeting with the Chief Child Advocate and leadership from the Agency for Workforce Innovation to discuss the opportunities for helping families build resilience through early education and care in Florida.
- Met with the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy on building the *Five Protective Factors* through systems development and change.
- Assisted with the evaluation of the statewide Winds of Change public awareness campaign for the prevention of child abuse.
- Attended a meeting with the Chief Child Advocate and leadership from the Department of Children and Families to discuss the Community Based Child Abuse Program (CBCAP) Project Proposal for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2009-2010.
- Held a meeting along with the Director of Prevent Child Abuse Florida with the Department of Health and the Department of Children and Families leadership. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the 18-month plan Prevention Goal 1 Family Strengthening Initiative.
- Along with the Prevention Manager from the Office of Family Safety, and the Program Director of Devereux Kids conducted a workshop for Circuit 5 on Family Strengthening held in Wildwood, FL. The workshop explained how the *Five Protective Factors* are cornerstones for family-centered practice.
- Presented to the Department of Children and Families Central Office Leadership, the Circuit Administrators and the Regional Directors about the proposed five-year plan and the *Five Protective Factors* that build family resilience.
- Addressed the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force of Brevard. Discussed the strengths of the circuit plan that was submitted and previewed what the Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council would be discussing on 4 May 2010.
- Participated as a member of the Cross-Agency Team for the Child Abuse and Neglect Headline Indicator of Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet.
- Met with the director of the Graduate Education Program in program evaluation at Florida State University to develop the initial design of a statewide monitoring and assessment system.
- Presented at the Florida School Boards Association and Florida Association of District School Superintendents annual meeting. The presentation was on *Strengthening a Child's Readiness and Ability to Learn through Family Resilience*.
- Along with the Executive Director of the Monique Burr Foundation presented at the Healthy Schools Summer Academy in Gainesville, FL. They presented on teaching skills to prevent child abuse.
- Presented the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan* at the Children and Youth Cabinet meeting in St. Petersburg, FL.

## Highlighted Activities of the Deputy Chief Child Advocate During 2010

*Continued*

- Presented at Secretary Sheldon's meeting for the Department of Children and Families and the Community Based Care Lead Agencies Chief Executive Officers. The Chief Child Advocate gave an overview of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan*. The meeting was held in Orlando, FL.
- Along with the Prevention Manager from the Office of Family Safety, and the Program Director of Devereux Kids conducted a workshop for court and child welfare staff members at the Dependency Summit in Orlando, FL. The workshop explained how the *Five Protective Factors* are cornerstones for family-centered practice.
- Along with the Chief Child Advocate met with the State Surgeon General and the leadership from the Department of Health to discuss the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan* as well as the Department of Health's Leadership for Prevention Objectives 2.3, 2.4, and 3.3.
- Participated in the Miami Court Team Dissemination Project, a family court improvement initiative in Circuit 2.
- Along with the Point of Light award winner presented at the Kinship Care conference two workshops for child welfare and adoption specialists and one workshop for relative caregivers on *Strengthening Florida's Families Caring for their Relatives*.
- Testified on behalf of the Child Care Executive Partnership at the Agency for Workforce Innovation public rule hearing.
- Presented the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan* at a multi-agency meeting to discuss the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems.
- Presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Head Start Leadership Conference in Celebration, FL. Presented on *Head Start's Role in the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect*.
- Along with the staff of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, met with the Director and leadership at the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to review the APD Management System.
- Prepared the meeting materials and proposals for consideration by the statewide Evaluation Design Team.
- Assisted with the press conference and launch of the *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* in Tallahassee, FL.
- Met with leadership at the Department of Children and Families to discuss and review the anticipated federal AFCARS (adoption) and NCANDS (child abuse) data submissions for the state.
- Participated on a Webinar to review options for reporting to Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet on the Child Maltreatment Headline Indicator work.



## Constituent Support and Assistance

The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection has become well known to Floridians and as such is seen as a resource to those seeking help and assistance. The Office works with the Governor's Office of Citizen Services in responding effectually to these Floridians who have challenges and concerns about our child welfare system. The two offices work collaboratively to coordinate their resources and collective knowledge bases.

The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection uses a triage system that enables a proactive response to those citizens who have the greatest need. In doing so, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection has assisted approximately 200 individuals and/or families in 2010, almost twice the number served in 2009. Representative examples of the more prevalent cases include helping:

- Families engaged in the adoption process (including families outside of Florida seeking to adopt from Florida's foster care system) to navigate the system.
- Grandparents of children within Florida's foster care system seeking ways to protect their grandchildren.
- Families within the foster care and adoption systems to resolve barriers.

Additional cases included:

- Responding to information requests of adult adoptees.
- Helping adoptive parents obtain information and assistance with accessing medical subsidies and financial supports for their adopted children.
- Addressing concerns of families with foster placements.
- Providing guidance about relative placement/adoption, services assistance, adopted children that were about to age out of the system, and more.

Through phone calls, letters and emails, these are some of the major issues that citizens reached out to the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection with for guidance and assistance.

## *Explore Adoption – Florida's Award Winning Campaign*



The 2007 Legislature appropriated funding to the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection for the purpose of initiating a statewide marketing campaign to promote the adoption of the children who are in Florida's foster care system. After extensive research, statewide surveys and focus groups during the design phase, *Explore Adoption* was launched in May 2008. The campaign

ran through December 2008, winning many state and national awards, including an EMMY and three ADDYs. The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection has continued to promote public adoption through *Explore Adoption* and distribute materials including marketing kits, brochures, educational "one-pagers", window clings, posters, lapel pins and DVDs of television advertisements. For more information, please visit [www.adoptflorida.org](http://www.adoptflorida.org) or call 1-800-96-ADOPT.

During 2010, *Our Adoption Journey* handbook, an educational tool and keepsake for adoptive families for documenting their adoption experience with facts, photographs and memories was developed with the input of adoptive families and adoption staff members. Information about the *Five Protective Factors* and state and local adoption support information is also included in the handbook. Throughout the year, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection distributed marketing materials to the Florida Department of Children and Families Regions and Circuits, Community Based Care Lead Agencies, adoption providers, Heart Galleries, faith-based and community-based organizations and other partners. *Explore Adoption* television and radio spots were aired through various media outlets and print advertisements were printed in newspaper affiliates throughout Florida. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and County Health Department offices aired *Explore Adoption* advertisements in the waiting rooms and lobbies. Web advertisements were placed on several web affiliates including the Miami Herald, Palm Beach Post, Tampa Bay Online, Orlando Sentinel, Sun Sentinel (Ft. Lauderdale) and Tampa Bay.com.

In order to build the capacity for its use in finding homes best suited for the children available for adoption at the region and circuit levels, on 13 April 2010, the Five Points Technology Training Team began a 6-week (one region each week), 13 session Webinar-based training series on *Targeted Recruitment for Adoption and Recruitment Staff Statewide*. Participants were provided with techniques for using the *Explore Adoption* targeted recruitment materials to identify families most likely to adopt the children in care with information about the communities in which these families live and the media and information these families trust and use. The curriculum used in the training is included within the *Explore Adoption Targeted Recruitment Resource Guide*. A County Matrix was created for each region in the state. A recording of each of the six regional trainings was produced in June 2010 and copies were provided to Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice and can be heard at: <http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org>. A total of one hundred and thirty-four individuals participated in the series of trainings and received certificates for completing the training. The Targeted Recruitment Training Final Report for each region in the state can be viewed at <http://www.adoptflorida.org/resources5.shtml>.

On 3 May 2010 the Governor hosted an afternoon reception at the Governor's Mansion to honor adoptive mothers and discuss public adoption. The event was part of the re-launch of the *Explore Adoption* initiative. To extend the reach of the re-launch of the initiative, three visits between families in Jacksonville, Orlando, and Clearwater with the Chief Child Advocate were conducted to encourage other Floridians to explore public adoption.

The *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* was introduced and launched at the July meeting of Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet. To promote the prevention and permanency aspects of the plan along with the *Explore Adoption* campaign, two adoptive families and their children were recognized. This provided the families with the opportunity to share their adoption journeys with the press, cabinet members and the members of the audience.

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection hosted an *Explore Adoption* exhibit at the 2010 Dependency Summit in August. *Explore Adoption* marketing materials and *Our Adoption Journey* handbooks were distributed to participants during the three-day summit sponsored by the Department of Children and Families.

On 1 November 2010 Florida's Chief Child Advocate, Department of Children and Families Secretary Sheldon and Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation, Bob Ballard kicked off National Adoption Month with a news conference at Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park in Tallahassee, FL. During the news conference, Florida unveiled *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption* a month-long campaign featuring daily videos of children in foster care available for

adoption along with their photos on the *Explore Adoption* Web site: [www.adoptflorida.org](http://www.adoptflorida.org). The Department of Environmental Protection also announced at the news conference they were giving free passes to state parks to all families finalizing adoptions of children in foster care during National Adoption Month 2010.

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection and a host of partner groups promoted the month-long *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* campaign with weekly emails, Web site links and media coverage. Due to strong public interest in viewing the personal messages of the children featured during the campaign, the *Explore Adoption* Web site set a record number of page views in November – 60,000 (by visitors from 72 different countries). The campaign also produced more than 1,250 calls (a 15% increase over calls received during November 2009) to the *Explore Adoption* hotline and strong leads on permanent families for the children featured. To date, five families have begun the process to adopt children featured in the campaign.

Florida has become a national model for public adoptions, collecting a total of more than \$15 million in federal adoption bonuses in 2009 and 2010 for increasing the number of children adopted from foster care. Nearly 14,000 children in foster care have been adopted from January 2007 through June of 2010 and statewide records were set two years in a row. Florida is also currently the best among the states in achieving adoptions in a timely manner. Credit for Florida's adoption successes is shared by many committed partners, including the *Explore Adoption* campaign, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection, the Department of Children and Families, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Community Based Care Lead Agencies, local adoption providers, Adoption Information Center, Forever Family, Heart Galleries, One Church One Child, and many other associates.

### **The Trust for Florida's Children, Inc.**



The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection was instrumental in the creation and launch of the Trust for Florida's Children. Pursuant to §39.0011, FS, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection is granted the authority to establish a direct-support organization to assist the state in carrying out its purposes and responsibilities regarding the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the promotion of adoption and the support of adoptive families. To view this statute, please refer to <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/>. The main purpose of this direct-support organization, which is a non-profit, tax exempt 501(c)3 entity, is to raise money, public and private, and make expenditures for the benefit of and in a manner consistent with the goals of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection and in the best interest of the state.

In accordance with the Florida Statutes and as one of the objectives in the state's 18-month prevention and permanency plan, the Chief Child Advocate selected an Initial Board of Directors for the direct-support organization and on 29 March 2010, the Board convened their first meeting. Representation on the 13-member Board of Directors spans 12 state and local public and private organizations. In April 2010, The Trust for Florida's Children, Inc. was incorporated as a Florida corporation with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations, as the direct-support organization of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection.

The Trust has signed a services contract with the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection to facilitate their mutual goals of preventing child maltreatment, promoting adoption, and supporting adoptive families, and the dedication of the Trust in supporting the Office in that effort.

To handle the financial and accounting matters of the Trust, a memorandum of understanding was entered into between the Trust and Florida’s Foundation, which designates the Foundation as the fiscal agent of the Trust. Also, the Trust filed for a 501(c)3 not-for-profit status with the Internal Revenue Service.

The Board drafted and approved a set of by-laws for the Trust to direct the affairs of the organization and established a Nominating Committee chaired by Jim Clark and a Marketing/Communications Committee chaired by Victoria Vangalis-Zepp.

The Board continues to seek possible grant applications, other potential fund raising opportunities, and partnerships with other organizations that will enhance the efforts of the Trust such as the National Alliance of Children’s Trust and Prevention Funds.

**Table 1. Board Members of The Trust for Florida’s Children, Inc.**

<b>BOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>TITLE AND ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION</b>
<b>Leonel “Leo” Mesa, Psy.D., LMHC</b>	Chairman, President/CEO Reflections Wellness Center and Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council Member
<b>Jon Johnson</b>	Vice Chairman, Managing Partner, Johnson and Blanton, LLC
<b>Aaron Bean</b>	Treasurer, Community Relations Officer, Shands Jacksonville
<b>Victoria Vangalis-Zepp</b>	Secretary, President, Zepp Strategic Partners
<b>Cathy Beveridge, JD</b>	Attorney, Fowler, White, Boggs P.A.
<b>Deborah Polston</b>	Author and Adoption Advocate
<b>Greg Kurth, M.A.</b>	Chief Executive Officer, Family Services of Metro Orlando
<b>Jerry Haag, Ph.D., CFP</b>	President, Florida Baptist Children’s Homes
<b>Jim Clark, LCSW</b>	President and Chief Executive Officer, Daniel Kids, Inc.
<b>Nick Cox</b>	Regional Administrator, Florida’s Department of Children and Families
<b>Rich Komando</b>	Assistant State Attorney, Fourth Judicial Circuit
<b>Wesley Barnett</b>	Director of Strategic Planning, TreeTop Software Company
(1 vacancy)	

### **Other Activities of the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection During 2010**

The Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection conducted various workshops and other supports around the state to promote the work of and educate stakeholders on office-related initiatives in 2010. These include:

- A Results Based Accountability Seminar was hosted by Mark Friedman for the Children and Youth Cabinet agency staff. These staff members also participated in a “Turn the Curve” exercise for each of the four headline indicators the Cabinet is working on.
- A workshop was given by the Center for Support of Families and the Five Points Technology Group on the topic of “Targeted Recruitment.” This is a strategy that focuses on targeting people to adopt children with special needs.
- Launched the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*.
- The office attended an interagency workgroup regarding Trauma Informed Care. Presenters included people from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Children and Families, and Florida State University.

- The Chief Child Advocate as well as the Special Projects Manager and the Executive Program Support staff participated in Read for the Record, reading to classrooms of Kindergarteners or First Graders. Read for the Record exists to gather preschool children in an international campaign to read the same book, in one day to raise awareness about early literacy. On 7 October 2010 over two million children were read *The Snowy Day*.
- The office met with leadership from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to discuss a data management system for the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*.
- The Special Projects Manager presented the Role of Trauma-Informed Care in *Florida's Prevention and Permanency Plan* at the Interagency Trauma-Informed Care Workshop in Tallahassee, FL.
- At the Florida Fights Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders Summit the Special Projects Manager delivered a presentation highlighting Florida's efforts incorporating the *Five Protective Factors* into the promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families. A number of Florida's children, both those that are available for adoption as well those that have been adopted have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders.
- In conjunction with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Environmental Protection held a press conference to kick off *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!*
- For National Adoption Month in November, conducted the statewide campaign for *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* with weekly e-mail reminders and updates.

## Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency

Economic development and jobs creation are priorities for Florida. The Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection supports these efforts by working to strengthen families and empower communities which, in turn, help to build a more stable workforce. Additionally, these efforts will help parents raise a new generation; ready, willing and able to be productive and dependable employees.

As illustrated in Part 2 of this report, the importance of the five-year plan for prevention of child maltreatment and permanency is underscored by the great and increasing need of Florida’s children for safe and stable families. The plan was prepared by the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection with the input and guidance of the Governor’s Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, local planning teams representing Florida’s 20 judicial circuits, and hundreds of professionals and stakeholders from across Florida. The plan was submitted in June 2010 to the Governor and the Legislature and was just launched in July 2010. It has identified mechanisms and systems for implementing predominately low-cost and no-cost strategies to:

- Increase the stability and resiliency of Florida families through the infusion of *Five Protective Factors*.
- Better support the needs of the thousands of families that have adopted and will be adopting Florida’s most vulnerable citizens.

### **Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council**

In accordance with §39.001(8)(b)1, FS, the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection established a Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. As of December 2010, the Advisory Council comprised thirty-one (31) child and family welfare experts gathered from across Florida. In order to better serve the people of Florida, the membership exceeds the minimum requirements of twenty-three (23) representatives as set forth in Florida Statutes. The following table provides for the membership and the areas of representation on the Advisory Council as of December 2010.

**Table 2. Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council Membership**

AREA OF REPRESENTATION	COUNCIL MEMBER
<b>01. Chairman/ Convener,</b> EOG – Exec. Office of the Governor	<b>Jim Kallinger</b> , Chief Child Advocate and Director, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
<b>02.</b> DCF – Dept. of Children and Families	<b>Pete Digre, DMin, MSW, MPA</b> , Assistant Secretary for Operations, Florida Department of Children and Families
<b>03.</b> DOC – Dept. of Corrections	<b>Bonnie Rogers</b> , Chief of Staff, Florida Department of Corrections
<b>04.</b> DOE – Dept. of Education	<b>Frances Haithcock, EdD</b> , Chancellor K-12, Florida Department of Education
<b>05.</b> DOH – Dept. of Health	<b>Michael “Mike” Haney, PhD, NCC, LMHC</b> , Div. Dir., Prevention and Intervention, Children's Medical Services, Florida Department of Health
<b>06.</b> DJJ – Dept. of Juvenile Justice	<b>Andy Hindman</b> , Director, Faith and Community Based Partnerships, Office of Prevention and Victim Services, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
<b>07.</b> DLE – Dept. of Law Enforcement	<b>Terry Thomas</b> , Special Agent, Crimes Against Children Unit, Florida Department of Law Enforcement
<b>08.</b> APD – Agency for Persons with Disabilities	<b>Mac McCoy, MA, BCBA</b> , Operations Officer, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
<b>09.</b> AWI – Agency for Workforce Innovation	<b>Brittany Birken, PhD</b> , Director, Office of Early Learning, Agency for Workforce Innovation

AREA OF REPRESENTATION	COUNCIL MEMBER
10. Parent with adopted child	<b>Cyndee Odom</b> , Special Projects Manager, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
11. Community mental health centers	<b>Leonel “Leo” Mesa, Jr., PsyD, LMHC</b> , President/CEO, Reflections Wellness Center
12. Guardian ad Litem	<b>Charles Nelson</b> , Interim Executive Director, Statewide Guardian ad Litem
13. School boards	<b>Georgia “Joy” Bowen, MEd</b> , Past President, Florida School Boards Assoc.
14. Florida local advocacy council	<b>(Vacant)</b> <i>This function was defunded by the 2009 Legislature. The person filling this position left at the end of the 2009-2010 State Fiscal Year.</i>
15. Community-based care lead agencies	<b>Patricia “Trish” Nellius-Guthrie, PhD</b> , CEO, Community Based Care of Brevard, Inc.
16. Private/ public child abuse prevention programs	<b>Christie Ferris</b> , Director, Prevent Child Abuse Florida
17. Private/ public programs working with children/ families of children who are abused, abandoned or neglected	<b>Andrea Raasch, LCSW</b> , Clinical Coordinator, Sexual Abuse Treatment Services, Children’s Medical Services, Florida Department of Health
18. Private/ public programs with expertise in maternal and infant health care	<b>Donna Hagan</b> , Executive Director, Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor Counties, Inc.
19. Multi-disciplinary child protection teams	<b>Mark Perlman, MA</b> , Founder and President, Center for Growth and Development
20. Child day care centers: Federal/State representation	<b>Lilli Copp</b> , Director, Head Start State Collaboration Office
21. Child day care centers: FLAEYC representation	<b>Suzanne Gellens, MS</b> , Executive Director, Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
22. Law enforcement agencies	<b>Connie Shingledecker</b> , Major, Investigative Bureau Chief, Manatee County Sheriff’s Office
23. Circuit courts	<b>Daniel Dawson, JD</b> , Circuit Judge, Ninth Judicial Circuit
24. Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection	<b>Barbara Foster, PhD</b> , Deputy Chief Child Advocate, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
25. Child advocate/community philanthropy	<b>Graciela “Graci” McGillicuddy</b> , Child Advocate and Community Philanthropist
26. Children’s advocacy center	<b>Julie Hurst, MPA</b> , Executive Director, Emerald Coast Children’s Advocacy Center, Inc. <i>(Also affiliated w/Florida Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers)</i>
27. Community alliance	<b>Marilyn “Bunny” Finney</b> , Brevard Children’s Services Council and Member, Brevard County Children’s Cabinet, Brevard County Community Alliance, and the Brevard County Charter Review Commission
28. Local children’s cabinet	<b>Nancy Crawford</b> , Executive Director, Kids House of Seminole, Inc. Children’s Advocacy Center
29. Medical doctor, university researcher, children’s services council	<b>Peter A. Gorski, MD, MPA</b> , Director of Research and Innovation, Children’s Board of Hillsborough County Professor of Public Health, Pediatrics and Psychiatry, USF
30. State court administration	<b>Sandy Neidert, MSW</b> , Senior Court Operations Consultant, Office of the State Courts Administrator, Office of Court Improvement
31. Faith-based and community-based efforts	<b>Sheila Hopkins</b> , Associate Director for Social Concerns/ Respect Life, Florida Catholic Conference, Chairman, Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council
32. DCF, Office of Family Safety	<b>Alan Abramowitz, JD, MPA</b> , State Director, Office of Family Safety, Department of Children and Families

## **Statutory Charge to the Advisory Council**

In accordance with §39.001(8)(b)1, FS, the Advisory Council members:

- Served as a research arm for the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection.
- Assisted in the development of a plan of action for better coordination and integration of the goals, activities and funding pertaining to the promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families and the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect in order to maximize staff and resources at the state level.
- Assisted in providing a basic format to be utilized by the districts in the preparation of local plans of action in order to provide for uniformity in the district plans and to provide for greater ease in compiling information for the state plan.
- Provided the districts (circuits) with technical assistance in the development of local plans of action.
- Assisted in the examination of the local plans to determine if all the requirements of the local plans have been met and informed the districts (circuits) of the deficiencies and requested additional information needed.
- Assisted in the preparation of the two sets of state plans for submission to the Legislature and the Governor in December 2008 and June 2010.

## **Advisory Council Meetings and Efforts**

Development of the current five-year plan for prevention and permanency was based upon the development and implementation of the 18-month plan for prevention and permanency. To this end, between November 2007 and December 2010, the Advisory Council met eleven (11) times:

*Development of the Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: January 2009 – June 2010 with the Education and Law Enforcement Cooperative Plans.*

- November 2007 – Local planning and the state of the state.
- February 2008 – Research and practice: Preventing child maltreatment.
- March 2008 – Research and practice: Promoting adoption and supporting adoptive families.
- May 2008 – Planning for prevention of child maltreatment.
- August 2008 – Planning for prevention, adoption promotion and support of adoptive families.
- November 2008 – Action planning and finalizing the state 18-month plan.

*Development of the Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015 with the Education and Law Enforcement Cooperative Plans.*

- May 2009 – Implementing of the state 18-month plan and developing of the state five-year plan.
- February 2010 – Developing the state five-year plan.
- May 2010 – Finalizing the recommendations for the state five-year plan.

*Launch of the Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015.*

- August 2010 – Assessing state level leadership assignments and workgroup assignments for plan implementation.
- December 2010 – Monitoring initial plan implementation and sustaining the momentum.



## The Five-Year Plan for Prevention and Permanency

The *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* was developed with the guidance and input of 166 planning partners representing 107 organizations and agencies, the Governor’s Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council and the Local Planning Teams for the 20 Florida Circuits. The five-year plan comprises five (5) plans:

- Prevention
  - Florida Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Plan which includes:
    - Florida Education Cooperative Plan
    - Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan
- Permanency
  - Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan
  - Florida Support of Adoptive Families Plan

The central focus of the five-year plan is to build resilience in all of Florida’s families and communities in order to equip them to better care for and nurture their children and become a more stable and strong workforce. In accordance with the state law (§39.001, FS), this five-year prevention and permanency plan provides for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promotion of adoption; and for the support of adoptive families. The vision, mission and overarching goal of the plan are:

### ***Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015***

***Vision*** – Florida’s highest priority is that children are raised in healthy, safe, stable, and nurturing families.

***Mission*** – To serve as a blueprint that will be implemented to provide for the care, safety, and protection of all of Florida’s children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.

***Overarching Goal*** – All families and communities ensure that children are safe and nurtured and live in stable environments that promote well-being.

Through the implementation of 12 strategies with 40 objectives, the plan is the most ambitious and comprehensive low cost/no cost effort in the country crafted to strengthen families and empower communities resulting in a more stable workforce. It is comprehensive and cross-agency focused in all aspects of the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; the promotion of adoption; and the support of adoptive families. The prevention plan seeks to reduce the rate of verified child abuse findings. This plan also includes the two cooperative child abuse prevention plans: one for education and one for law enforcement. The promotion of adoption plan seeks to reduce the amount of time children wait for permanent and stable homes. The support of adoptive families plan seeks to reduce the number of adopted children who are returned to foster care.

A series of documents have been posted on the Web site to serve as an adjunct to this report. Visit [http://www.flgov.com/adoption\\_abuse\\_prevention](http://www.flgov.com/adoption_abuse_prevention) to obtain:

- *Executive Summary* – Brief outline of the five-year plan for prevention and permanency.
- *Overview* – Description of the five-year prevention and permanency plan strategies, leadership, workgroups, objectives and tactics for action.
- *Implementation Status* – Brief report on the first six months implementation of the five-year plan.
- *Local Plans Overview* – Compilation of local five-year prevention and permanency plan strategies and objectives by circuit and county.

- *Law Enforcement MOU* – Interagency Agreement between DCF, DJJ, DOH, and FDLE.
- *Customer Service and Support* – Customer service and customer support protocols for adoption services.
- *The Planning Partners* – Those who assisted with the development of the statewide five-year plan.
- *State Planning Background* – Description of the 18-month plan and how it informed the development of the five-year plan.
- *Local Planning Background* – Description of the supports provided to the local planning teams for the development of their five-year plans.

## Prevention

### **Primary Prevention –** *The potential for all of Florida ...*

In April 2008, the community residents in a small geographical area partnered with their local DCF, CBC and a provider to positively change the community and familial dynamics that place children at risk. This project grew out of analysis of why the child “out –of –home” care per 1000 in their county was above the statewide average.

A Community Facilitator was hired to engage residents, to comprehensively address the issues that were negatively impacting child and family well-being, and to do so with community based, consumer driven strategies and services. Because of its success, this model has grown to six other neighborhoods in Circuit 5. Each neighborhood project has a goal of increasing access to services for the neighborhood families. Community Facilitators engage businesses, local governments, and civic and religious organizations in their neighborhood efforts.

This strategy has resulted in an additional \$365,000 (Year to date, 2010) in donations of cash, goods and services directly benefiting the neighborhood families in the seven project areas. Likewise, new services like health screening, neighborhood family events and employment and training opportunities have been brought to the neighborhoods to benefit all families. The projects are achieving positive results, which have been shared in the December 2010 edition of the American Humane Association’s Journal, *Protecting Children*, and will be highlighted at the Child Welfare League of America Conference in Washington, DC in March 2011.

### **Secondary Prevention –** *What it can do ...*

“When I came into this program, I was a mess with no direction and no purpose. I was using drugs and stealing. I was 22 years old, suffering from depression and had no idea of what it meant to be a good mom or person. My family was not very supportive and I lost custody of my first son. I was given the chance back then to clean up my act but had no one to guide or support me.

It was not until I became pregnant with my second son that this lady with Healthy Families Florida showed up at my door. She helped me gain self confidence and the courage to fight the depression and bad things going on in my life. She showed me how to be a good mom. She referred me for mental health counseling, encouraged me to look for a job, to go back to school, to set goals for myself. I am proud to say that today, almost five years later; I have achieved every one of those goals and met every challenge.

Healthy Families Florida taught me that I do not have to be a victim; that I can be an asset for myself, for my son and for my community. I obtained my driver’s license, bought a car, applied for housing and now have my own apartment. I love to write poetry, and I hope someday to open my own soul food restaurant. I have Healthy Families Florida to thank for this.

“The program and my home visitor taught me how to become a better person, a better mom and a productive citizen, and for this, I am very grateful.”

As stated earlier, the *Florida Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* was developed by the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection with guidance from the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council and hundreds of partners across Florida. The prevention of child maltreatment is one of the four critical areas that Florida’s Children and Youth Cabinet has chosen as a focus. It adopted this five-year prevention plan as the array of strategies to be implemented for the prevention of child maltreatment in Florida. There are six overarching prevention strategies within the plan that endeavor to:

- Infuse the *Five Protective Factors* into Florida systems that serve parents and children.
- Strengthen Florida systems to better serve the needs of Florida families.
- Provide information on ways to ensure that children are safe and nurtured and live in stable environments that promote well-being.
- Inform and instruct education communities (*Florida Education Cooperative Plan*).
- Inform and instruct law enforcement communities (*Florida Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan*).
- Monitor and evaluate plan implementation.

Within these six strategies are twenty objectives focused on building family resilience and educating Florida professionals and communities; thus preventing child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. The objectives focus on:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child death reviews.</li> <li>• Early education and care.</li> <li>• Education services for parents/caregivers of newborns/young infants.</li> <li>• Evidence-based parenting programs.</li> <li>• Faith-based and community-based efforts.</li> <li>• Head Start programs.</li> <li>• Healthy Families Florida programs.</li> <li>• Healthy Start programs.</li> <li>• Home visiting programs.</li> <li>• Law Enforcement <i>Memorandum of Understanding</i> implementation reviews and updates.</li> <li>• Medicaid Child Health Check-Up services.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and evaluating implementation of prevention strategies.</li> <li>• Multidisciplinary approaches to prevention in schools.</li> <li>• Professional development for school personnel.</li> <li>• Public awareness and education.</li> <li>• Resource awareness for educators and parents.</li> <li>• Resources for parents of school children.</li> <li>• Technical assistance to circuit prevention efforts.</li> <li>• Whole Child communities.</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

The desired population-level result of the implementation of these areas of work within the prevention plan is that:

*By 30 June 2015, the verified findings of child abuse rate will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 statewide rate of 10.94 per 1,000 children.*

## Permanency

### *Promotion of Adoption*

#### **Sophia's Story** – *What we want all of Florida's potential adoptive parents to experience ...*

A parent, who had adopted previously, began the process to adopt again. The adoption case worker in Circuit 8 assisted this parent on a consistent basis – answering questions and connecting the parent to resources in an appropriate timeframe. This parent was so appreciative and impressed with the case worker, a letter of thanks was sent to Secretary Sheldon letting him know of the wonderful job the case worker did.

#### **Allie's Story** – *Why we need to continue working on the plan and customer service ...*

Allie contacted a local organization interested in adopting a child that she saw featured in her neighborhood. After multiple calls and e-mails, she finally got a hold of a case worker that informed her that she covered several other counties and would put her request on the "I'll do it when I get a chance" pile. Allie repeatedly followed up, to no avail. Finally Allie gave up on the adoption process from the foster care system.

The *Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* has three main strategies:

- Infuse the *Five Protective Factors* into Florida systems that recruit adoptive parents.
- Strengthen Florida recruitment systems to better identify families that meet the needs of children and youth awaiting adoption.
- Monitor and evaluate plan implementation.

The promotion of adoption objectives of this plan focus on:

- Local recruitment efforts.
- Parent preparation and training.
- Faith-based and community-based efforts.
- Targeted and child specific recruitment.
- Information and support for prospective adoptive parents.
- Monitoring and evaluating plan implementation.

The two desired population-level results of the implementation of these areas of work within the promotion of adoption plan are that:

*By 30 June 2015, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 66.4 percent.*

*By 30 June 2015, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights (TPR) for more than 12 months will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 53.19 percent.*

## ***Support of Adoptive Families***

**Sigmund's Story** – *What we would like for all of Florida professionals and for the families that these professionals serve ...*

A group of mental health professionals completed the Rutgers *Adoption Competency* curriculum provided by DCF. After the training, the professionals stated they “didn’t know what they didn’t know” regarding adoptive children and how their previous experiences have deeply and profoundly impacted the day to day functioning of the children.

After the training was completed one group created its own learning community to discuss best practices for helping adoptive families/children and to collectively help one another with their tough cases. It was so helpful, they now meet weekly!

**Tim's Story** – *Why we need to continue working on the plan and supporting our adoptive families and children ...*

An adoptive family with three special needs children contacted multiple agencies over a 10-month period to obtain assistance and services for their 16 year old son. The 16 year old was depressed; experiencing significant grief and loss issues related to his birth family. He refused to go to psychiatric and therapy appointments and stopped taking his medication for managing bipolar and attention deficit disorders. The 16 year old was also skipping school and failing most of his classes. After several months and numerous phone calls, the adoptive family finally found a therapist that would come to their home. By this time, the 16 year old had dropped out of school and had run away from home.

The *Florida Support of Adoptive Families Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* has three strategies:

- Strengthen Florida service systems to better support adoptive families to meet the needs of their adopted children and youth.
- Provide information and supports to adoptive families.
- Monitor and evaluate plan implementation.

The support of adoptive families objectives cover:

- Information and support for adoptive families.
- Adoption competent professionals.
- Post Adoption Services Counselors.
- Adoption support groups.
- Education opportunities for adoptive parents.
- Faith-based and community-based efforts.
- Monitoring and evaluating plan implementation.

The desired population-level result of the implementation of these areas of work within the support of adoptive families plan is that:

*By 30 June 2015, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 number of 98.*

## **Local Planning for Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency**

In September 2007, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection initiated the local planning process in each of the twenty (20) circuits with leadership from the state level. These circuits are aligned geographically with the judicial and Department of Children and Families circuits. The representation on these local planning teams was consistent with the make-up of the Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. At a minimum, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection ensured that the team membership requirements of §39.001, FS were met. Over 600 people around the state worked on developing the local plans of action. The local planning teams developed their five-year plans based on the *Five-Year Local Planning Process Outline, V1.2* developed by the Office with input from the Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council (See [http://www.flgov.com/ca\\_lpt\\_plandev\\_10\\_15](http://www.flgov.com/ca_lpt_plandev_10_15)). The five-year local plans developed by the circuit teams are incorporated into the state's five-year state plan – *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. The Governor's Web site provides electronic copies of the current state and local plans: [http://www.flgov.com/adoption\\_abuse\\_prevention](http://www.flgov.com/adoption_abuse_prevention).

### ***Monthly Local Planning Team Convener Meetings via Conference Call***

Conference calls were initiated in November 2007, and were held monthly through December 2010. Those participating on the call included: the conveners, key contacts, all interested members of the local planning teams, Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection staff members, Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council members, State Objective Leads and their staff, and Department of Children and Families staff members. These monthly meetings were to address questions and discuss information that would assist with the planning process and implementation.

Below are major topics covered in the conference calls during first six months of 2010 which included the final implementation of *Florida's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: January 2009 – June 2010*, and the six months leading up to the submission of the local five-year plans.

- 12 January – Procedures for submission of the draft five-year plan and for feedback from the Advisory Council members and how to increase response rate for the *MyFloridaSurvey* catalog.
- 9 February – Review of the data developed from *MyFloridaSurvey*.
- 9 March – Local plan review procedures and instrumentation by the Advisory Council.
- 13 April – Proposals for state initiatives, Advisory Council member reviews and next steps.
- 11 May – Review of the final five-year plan submissions for the local planning teams.
- 8 June – Overview of the state's five-year plan and the local monitoring process.

Below are major topics covered in the conference calls after the launch of *Florida's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*.

- 13 July – State's five-year plan, statewide workgroup opportunities, and local plan monitoring.
- 10 August – State plan information (12 strategies, 40 objectives and 19 anticipated workgroups).
- 14 September – Monitoring and evaluation of the local five-year plans.
- 12 October – Child maltreatment data (DCF Web-based spinner reports vs. dashboard information), Florida Prosperity Partnership resources, public awareness, Strengthening Families Best Practices Web site, Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative Web site, and the Prevention Learning Community/Cross Agency Team.
- 9 November – Data and monitoring, local five-year plan quarterly reporting and National Adoption Month.
- 14 December – Progress at the state level for prevention, adoption promotion and support of adoptive families, National Adoption Month, and monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to the monthly conference calls between the Deputy Chief Child Advocate and the local planning team conveners, the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection also provided multiple external supports to the local planning team conveners. This was accomplished through webinars, statewide summits, web-based support, as well as on site training and technical assistance. The points of contact for the local planning teams as of December 2010 are provided in the following table.

**Table 3. Local Planning Team Leadership and Key Contacts**

<b>CIRCUIT</b>	<b>POINTS OF CONTACT FOR EACH CIRCUIT'S LOCAL PLANNING TEAM</b>
1 Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton	<b>Janice Thomas</b> , Circuit 1 Administrator, DCF <b>Randall N. Fleming</b> , Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 1 <b>Phyllis Gonzalez</b> , Director of Services, Families Count
2 Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla	<b>Traci Leavine</b> , Circuit 2 Operations Administrator, DCF <b>Nicole Stookey</b> , Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 2
3 Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor	<b>Mona Gil de Gibaja, MSW, Ph.D.</b> , Program Consultant, Partnership for Strong Families <b>Becky Dobbins O'Brien</b> , Community Relations, DCF Circuits 3 & 8
4 Clay, Duval, Nassau	<b>Bryan Hensley</b> , Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 4 <b>Jackie Green</b> , Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 4
5 Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter	<b>Philip Scarpelli</b> , Community Relations Manager, DCF Circuit 5 <b>Ann Doyle</b> , Program Director, Devereux Kids
6 Pasco, Pinellas	<b>Lourdes Benedict</b> , Regional Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 6 <b>Bob Henriquez</b> , Circuit Administrator, DCF Circuit 6
7 Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, Volusia	<b>Clay LaRoche</b> , Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 7 <b>Reggie Williams</b> , Circuit Administrator, DCF Circuit 7 <b>Betsy Lewis</b> , Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 7 <b>Kellie Daniels</b> , Program Operations Administrator, Community Partnership for Children
8 Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, Union	<b>Mona Gil de Gibaja, MSW, Ph.D.</b> , Program Consultant, Partnership for Strong Families <b>Becky Dobbins O'Brien</b> , Community Relations, DCF Circuits 3 & 8
9 Orange, Osceola	<b>Kristi Gray</b> , Community Relations Manager, Circuit 9 <b>Stacey Dano</b> , Director of Operations, Family Services of Metro Orlando <b>Joy Chuba</b> , Exec. Director, Children's Advisory Council for Osceola County, Inc.
10 Hardee, Highlands, Polk	<b>Liesta Sykes</b> , Community Relations Manager, DCF Circuit 10 <b>Kim Daugherty</b> , Chief Community Relations Officer, Heartland for Children
11 Miami Dade	<b>Gilda Ferradaz</b> , Administrator, DCF Circuits 11 and 16 <b>Alejandro Villibord</b> , Government Analyst, DCF Circuit 11
12 Desoto, Manatee, Sarasota	<b>Brena Slater</b> , Regional Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 12 <b>Maureen Coble</b> , Director of Quality Management, YMCA Family, Inc. <b>Andrea Mertyris</b> , Quality Management Specialist, Sarasota Family YMCA
13 Hillsborough	<b>Jan Gregory</b> , Deputy Regional Director, SunCoast Region, DCF <b>Brian McEwen</b> , Associate Director, Child Abuse Council, Inc. <b>Hillary Shaughnessy</b> , MS, Director of Diversion, Hillsborough Kids Inc.
14 Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington	<b>Courtney Peel</b> , Administrator, DCF Circuit 14 <b>Rebecca "Becky" Siebert</b> , Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 14
15 Palm Beach	<b>Bryan Lindert</b> , Child Abuse Prevention Manager, CSC Palm Beach County <b>Toby Pina</b> , Director of Clinical Services, Child and Family Connections
16 Monroe	<b>Gilda Ferradaz</b> , Administrator, Circuits 11 and 16 <b>Elena George</b> , Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 16
17 Broward	<b>Monica King</b> , Resource and Systems Manager, CSC of Broward County <b>Yasmin Mendoza</b> , LMHC, Specialized Adoption Supervisor, ChildNet
18 Brevard, Seminole	<b>Heather Howlett</b> , OPS Management Consultant II, DCF Circuit 18
19 Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie	<b>Cheri Sheffer</b> , Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 19
20 Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee	<b>Kim Kutch</b> , Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 20 <b>Karen Turcotte</b> , Director, Staff Development, Children's Network of Southwest Florida

## Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet



On 11 July 2007, the Governor signed the legislation that created Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet which is codified in §402.56, FS (Please see <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>).

Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet is charged with promoting and implementing collaboration, creativity, increased efficiency, information sharing and improved service delivery between and within state agencies and organizations. As directed by statute, in 2007 the cabinet developed a shared vision and a strategic plan to guide the cabinet in designing and implementing measurable outcomes and actions that promote collaboration and information sharing. The cabinet's strategic plan requires creative and aggressive action to:

- Empower families to provide a nurturing, healthy and safe environment for children. Invest in children's health, safety, education and well-being.
- Align public finances, information technology and human resources to support the healthy growth and development of children.
- Ensure a long-term commitment to at-risk children and youth.
- Improve family and child outcomes related to the cabinet's vision for children.
- Engage families, the community, stakeholders and businesses to improve child and family outcomes.

As set forth in statute, Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet consists of 20 members. The membership as of December 2010 is provided below.

**Table 4. Representation and Membership on Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet**

AREA OF APPOINTMENT, CABINET MEMBER, TITLE, ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATION
<p>In statute, ten members based on state positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp</b>, Chairman, for the Governor</li> <li>• <b>Ana Viamonte Ros</b>, State Surgeon General at the Department of Health</li> <li>• <b>Charles Nelson</b>, Interim Statewide Director of the Guardian Ad Litem Office</li> <li>• <b>Cynthia Lorenzo</b>, Director of the Agency for Workforce Innovation</li> <li>• <b>Elizabeth Dudek</b>, Interim Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration</li> <li>• <b>Eric J. Smith</b>, Commissioner of the Department of Education</li> <li>• <b>Frank Peterman, Jr.</b>, Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice</li> <li>• <b>George Sheldon</b>, Secretary of the Department of Children and Families</li> <li>• <b>James DeBeaugrine</b>, Director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities</li> <li>• <b>Jim Kallinger</b>, Chief Child Advocate, Executive Office of the Governor</li> </ul>
<p>In statute, five ex-officio members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deputy Attorney General Cynthia Guerra</b> for the Attorney General</li> <li>• <b>Justice Barbara J. Pariente</b> for the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court</li> <li>• <b>Representative Nick Thompson</b> for the Speaker of the House</li> <li>• <b>Senator Nan Rich</b> for the Senate President</li> <li>• <b>Vice Chair of the Broward County School Board Maureen S. Dinnen</b> for the Chief Financial Officer</li> </ul>
<p>In statute, five Governor's appointees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Antonia Crawford</b>, Chairman of the Early Learning Coalition</li> <li>• <b>David Lawrence Jr.</b>, President of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation in Miami and "University Scholar for Early Childhood Development and Readiness" at the University of Florida</li> <li>• <b>Donna Gay Lancaster</b>, Executive Director of Juvenile Welfare Board</li> <li>• <b>Judy Schaechter</b>, physician and professor, University of Miami, Mailman Center for Child Development</li> <li>• <b>Steven J. Uhlfelder</b>, Uhlfelder and Associates, PA</li> </ul>



In compliance with state law (§402.56, FS), the cabinet meetings are held in different regions of the state in an effort to provide an accessible and open forum for the public. The public has had opportunities to make comments or presentations before the cabinet at every meeting. When and where feasible, cabinet meetings are co-located with other related conferences and workshops around the state to enhance citizen opportunities and attendance. All meetings are published in the Florida Administrative Weekly and are documented by the Florida Channel and various news organizations including Florida Public Radio. In order to ensure the public has complete access and up-to-date information, cabinet staff has created a Web page at [www.flgov.com/youth\\_cabinet](http://www.flgov.com/youth_cabinet) that contains information about the cabinet, its members, activities, work products, subcommittees, transition, meeting dates and locations.

### **2010 Meetings of Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet**

Five meetings were held during 2010 as described below.

**March 25 – Tallahassee.** Representatives from the Health Insurance and Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Workgroups presented their “Turn the Curve” reports. Public testimony and presentations were given on child health insurance, Child Abuse Prevention Month and a Tallahassee Community College project with youth aging out of foster care.

**May 27 – Orlando.** Public presentations were given that addressed Florida's Medicaid Eligible Children, helping at-risk youth aging out of the foster care system, advocating for Children in Central Florida, and the state of the Whole Child. Following the presentations, Thomas W. Arnold, Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration spoke to the cabinet on the Federal Affordable Health Care Act. The Child Abuse and Neglect Indicator Workgroup, presented their “Turn the Curve” report. General discussion was held on the status of the Children's Budget Report and its projected finalization at the July meeting.

**July 29 – Largo.** The *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 - June 2015*, recently launched, and was presented to the cabinet. The Children's Budget Committee and four Headline Indicator workgroups provided their updated reports. Cabinet Members recommended moving forward with all four indicators. A preview of the Cabinet's Early Childhood Advisory Council was given to the cabinet.

**September 30 – Boynton Beach.** Three presentations were given related to the Headline Indicators: the Results Based Accountability Scorecard, child health insurance and child maltreatment. The Child Maltreatment Indicator cross-agency team presented their plan for action to the cabinet, and the recommendations, strategies, objectives and tactics were unanimously adopted. The proposal of the Youth Commission Application was presented, discussed and adopted. It was noted that the Early Childhood Advisory Council to Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet had their first meeting at the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach prior to the cabinet meeting.

**December 1 – Cocoa.** In connection with the cabinet's continuing work on their Headline Indicators, a demonstration was given on the monitoring tool that will be used to manage the implementation of the child abuse and neglect plan. An update was also given on the progress of the plan for the Kindergarten Readiness Indicator. A demonstration of the Information Sharing System was presented, as well as an update on the Children's Budget. Under new business, a new initiative called “Everybody is a Teacher” was discussed. An informative brochure for the cabinet was handed out and the members discussed the cabinet transitioning to a new administration.

Approximately twenty states operate some form of a Children's Cabinet. At a national meeting of cabinet administrators, Florida's relatively new cabinet was lauded for its remarkable progress in spite of the limited financial resources allocated to its efforts. In addition to adopting a strategic plan to better coordinate children and family services in Florida, the cabinet has completed or begun work on all nine of its statutorily required duties and responsibilities, including the implementation of a web-based, cross-agency data sharing system to help improve service delivery, and the development of a children and youth budget structure for evaluating funding streams that will be aligned with the cabinet's work on key child well-being indicators.

## **Projects of Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet**

### **Data Sharing Initiative**

To fulfill the cabinet's mission to design and implement data sharing between and within state agencies, the Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System (CYCISS) was launched. The cabinet determined that the quickest vehicle for implementation would be to replicate and build upon the existing Judicial Inquiry System (JIS) of the Office of State Court Administration (OSCA), a system that has successfully been in operation for over 8 years. The JIS, a data and information sharing system acts as a portal to query multiple systems and display data from these systems. The CYCISS is located at and hosted by the Northwest Regional Data center (NWRDC). The major goals of the CYCISS project are to:

- Equip state agencies that serve children, youth, and families with a tool that helps them provide better services in a timelier manner.
- Enable the eight cabinet agencies to exchange and share data quickly.
- Identify and eliminate service overlaps between agencies.
- Empower agency leadership with tools for more effective decision-making.
- Improve staff efficiency through gathering information more quickly.

Planned and anticipated benefits of the CYCISS include:

- Serve as a portal that accesses read-only information from agency data sources.
- Operate as a query system only, not a data warehouse.
- Preserve each individual agency's data integrity and security.
- Quickly identify and resolve barriers to sharing information.
- Provide in a single view, as much real time, up-to-date data and data exchange capability on a child or family as possible.
- Facilitate better decision-making and service delivery through a single sign-on system.
- Utilize role-based security.
- Leverage existing solutions and provide more immediate benefits to the users.
  - A User Interface (dashboards) framework is already built and requires very little modification to meet the needs of the cabinet agency users.
  - The core solution is already built, highly stable, and rich in functionality; it will be very quick to connect the additional eight agency data source connections.
  - Most of the implementation effort will be spent configuring software components that already exist versus writing code from scratch, a costly and lengthy process. This keeps costs low and allows for very quick deployment.
- Perform comprehensive logging and auditing of inquiries and transactions (this is the only information that this system will store and backup).

To provide oversight and initiative to the Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System (CYCISS), the cabinet convened the Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System Committee as a cross-agency committee to facilitate the identification, prioritization, standardization, sharing, and coordination of data and information among federal, state, and local agencies in order to promote a continuum of integrated and comprehensive services for Florida's children and youth.

### **Children's Budget Project**

Pursuant to §402.56(5)(h), FS, the Children and Youth Cabinet of Florida is charged with creating a Children's Budget:

*Develop a children-and-youth-based budget structure and nomenclature that includes all relevant departments, funding streams, and programs. The budget shall facilitate improved coordination and efficiency, explore options for and allow maximization of federal financial participation, and implement the state's vision and strategic plan.*

The Children and Youth Cabinet established a Children's Budget Committee to oversee this initiative, and the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County and the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection provided staffing and support for the development of a Children's Budget. The purpose of the budget is to build a mechanism that would provide a high-level view of the extent to which budgeted state dollars would impact the outcomes and indicators identified as critical by the cabinet. A well-crafted Children's Budget would assist the cabinet with:

- Uncovering funding disparities system-wide and across state agencies.
- Revealing opportunities to strengthen outcomes in areas lagging in funding.
- Determining whether Florida is serving its children in the most excellent way possible.

This is a long-term project that will require several more years to refine the process, solidify the definitions and develop reliable and valid reporting on the funding of programs and services statewide. During 2010, great strides were made in creating a budget platform and benchmarks from which state agencies can begin addressing similar priorities and consider how funding might be maximized in partnership with each other.

To begin the budget building process, the committee developed a preliminary crosswalk of programs and services offered by agencies, aligned to the outcomes and indicators identified by the cabinet. With the leadership of the Juvenile Welfare Board, the eight agencies represented on Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet, a crosswalk was utilized to analyze their agency budgets and identify those programs and services that would impact the cabinet's outcomes and indicators. When identifying programs or services, the agencies were encouraged to work at the highest aggregated level possible that would still allow matches to be made to specific indicators. The next steps planned for this project include:

- Delineate funding sources (e.g., state general revenue, federal funding source, match requirements and sources, private sources) for incorporation.
- Identify benchmarks/child outcomes currently used by state agencies/national sources.
- Identify gaps in services and funding.
- Garner commitments across agencies to share the vision of the cabinet.
- Agree on benchmarks/child outcomes to use across agencies.

## Headline Indicators on Child Well-being

The mission of the cabinet is to improve the well-being of Florida’s children and their families. Through the leadership of the cabinet, Florida has established a priority focus on four headline indicators from the 13 key child well-being indicators that the cabinet identified as most important. The cabinet has made a commitment to target its efforts and resources in these areas in order to improve Florida outcomes related to these indicators. The four areas of focus and their headline indicators are:

1. **Every Florida child is healthy** as measured by the headline indicator of children with health insurance.
2. **Every Florida child is ready to learn and succeed** as measured by the headline indicator of children whose kindergarten entry assessment scores show they are ready for school.
3. **Every Florida child has a stable and nurturing family** as measured by the headline indicator of child maltreatment (abuse and neglect).
4. **Every Florida child lives in a safe and supportive community** as measured by the headline indicator of homeless children.

The Children’s Summit Workgroup provided the cabinet with *The State of Florida’s Child Report*, from which the 13 key indicators originated. The report provides an objective knowledge base to support the cabinet in its mission to improve outcomes for our state’s children and families, and provides data and information from which the cabinet can move toward its stated goal of promoting increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children and their families in Florida. The baseline data in the report closely relates to indicators (or outcomes) shown by research to signify child well-being or improvement in child well-being. These indicators may be used to form a “results based” framework leading to shared goals and a cohesive vision for child and youth outcomes. Ultimately, the results framework can and should be linked to resources and state budgets. The report’s organization intentionally aligns with the Cabinet’s Guiding Principles.

The State of Florida’s Child Report is a starting point and the report provides a foundation for the cabinet to focus state work and create the “cohesive vision” as stated in the cabinet’s strategic plan. The report is provided as a tool to help create meaningful ways to improve child well-being outcomes and evaluate results. The cabinet will realize the full value of the report when it is accompanied by a strong and enduring commitment to Florida’s children, assuring they are healthy, learning, succeeding and nurtured by stable families living in safe and supportive communities.

## State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care

The State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (State Advisory Council) was established by the Governor to assist the cabinet in leading the development of a high quality, comprehensive system of early childhood education and care that ensures statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide array of early childhood programs and services in the State, including Head Start, child care and pre-kindergarten programs and services.

Through partnerships and cooperation across agencies and organizations that work on behalf of young children and their families, the goal of the State Advisory Council is that at the end of three years, Florida will have a stronger, more responsive, and more integrated early childhood system. That is, children and families will receive more coordinated, responsive services and the funding that will support these priorities.

The State Advisory Council is made up of the following Governor appointed members:

**Table 5. State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care Membership**

AREA OF REPRESENTATION	COUNCIL MEMBER
<b>Chairman/ Convener</b> Exec. Office of the Governor	<b>Jeff Kottkamp</b> , Lieutenant Governor, Executive Office of the Governor
Children and Youth cabinet	<b>Jim Kallinger</b> , Chief Child Advocate, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
Head Start Agencies located in State	<b>Louis Finney, Jr.</b> , Director, Hillsborough County Head Start, Board of County Commissioners
Head Start Agencies located in State	<b>James Finnegan</b> , Head Start Administrator, East Coast Migrant Head Start Project
Institutions of Higher Education in the State	<b>Vickie Lake</b> , Associate Professor, Early Childhood Education, Florida State University
Local Educational Agencies	<b>Robert Chilmonik</b> , Lee County School Board
Local Educational Agencies	<b>Heather Fiorentino</b> , Superintendent, District School Board of Pasco County
Local Providers of Early Childhood Education and Development Services	<b>Kate Sroka</b> , Director, All Aboard Preschool
State Agency Responsible for Child Care:	<b>Brittany Birken, PhD</b> , Director, Office of Early Learning, Agency for Workforce Innovation
State Agency responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	<b>Manuel Arisso</b> , Director of Legislative Planning, Department of Health
State Agency responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	<b>David Sofferin</b> , Asst. Sec., Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Department of Children and Families
State Agency responsible for programs under Section 619/Part C of IDEA	<b>Rob Siedlecki, JD</b> , Chief of Staff, Department of Health
State Director of Head Start Collaboration	<b>Lilli Copp</b> , Director, Head Start State Collaboration Office
State Educational Agency	<b>Stuart Greenberg</b> , Executive Director, Office of Early Learning, Department of Education
Other	<b>Sandra Murman</b> , Consultant

By direction of the Executive Office of the Governor, the State Advisory Council serves as a coordinating council to the established Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. With leadership from the Executive Office of the Governor, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, the Department of Education, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health, the Head Start Collaboration Office, and numerous local organizations, the state looks forward to improvements in the infrastructure and quality of services provided to families and children. Proposed projects directly impact children, families, child care teachers, in addition to positively impacting efforts involving state policy development, collaboration, and system infrastructure.

The State Advisory Council efforts will build on Florida's focus on improving child well-being through enhancing investments in young children, developing systems that support children and families, and developing innovative strategies to improve opportunities for our youngest citizens. The State of Florida will use grant funding over the next three years to improve coordination and collaboration between state agencies, local organizations, and other stakeholder groups of the child well-being system in the state.

The State Advisory Council and the proposed work under its auspices, represent a tremendous opportunity for Florida to take the next steps to create cross-departmental strategies to better integrate services so they are more responsive to the needs of children and families. Efforts include strategies to create and streamline consistent needs assessments; improve the quality and responsiveness of screening, assessment and treatment of children with special needs; develop new data systems to better support quality improvement work within early learning programs; increase the capacity of higher education institutions to deliver consistent, high quality educational opportunities statewide; and establish new professional development opportunities for providers serving vulnerable populations.

## **Transition**

Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet is a member of the Children's Cabinet Network, which represents a bi-partisan group of over twenty states. The Children's Cabinet Network is managed by the *Forum for Youth Investment*. The *Forum* is a non-profit, non-partisan "action tank" dedicated to helping states and communities make sure all young people are ready for college, to be productive, stable members of the workforce, and life. Across the country, Children's cabinets are systematically changing the fragmented and ineffective ways that states typically do business for children and youth.

As Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet prepares for a new administration and the inevitable changes that come with it, Florida was fortunate to be chosen as 1 of 6 states to receive technical assistance from the *Forum*. The technical assistance helps states ensure the sustainability of effective cross-agency systems, interagency child and youth policies, and collaborative service delivery efforts. By gathering insights and data from key internal state agency stakeholders, as well as external partners that the cabinet has come to rely on, Florida was able to seamlessly maintain current and build future alliances to promote the value and well-being of Florida's children, youth, and their families. Several key resources that were developed include a comprehensive assessment tool, a transition plan template, a message platform, and a glossy communications piece for external stakeholders. There are plans to convene an orientation meeting for new cabinet members early next year.

## PART 2 – STATUS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT AND ADOPTIONS IN FLORIDA

Part 2 of this annual report is governed by Subsections 39.001(7)(c)(5) b-d, Florida Statutes (§39.001(7)(c)(5) b-d, FS) which call for:

- b. A summary of the adoption data collected and reported to the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.*
- c. A summary of the child abuse prevention data collected and reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.*
- d. A summary detailing the timeliness of the adoption process for children adopted from within the child welfare system.*

The Department of Children and Families is the reporting agency for these data. Thus, staff members from the Department of Children and Families provided the data and information included in Part 2 of this report.

The central focus of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* is to build resilience in all of Florida’s families and communities in order to equip them to better care for and nurture their children. In accordance with the state law (§39.001, FS), this five-year prevention and permanency plan provides for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promotion of adoption; and for the support of adoptive families.

### *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

**Vision** - Florida’s highest priority is that children are raised in healthy, safe, stable, and nurturing families.

**Mission** - To serve as a blueprint that will be implemented to provide for the care, safety, and protection of all of Florida’s children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.

**Overarching Goal** - All families and communities ensure that children are safe and nurtured and live in stable environments that promote well-being.

#### **Desired Population-Level Results of Plan Implementation**

- 1. *Child Maltreatment Prevention*** – By 30 June 2015, the verified findings of child abuse rate will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 statewide rate of 10.94 per 1,000 children.
- 2. *Promotion of Adoption*** – By 30 June 2015, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 66.4 percent.
- 3. *Promotion of Adoption*** – By 30 June 2015, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights (TPR) for more than 12 months will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 53.19 percent.
- 4. *Support of Adoptive Families*** – By 30 June 2015, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 number of 98.

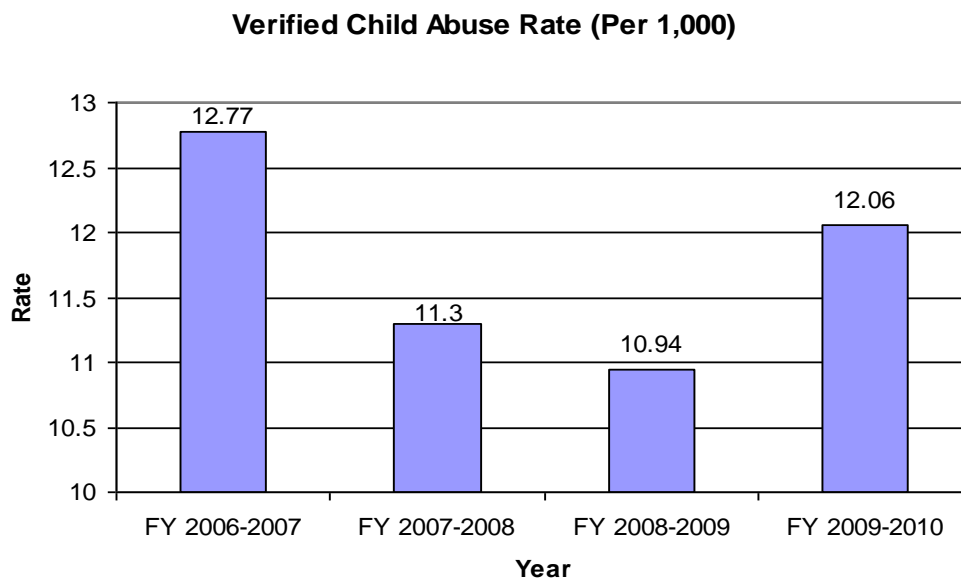
## Summary of Child Maltreatment Data

Child maltreatment is an all inclusive term for child abuse, abandonment and neglect. Data and summaries were provided by the Department of Children and Families to the Executive Office of the Governor in December 2010 for State Fiscal Year 2009 through 2010. These data and information have been aggregated in order to describe the status of child maltreatment in Florida. The data in Chart 1 and Table 1 are based on the official published per capita rate for Florida and are based on data that were extracted on 15 September 2010. The data contained in the Tables 2 - 7 and 9 were extracted on 02 December 2010 specifically for the additional breakdowns to provide for more in-depth reporting and analysis. Therefore the numbers differ slightly because when querying a live data system, the time lag between different run dates allows for additional data entry and correction. The difference between the September and December data sets is 527 children, reflecting less than one percent (1%) of the total.

### Status of Child Maltreatment in Florida

**State Plan Desired Result #1 – Child Maltreatment Prevention.** By 30 June 2015, the verified number of child victims per capita will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 statewide rate of 10.94 per 1,000 children between the ages of birth to 17.

**Chart 1. Verified Child Maltreatment Rate (Per 1,000)**



### *The Story Behind the Baseline*

Based upon a strategy developed by Mark Friedman (2005), a child abuse and neglect workgroup was convened by the Children and Youth Cabinet of Florida. The workgroup included 13 members representing 10 organizations and departments across Florida. The workgroup developed a story behind the baseline data reviewed, identifying events or issues that would correlate with the changes in the numbers, either up or down.

Interaction effects among these and other potential contributing factors may drive performance in directions that, if the factors were changing in isolation, might seem counter-intuitive. External influences that may contribute to a change since the baseline include:



- A tightening of definitions in the allegation matrix, now known as the child maltreatment index.
- Change in terminology for findings of investigations (e.g., “not substantiated” was added and “some indicators” was eliminated).
- Screening hotline calls to divert those that do not meet statutory criteria for investigation toward other Departmental services, increasing the proportion of those that will result in verified findings among those hotline calls that are accepted for investigation.
- Effectiveness of the primary and secondary prevention programs in place (e.g., Florida’s public awareness campaigns, Healthy Families Florida, programs funded by the Children’s Services Councils, Healthy Start, etc.).
- Loss of funding for secondary prevention (e.g., Healthy Families and Healthy Start) may increase the rate of child maltreatment.
- Loss of revenue to Children’s Services Councils which funded primary and secondary prevention programs may increase the rate of child maltreatment.
- Foreseeable stressors:
  - Changes in family living arrangements.
  - Economic losses / rising unemployment.
  - Increase in adoptions without sufficient post-adoption supports.
  - Increase in teen pregnancies and births.
  - Natural and environmental disasters (e.g., oil spill, hurricanes, etc.).

The *incidence* of child maltreatment is the estimated number of maltreated children in Florida, regardless of the number of children reported as abused. Data from the 3rd National Incidence Study suggests that only about 30 percent of all maltreated children were actually investigated. Thus, it would be expected that reporting and investigation rates would be low, conservative estimates of the actual abuse incident rates in Florida.

Florida’s Abuse Hotline is the central toll-free (1-800-96-ABUSE) statewide access point for reporting suspected child maltreatment. Based upon the unduplicated data provided by the Florida Department of Children and Families in December 2010 for State Fiscal Year 2009-2010, the hotline accepted calls to commence investigations for **211,092 alleged victims of child maltreatment**. This is a **statewide rate of 50.96 alleged victims** per 1,000 children (birth – 17) in Florida. Of these commenced investigations, **49,964 (23.7%) resulted in** verified findings of child maltreatment. This results in a **statewide victimization rate of 12.06 maltreated children** per 1,000 children (birth – 17) in Florida.

It is interesting to note that:

- The 0-17 year old child population in Florida is *down*.
- The number of alleged victims in commenced investigations is *lower* than that of the previous year (220,189 in 2008-2009 SFY).
- The number of children in out of home care is also *down* from last year.
- The number of children with verified findings is *higher* than last year (45,901 in 2008-2009 SFY).

## Verified Maltreatment

As stated earlier, the rate of children with verified maltreatment was 10.94 during SFY 2008-2009. The table below provides the rates statewide and for each of the twenty (20) circuits for SFY 2008-2009 and SFY 2009-2010. As shown in the table below, the rate of children with verified maltreatment declined for seven (35%) of the circuits (i.e., Circuits 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 16 and 18 highlighted in green), but increased statewide, with approximately 50 percent of the increase attributable to three circuits (i.e., Circuits 3, 6, and 17).

**Table 1. Rate of Children with Verified Maltreatment  
per 1,000 Children in the General Population  
July 2008 – June 2009 and July 2009 – June 2010**

CIRCUIT	2008 - 2009				2009-2010				↑ ↓
	NUMBER ALLEGED VICTIMS	NUMBER VERIFIED	TOTAL POPULATION	MALTREATMENT RATE	NUMBER ALLEGED VICTIMS	NUMBER VERIFIED	TOTAL POPULATION	MALTREATMENT RATE	
Circuit 01	11,595	2,644	163,147	16.21	10,734	2,587	162,575	15.91	↓
Circuit 02	4,654	932	80,286	11.61	4,185	900	81,048	11.10	↓
Circuit 03	3,058	597	41,212	14.49	2,893	804	41,568	19.34	↑
Circuit 04	16,473	3,350	290,913	11.52	15,770	3,651	289,082	12.63	↑
Circuit 05	14,709	3,361	193,662	17.35	14,213	3,254	191,647	16.98	↓
Circuit 06	18,195	4,101	268,896	15.25	16,939	4,881	261,831	18.64	↑
Circuit 07	11,640	1,807	172,187	10.49	11,698	2,162	171,309	12.62	↑
Circuit 08	5,566	1,822	75,946	23.99	5,216	1,662	77,158	21.54	↓
Circuit 09	19,815	4,196	362,471	11.58	18,757	4,844	359,495	13.47	↑
Circuit 10	11,474	2,277	167,840	13.57	11,063	2,163	165,466	13.07	↓
Circuit 11	15,114	2,777	598,735	4.64	14,501	3,294	594,557	5.54	↑
Circuit 12	8,458	2,012	136,203	14.77	8,116	2,024	134,629	15.03	↑
Circuit 13	14,257	2,976	302,651	9.83	13,893	3,159	298,584	10.58	↑
Circuit 14	5,417	917	62,987	14.56	5,232	943	63,781	14.78	↑
Circuit 15	13,134	2,536	277,701	9.13	12,621	2,900	270,882	10.71	↑
Circuit 16	788	226	13,434	16.82	682	214	12,828	16.68	↓
Circuit 17	14,959	3,253	415,698	7.83	14,911	4,225	407,694	10.36	↑
Circuit 18	12,673	2,582	211,352	12.22	11,998	2,422	206,267	11.74	↓
Circuit 19	6,597	1,719	123,369	13.93	6,118	1,807	120,130	15.04	↑
Circuit 20	11,613	1,816	238,597	7.61	11,552	2,068	231,967	8.92	↑
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>220,189</b>	<b>45,901</b>	<b>4,197,287</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>211,092</b>	<b>49,964</b>	<b>4,142,498</b>	<b>12.06</b>	↑

As shown in Tables 2 and 3 below, the younger the child, the more vulnerable the child is for maltreatment (highlighted in orange). The highest percentage of children with verified maltreatment during SFY 2009-2010 was in the birth to four year old range. This was followed by elementary school age children. As noted earlier, Tables 2 - 7 and 9 are based on data extracted on 2 December 2010, so there will be a slight variance in numbers from Table 1.

**Table 2. Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of Verified Abuse by Age Range, July 2009 – June 2010 Statewide**

GRADE (AGE RANGE)	TOTAL WITH VERIFIED ABUSE	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Preschool (0-4)	22,576	45.07%
Elementary School (5-10)	15,606	31.15%
Middle School (11-13)	5,564	11.11%
High School (14-17)	6,334	12.64%
18+	16	0.03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,096</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 3. Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of Verified Abuse by Age Range, July 2009 – June 2010 by Circuit**

CIRCUIT	AGE					UNKNOWN	TOTALS
	0 – 4 YRS.	5 – 10 YRS.	11 – 13 YRS.	14 – 17 YRS.	18+		
Circuit 01	1,877	1,243	474	492	-	-	4,086
Circuit 02	727	577	216	219	-	-	1,739
Circuit 03	302	262	87	76	-	-	727
Circuit 04	453	366	151	130	1	-	1,101
Circuit 05	763	610	231	230	2	-	1,836
Circuit 06	2,133	1,442	511	598	1	-	4,685
Circuit 07	1,509	1,006	320	398	3	-	3,236
Circuit 08	1,092	659	228	269	-	-	2,248
Circuit 09	2,135	1,513	527	679	2	-	4,856
Circuit 10	1,172	846	320	335	1	-	2,674
Circuit 11	121	91	38	44	-	-	294
Circuit 12	1,963	1,349	475	564	-	-	4,351
Circuit 13	129	84	32	49	-	-	294
Circuit 14	2,102	1,351	450	550	1	-	4,454
Circuit 15	1,313	858	338	312	-	-	2,821
Circuit 16	92	58	22	33	-	-	205
Circuit 17	1,989	1,368	485	521	1	-	4,364
Circuit 18	1,034	706	234	328	2	-	2,304
Circuit 19	924	689	221	296	-	-	2,130
Circuit 20	746	528	204	211	2	-	1,691
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>22,576</b>	<b>15,606</b>	<b>5,564</b>	<b>6,334</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,096</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>45.07%</b>	<b>31.15%</b>	<b>11.11%</b>	<b>12.64%</b>	<b>0.03%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Allegations and Investigations of Child Maltreatment

This pattern continues when looking at allegations. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the largest percentage of allegations is for children between the ages of birth and four years old (highlighted in orange).

**Table 4. Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) for July 2009 – June 2010 Statewide**

GRADE (AGE RANGE)	TOTAL WITH VERIFIED ABUSE	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Preschool (0-4)	79,600	37.61%
Elementary School (5-10)	69,846	33.01%
Middle School (11-13)	27,902	13.19%
High School (14-17)	34,146	16.14%
18+	107	0.05%
<b>Total</b>	<b>211,619</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 5. Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) for July 2009 – June 2010 by Circuit**

CIRCUIT	AGE						TOTALS
	0 – 4 YRS.	5 – 10 YRS.	11 – 13 YRS.	14 – 17 YRS.	18+	UNKNOWN	
Circuit 01	4,248	3,379	1,361	1,742	3	0	10,733
Circuit 02	1,697	1,370	511	601	2	0	4,181
Circuit 03	1,056	980	372	431	1	0	2,840
Circuit 04	6,042	5,377	1,998	2,458	10	0	15,885
Circuit 05	5,404	4,847	1,888	2,319	8	0	14,466
Circuit 06	6,316	5,383	2,175	2,664	11	0	16,549
Circuit 07	4,290	3,655	1,588	1,876	2	0	11,411
Circuit 08	2,203	1,725	715	806	3	0	5,452
Circuit 09	6,861	6,298	2,474	3,231	11	0	18,875
Circuit 10	4,031	3,640	1,474	1,710	8	0	10,863
Circuit 11	5,155	4,718	2,064	2,564	6	0	14,507
Circuit 12	3,183	2,699	1,026	1,179	5	0	8,092
Circuit 13	5,405	4,655	1,819	2,378	4	0	14,261
Circuit 14	2,010	1,721	706	842	2	0	5,281
Circuit 15	4,773	4,180	1,644	1,854	5	0	12,456
Circuit 16	261	207	92	105	0	0	665
Circuit 17	5,760	4,933	2,067	2,519	6	0	15,285
Circuit 18	4,425	4,063	1,539	1,994	13	0	12,034
Circuit 19	2,207	2,039	797	1,049	1	0	6,093
Circuit 20	4,273	3,995	1,592	1,824	6	0	11,690
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>79,600</b>	<b>69,864</b>	<b>27,902</b>	<b>34,146</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>211,619</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>37.61%</b>	<b>33.01%</b>	<b>13.19%</b>	<b>16.14%</b>	<b>0.05%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The largest percentage of children and youth who were alleged victims of maltreatment were white (63.43%). For ethnicity, the largest portion was non-Hispanic (83.36%). Investigations were conducted for nearly equal numbers of boys and girls. In Table 6 the highlighted cells show the highest numbers of race, ethnicity and gender per circuit.

**Table 6. Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated)  
July 2009 – June 2010**

CIRCUIT	RACE				ETHNICITY		GENDER		
	WHITE	BLACK	MULTIRACIAL	OTHER	HISPANIC	OTHER	MALE	FEMALE	UNKNOWN
Circuit 01	7,357	2,658	421	297	389	10,344	5,343	5,356	34
Circuit 02	1,766	2,181	82	152	117	4,064	2,097	2,054	30
Circuit 03	2,154	580	82	24	155	2,685	1,440	1,393	7
Circuit 04	8,429	6,492	294	670	824	15,061	7,895	7,904	86
Circuit 05	11,369	2,306	260	531	1,446	13,020	7,311	7,100	55
Circuit 06	12,212	3,161	577	599	1,623	14,926	8,324	8,187	38
Circuit 07	8,461	2,359	193	398	1,068	10,343	5,763	5,600	48
Circuit 08	3,227	1,908	234	83	282	5,170	2,649	2,792	11
Circuit 09	10,836	6,451	319	1,269	5,487	13,388	9,513	9,225	137
Circuit 10	7,501	2,683	231	448	1,831	9,032	5,384	5,440	39
Circuit 11	7,145	6,261	89	1,012	6,200	8,307	7,058	7,376	73
Circuit 12	6,026	1,601	241	224	1,460	6,632	4,079	3,991	22
Circuit 13	8,468	5,025	407	361	3,110	11,151	7,147	7,096	18
Circuit 14	4,039	979	131	132	181	5,100	2,647	2,624	10
Circuit 15	6,456	5,159	170	671	2,509	9,947	6,159	6,214	83
Circuit 16	537	102	9	17	176	489	352	311	2
Circuit 17	6,450	7,556	159	1,120	3,027	12,258	7,579	7,644	62
Circuit 18	8,535	2,753	556	190	1,423	10,611	6,110	5,896	28
Circuit 19	4,173	1,608	153	159	878	5,215	2,991	3,085	17
Circuit 20	9,085	1,959	298	348	3,029	8,661	5,821	5,849	20
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>134,226</b>	<b>63,782</b>	<b>4,906</b>	<b>8,705</b>	<b>35,215</b>	<b>176,404</b>	<b>105,662</b>	<b>105,137</b>	<b>820</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>63.43%</b>	<b>30.14%</b>	<b>2.32%</b>	<b>4.11%</b>	<b>16.64%</b>	<b>83.36%</b>	<b>49.93%</b>	<b>49.68%</b>	<b>0.39%</b>

In the following table, the numbers are duplicated counts. A child might have been the alleged victim with more than a single allegation attributed to the same incident. For example, an investigation may be conducted for a child for whom family violence, substance abuse and failure to protect were all noted; resulting in three allegations being assigned to that one investigation. Using the updated run from 02 December 2010, statewide there were 50,096 children with verified child maltreatment (unduplicated count). For these children, there were 69,779 verified allegations of child maltreatment. The largest numbers with verifications were for the following allegations: family violence followed by substance misuse in the home. The third through fifth, in terms of incidence, were those who lived in homes with inadequate supervision followed by physical injury and environmental hazards.

The highest numbers of verified allegations were for family violence threatens child and substance misuse. The highest *rates* of verification (e.g., the number of verified allegations divided by the number of allegations) were for abandonment, internal injuries, failure to protect, and failure to thrive. The lowest verification rates were for asphyxiation, mental injury, and burns. In Table 7, the orange highlighted cells show the highest number of allegations, allegations verified, and percentage of allegations verified.

**Table 7. Allegations and Verifications of Abuse (Duplicated Child Counts)  
July 2009 – June 2010**

TYPE OF ABUSE ALLEGATION	NUMBER OF ALLEGATIONS	NUMBER OF ALLEGATIONS VERIFIED	PERCENT OF ALLEGATIONS VERIFIED
Family Violence Threatens Child	78,310	21,361	27.28%
Substance Misuse	93,774	15,928	16.99%
Inadequate Supervision	59,907	9,302	15.53%
Threatened Harm	19,948	5,940	29.78%
Physical Injury	47,438	4,886	10.30%
Environmental Hazards	43,215	4,686	10.84%
Sexual Abuse	15,593	2,291	14.69%
Failure to Protect	4,323	2,062	47.70%
Medical Neglect	6,970	1,096	15.72%
Abandonment	826	541	65.50%
Mental Injury	8,928	520	5.82%
Bone Fracture	1,073	267	24.88%
Bizarre Punishment	1,915	212	11.07%
Death	507	182	35.90%
Burns	1,468	144	9.81%
Failure to Thrive	253	115	45.45%
Asphyxiation	1,776	103	5.80%
Internal Injuries	150	80	53.33%
Malnutrition/Dehydration	144	43	29.86%
Human Trafficking	167	20	11.98%
<b>Total</b>	<b>386,685</b>	<b>69,779</b>	<b>18.05%</b>

**Reasons for Removal**

The Department of Children and Families' *Florida Safe Families Network* data system recorded the primary reasons for removal of the children entering into foster care. If a child was removed twice during the year, both sets of reasons are included in this analysis. Of the 14,438 children entering foster care in the twelve month span from July 2009 – June 2010, the reasons for removal were divided into nine categories. These are shown in the table below as drawn from the AFCARS data file. A child may have more than one reason for removal noted, thus the counts in this chart will represent duplicated child counts. Highlighted in orange, the highest percentage of removals (44%) were due to parental drug and alcohol abuse.

**Table 8. Reasons for Removal Reported (Duplicated Child Count)  
July 2009 – June 2010**

NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENT OF 14,438 CHILDREN	REMOVAL REASON
6,339	44%	Parental Drug and Alcohol Abuse
2,963	21%	Physical and Sexual Abuse
2,241	16%	Inadequate Supervision, Medical and Physical Neglect
2,263	16%	Domestic Violence
2,104	15%	Death of Parent/Caretaker Unable to Cope
2,014	14%	Child Behavior/Relinquishment/Abandonment
1,943	13%	Incarceration of Parents
1,736	12%	Inadequate Housing
262	2%	Child Alcohol and Drug Abuse

As shown in the previous table, parental drug and alcohol abuse was the most often cited reason for almost half of the children being removed from their parent or primary caregiver. The second most cited service reason for a removal was physical and sexual abuse.

### Services Recommended

The Department of Children and Families' *Florida Safe Families Network* data system recorded the services recommended at disposition of an investigation for alleged victims. Multiple services might be recommended for the same child and would be counted for each service. Additionally, there may have been an array of services recommended for a child but only the first few might have been recorded in the electronic data system. These data most likely under-represent the complete numbers of actual services recommended at disposition for alleged victims of reported abuse.

The services with the largest numbers of recommendations include counseling, case management services, and court appointed representative, highlighted in orange. These underscore the importance of the *Five Protective Factors* as foundational for family stability and resilience:

- Concrete Supports for Parents.
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development.
- Nurturing and Attachment.
- Parental Resilience.
- Social Connections.

**Table 9. Services Recommended for Alleged Victims at Investigation Disposition  
July 2009 – June 2010**

RECOMMENDED SERVICE	NUMBER	PERCENT	RECOMMENDED SERVICE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Counseling Services	33,601	29.18%	Intensive Crisis Counseling Program	369	0.32%
Case Management Services	19,507	16.94%	Health Related Home Services	243	0.21%
Court Appointed Representative	15,942	13.85%	Pregnancy Parenting Services	197	0.17%
Other Services	11,413	9.91%	Adoption Services	192	0.17%
Informational Referral Service	8,968	7.79%	Day Care Services Child	192	0.17%
Services Offered Refused	8,721	7.57%	Employment Services	176	0.15%
Substance Abuse Services	5,194	4.51%	Juvenile Court Petition	167	0.15%
Family Support Services	3,719	3.23%	Family Planning Services	131	0.11%
Family Preservation Services	1,403	1.22%	Referral Possible False Report	131	0.11%
Home Based Services	1,224	1.06%	Special Juvenile Delinquent	84	0.07%
Family Builders	1,057	0.92%	Independent Transition Living	31	0.03%
Mental Health Services	819	0.71%	Transportation Services	31	0.03%
Housing Services	424	0.37%	Respite Care Services	25	0.02%
Legal Services	390	0.34%	Petition Dismissed By Judge	14	0.01%
Foster Care Services	388	0.34%	Special Services Disabled	11	0.01%
Educational Training Services	382	0.33%	<b>Total (duplicated counts across services)</b>	<b>115,146</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Child Abuse Death Review

In 2010, the State Child Death Review Committee prepared a report of its reviews during 2009 of deaths that occurred in 2008. During 2008, 2,843 children under the age of 18 lost their lives in Florida. Of those children who died, 465 were reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline. Of the 465 child deaths reported to the hotline, 201 were the result of verified child abuse or neglect. During 2009, the State Committee reviewed 198 of the 201 child abuse deaths. The remaining three deaths will be reviewed upon completion of the child death review process during 2010. The State Committee reviewed an additional six child deaths that occurred in previous years, bringing the total number of child deaths reviewed by the State Committee in 2009 to 204.

The committee found that in 2008, there was a substantial increase in the number of child abuse deaths in Florida from 2007 where 163 children died from verified child abuse or neglect. As shown in the table below, during calendar year 2008, the leading causes of the 198 verified child deaths reviewed were physical abuse (highlighted in orange), followed by unsafe sleep environments and then drowning.

**Table 10. Leading Causes of Child Abuse Deaths**

CAUSE	NUMBER OF DEATHS	PERCENT OF 198 DEATHS
Physical Abuse	59	30%
Unsafe Sleep	54	27%
Drowning	48	24%
Other	37	19%

The two key recommendations resulting from the review are addressed as a part of this prevention plan. These two recommendations include:

1. **All Child Death Review - A Commitment to Prevention Recommendation:**  
Amend §383.402 (1), FS to expand the State Child Abuse Death Review Committee's authority related to the review of all child deaths in Florida to have a complete understanding of why children die in Florida.
2. **Healthy Families Florida Prevention Funding Recommendation:**  
The Florida Legislature should fully fund Healthy Families Florida, an evidence-based home visiting program that prevents child abuse and neglect before it ever occurs.

The committee developed a list of priority issues with recommendations. This prevention plan addresses four of the priority issues. And every strategy in the prevention plan is responsive to at least one of the six priority issues and recommendations that were developed by the committee. The priority issues include:

- **Physical Abuse** – An alarming number of infant and toddler deaths are attributed to common triggers and risk factors for physical abuse.  
*Recommendation:* Anyone providing federal or state funded services, whether it be child protection investigations or case management, child care, home visiting or other services, should be aware of and sensitive to the common triggers and risk factors that contribute to child abuse.



- ***Unsafe Sleep Environments*** – Sudden unexplained infant deaths associated with unsafe sleep are tragic, but must be investigated thoroughly and consistently in order to prevent future infant deaths.

*Recommendation:* Improvements in the investigation of child deaths and heightened public awareness and education should be implemented for the prevention of infant suffocation deaths related to unsafe sleeping conditions.

- ***Drowning*** – Children continue to die from drowning at an alarming rate as a result of inadequate supervision.

*Recommendation:* Implement a systemic approach to prevent drowning of children in Florida, particularly those under the age of 5.

- ***Consistency and Communication*** – Communication between agencies and consistent evidence gathering protocol are crucial to the protection of children.

*Recommendation:* Improve consistency and communication among the various agencies involved in child abuse cases and child death cases.

- ***Substance Abuse*** – One of the most common risk factors present in child abuse or neglect deaths reviewed by the State Committee.

*Recommendation:* Substance abuse should be given a higher priority in the risk assessment activities of child protection organizations that come into contact with children and their families.

- ***Quality Assurance Review*** – Understanding the thinking and decision-making process of the legal decisions made and or the court action and taken would assist in educational opportunities resulting in better outcomes for children.

*Recommendation:* There is a need for a Quality Assurance review as it pertains to the legal involvement when any child dies as a result of abuse.

## **Summary of Adoption Data and the Timeliness of Adoptions**

This subsection comprises three areas of reporting:

- A summary of the adoption data collected and reported to the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.
- A summary detailing the adoption process and its timeliness for children adopted from within the child welfare system.
- A summary of the support of adoptive families information.

### **Adoption Data Reported by the Department of Children and Families to the Federal Administration for Children and Families via the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).**

In January 2007, the Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) published new federal child welfare outcome measures (AFCARS), including five measures related to the timeliness of adoptions from foster care. Four of these measures are included in this report.

Data and summaries were provided by the Department of Children and Families to the Executive Office of the Governor in December 2010. These data and information have been aggregated in order to describe the status of adoption in Florida. It should be noted that for the information provided below on the AFCARS measures, comparison benchmarks were set during a Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) which spans the months October through September. For example, FFY 2004 spans 1 October 2003 through 30 September 2004. On the other hand, the current state performance information is based on the 12-month period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 (SFY 2009-2010), using the most recent available data for this review.

**AFCARS Measure 1 – Percent Discharged in Less than 24 Months.** Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the period July 2009 through June 2010, *42.37 percent were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home.* The target was to reach the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for FFY2004 which is 36.6 percent. *Florida has exceeded this target for a third year in a row.* Florida has made steady progress on this measure over the last several years, increasing from 23.9 percent in FFY 2004 to 42.37 percent in SFY 2009-2010 (e.g., July 2009 through June 2010). This measure is limited to children adopted during the period and does not address the likelihood that children, presently in care, will be adopted within 24 months. It is important to note that this measure can be misleading, especially when an agency successfully recruits adoptive families for older children/teens who have been in foster care for multiple years and therefore may create a negative impact on this measure. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected below. As shown in Table 11, of the 20 Florida circuits, 15 (75%) met or exceeded the federal target. The five circuits highlighted in orange did not meet the federal target.

**Table 11. Percent Discharged to Adoption in Less than 24 months (by Circuit)**

CIRCUIT	PERFORMANCE	CIRCUIT	PERFORMANCE
Circuit 14	59.46%	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>42.37%</b>
Circuit 15	57.55%	Circuit 17	40.89%
Circuit 07	57.32%	Circuit 03	40.63%
Circuit 08	56.86%	Circuit 05	40.00%
Circuit 04	56.57%	Circuit 11	36.67%
Circuit 02	55.93%	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>36.60%</b>
Circuit 10	50.35%	Circuit 12	35.00%
Circuit 18	47.96%	Circuit 20	31.53%
Circuit 06	45.58%	Circuit 19	28.70%
Circuit 01	44.60%	Circuit 13	21.58%
Circuit 09	42.54%	Circuit 16	7.69%

**AFCARS Measure 2 – Median Length of Stay in Foster Care.** Of all children adopted from foster care during the period July 2009 through June 2010, the *median length of stay in foster care was 29.1 months from the date of latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption.* The target was to reach the national 25th percentile for FFY 2004 which is 27.3 months. This measure, like the first measure, is limited to children adopted during the period, so it only describes the length of stay of this particular group of adopted children. As shown in Table 12, Florida did not meet the federal target. Although this statewide target has not been met, Florida’s median has dropped for several years, from 35.1 months in FFY 2004 to 27.3 months in SFY 2009-2010. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected below. The circuits highlighted in orange did not meet the federal target. Last year, 12 (60%) of the 20 Florida circuits met the federal target, and this year, 14 (70%) of the 20 Florida circuits met or exceeded the federal target. *Additionally, Florida has been recognized as number one in the nation for timeliness of finalized adoptions.*

**Table 12. Median Length of Stay in Foster Care (by Circuit) for Children Discharged to Adoption**

CIRCUIT	MEDIAN LOS	CIRCUIT	MEDIAN LOS
Circuit 08	21.2	Circuit 01	25.7
Circuit 15	21.5	Circuit 05	25.8
Circuit 14	21.6	Circuit 06	25.9
Circuit 02	22.6	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>27.3</b>
Circuit 04	23.3	Circuit 12	27.9
Circuit 07	23.6	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>29.1</b>
Circuit 10	23.7	Circuit 11	30.1
Circuit 17	24.9	Circuit 19	30.8
Circuit 18	25.0	Circuit 16	32.1
Circuit 03	25.6	Circuit 20	32.4
Circuit 09	25.6	Circuit 13	38.9

**AFCARS Measure 3 – Finalized Adoptions.** Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of July 2009, and who had been in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, **31.62 percent were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by June 30, 2010.** The target was to reach the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for FFY 2004 which is 22.7 percent. **Florida has exceeded this target** for each of the last seven federal fiscal years. This measure provides one way of looking at the likelihood of children being adopted who have been in care for a long period of time. It selects all children who were in care at the beginning of the period and follows up after 12 months to see whether they have been adopted. This measure excludes children who, by the last day of the period, have achieved permanency through reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with other relatives, or guardianship. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected below. As shown in Table 13, of the 20 Florida circuits, 17 (85%) met or exceeded the federal target during SFY 2009-2010. The three circuits that did not meet the federal target are highlighted in orange. **It should be noted that Florida has led the nation in adoption incentive awards for the number of finalized adoptions for the prior two federal fiscal years.**

**Table 13. Percent of Finalized Adoptions (by Circuit)**

CIRCUIT	PERFORMANCE	CIRCUIT	PERFORMANCE
Circuit 12	44.56%	Circuit 09	31.39%
Circuit 01	44.44%	Circuit 06	30.93%
Circuit 08	43.58%	Circuit 11	28.60%
Circuit 19	41.10%	Circuit 18	28.57%
Circuit 07	40.80%	Circuit 20	27.93%
Circuit 05	38.74%	Circuit 10	25.82%
Circuit 14	37.50%	Circuit 03	25.61%
Circuit 02	35.90%	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>22.70%</b>
Circuit 04	35.42%	Circuit 15	22.03%
Circuit 13	33.73%	Circuit 16	22.00%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>31.62%</b>	Circuit 17	21.71%

**AFCARS Measure 4 – Legally Free for Adoption.** Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of July 2009 or January 2010, had been in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, and were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, **7.80 percent became legally free for adoption** by 31 December 2009 or 30 June 30 2010 respectively. The target was to reach the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for FFY2004 which is 10.9 percent. **Florida has exceeded this target** for five of the last six federal fiscal years, but did not achieve it this year. This measure reflects how quickly Florida moved to obtain termination of parental rights (TPR) when it appeared that reunification was no longer a viable option. This measure excludes children who did not become legally free during the first six months of the period but who, during that six-month period, achieved permanency through reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with other relatives, or guardianship. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected below. As shown in Table 14, the circuits highlighted in orange did not meet the federal target. Of the 20 Florida circuits, only 9 (45%) met or exceeded the federal target.

**Table 14. Percent of Children Legally Free for Adoption (by Circuit)**

CIRCUIT	PERFORMANCE	CIRCUIT	PERFORMANCE
Circuit 07	28.29%	Circuit 17	8.40%
Circuit 03	23.08%	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>7.80%</b>
Circuit 05	19.88%	Circuit 18	6.02%
Circuit 01	19.14%	Circuit 10	5.67%
Circuit 12	16.67%	Circuit 13	5.48%
Circuit 19	14.08%	Circuit 06	2.66%
Circuit 14	12.50%	Circuit 02	1.47%
Circuit 04	12.33%	Circuit 20	1.41%
Circuit 08	12.07%	Circuit 11	0.38%
<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>10.90%</b>	Circuit 15	0.35%
Circuit 09	9.56%	Circuit 16	0.00%

Florida’s performance on this measure was likely impacted due to changes in Families Safe First Network when the new Legal Module was brought online and it resulted in missing data. The Department of Children and Families is addressing the problem of missing Termination of Parental Rights dates by sending bi-weekly reports to the field listing records that are missing data and need to be completed and providing technical support on how to update records in closed cases for users in the field. This problem appears to be resolved for the next reporting year – SFY 2010-2011.

### **The Adoption Process for Children Adopted from within the Child Welfare System**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) uses several data sources and metrics related to adoption. Each serves a unique purpose. Some of the differences between these metrics, though important, can be somewhat nuanced. To avoid miscommunication or inadvertent misinterpretation, it is critical to use “the right tool for the right job”. For example, the answer to the question of how many children are available for adoption in Florida depends entirely on the meaning of the term “available for adoption.” Different interpretations of this term refer to different populations, or population subsets. These generally include:

- a. Children with a primary goal of adoption, who have not been TPR’d (that is the termination of their parental rights);
- b. Children who have been TPR’d, making them legally available for adoption, regardless of whether adoption is a primary goal;
- c. Children who have been both TPR’d and have a primary goal of adoption;
- d. Children who have been TPR’d, have a primary goal of adoption, and an adoptive family has been identified, but the adoption has not been finalized; and
- e. Children who are TPR’d, have the primary goal of adoption, but no family has been identified and recruitment for a family is still ongoing—these are the children who are featured on the Department of Children and Families Web site.

As shown in Table 15, adoption-related populations overlap or are nested within each other, and each yields a different number. Table 15 provides a point in time chart as of 3 July 2009 and provides a starting base at the beginning of SFY 2009-2010.

**Table 15. Adoption-Related Populations as of 3 July 2009**

POPULATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
a. Children TPR'ed or who have a primary goal of adoption	6,529
b. Children with a primary goal of adoption regardless of TPR status	5,980
c. Children TPR'ed, regardless of goal	4,744
d. Children who have been TPR'ed and have a primary goal of adoption	3,244
e. Children who have been TPR'ed, have a primary goal of adoption, do not have an identified family and are eligible to be featured on the DCF Web site	859*

\*The 859 was from 9/18/09, the most recent verifiable number available for this group. Source July 3, 2009 AFCARS Extract.

Of the 3,244 children who had a primary goal of adoption and were TPR'd as of 3 July 2009, 1,551 of them (48%) were adopted during the SFY 2009-2010. These adoptions represent 46% of the total 3,368 adoptions finalized during the course of SFY 2009-2010.

Table 16 shows the length of time from the last TPR date until the adoption finalization for all children adopted during SFY 2009-2010. The date of TPR was recorded in the system for 3,281 out of the 3,368 of the children adopted; a 97 percent non-random sample. Of these 3,281 children, most (64%) were adopted in less than twelve months and almost all (88%) were adopted within 24 months (highlighted in green) of their TPR dates.

**Table 16. Length of Time between TPR and Adoption Finalization for SFY 2009-2010 Finalized Adoptions**

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF CHILDREN ADOPTED BY THE NUMBER OF MONTHS BETWEEN TPR AND FINALIZATION OF ADOPTION BASED ON 3,281 FOR WHOM DATA ARE AVAILABLE		
Time Span	Number of Children Adopted	Percent of Children Adopted
< 12 months	2,102	64.0%
12-24 months	789	24.0%
24-36 months	237	7.2%
36-48 months	67	2.0%
> 48 months	86	2.6%
Data Not Available*	87	
<b>Total of Adopted Children</b>	<b>3,368</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* TPR date was not included in FSN for these children at the time of the extract, so the related time frames based on this date could not be calculated. These are excluded from the percentages calculated.

Table 17 shows the length of time from the last TPR date until 30 June 2010 for those children who were legally free for adoption as of the end of the State Fiscal Year. The date of TPR was recorded in the system for 1,717 of the 1,954 children who were legally free for adoption by 30 June 2010, an 88 percent non-random sample. Of these 1,717 children, almost over half (56%) have been waiting more than 12 months (highlighted in orange) to be adopted. Over 370 children have been waiting for three or more years to be adopted.

**Table 17. Length of Time Since TPR for Children Remaining Available for Adoption as of 30 June 2010**

REMAINING CHILDREN AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION BY THE NUMBER OF MONTHS BETWEEN TPR AND 30 JUNE 2010 FOR THE 1,717 CHILDREN FOR WHOM DATA ARE AVAILABLE		
Time Span	Number of Waiting Children	Percent of Waiting Children
< 12 months	757	44.1%
12-24 months	390	22.7%
24-36 months	199	11.6%
36-48 months	101	5.9%
>48 months	270	15.7%
Data Not Available*	237	
<b>Total of Waiting Children</b>	<b>1,954</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* TPR date was not included in FSN for these children at the time of the extract, so the related time frames based on it could not be calculated. These are excluded from the percentages calculated.

### Timeliness of Adoption

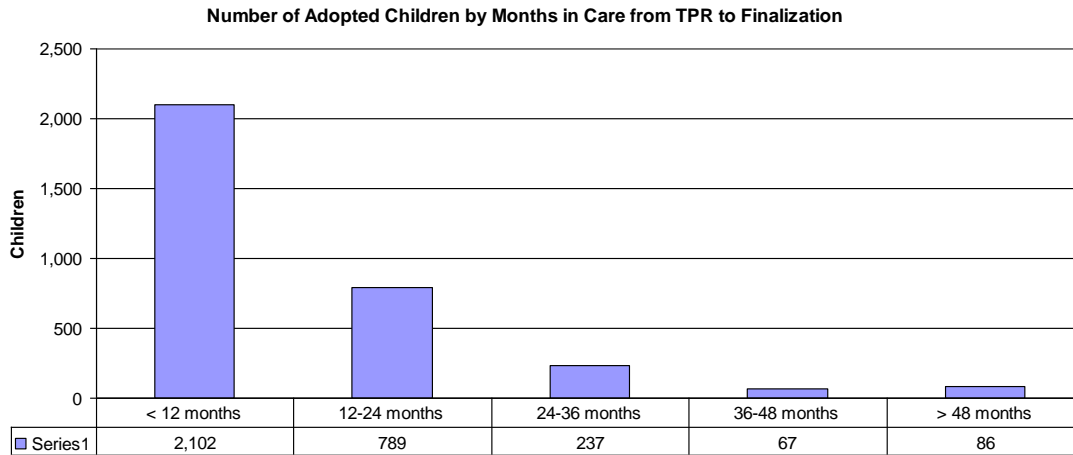
The state’s five-year prevention and permanency plan has two desired population results for the promotion of adoption. Both deal with the timeliness of adoption – increasing the adoptions that occur within 12 months of TPR and decreasing the length of time children have been waiting for adoption since TPR.

**State Plan Desired Result #2 – Promotion of Adoption** – By 30 June 2015, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 66.4 percent.

It should be helpful to know the number of months from securing the termination of parental rights (TPR) to the adoption finalization date to assess if there are delays. During SFY 2009-2010 3,368 children were adopted. Verified data sets were available and provided for 3,281 of these 3,368 children, representing a 97 percent non-random sample of this population. This section reports information based upon this sample of children for whom the data were complete.

As the following chart documents, 2,102 (64%) of the adoptions were finalized in less than twelve months from date of TPR. This is below the target of exceeding 66.4 percent in the next four years. Statewide efforts will continue in order to make this happen. As shown in this chart, of the children adopted during SFY 2009-2010, almost 1,200 children were adopted after waiting two or more years and of these, 86 children had been waiting for four or more years. The longer a child is in foster care waiting adoption, the more difficult it may be to place the child. The circuits and their providers have made adoption possible for 1,179 of these children in their care.

**Chart 2. Length of Stay in Foster Care from the Date of Termination of Parental Rights to the Date of Adoption Finalization**



As stated earlier, during SFY 2009-2010, 3,368 adoptions from the child welfare system were finalized in Florida. Of those, 3,251 had the adoptive parent relationship data entered into the system, a 97 percent non-random sample. Three-quarters of the 3,251 children were adopted by the families known to them and where they were already living – by their foster parents or relative caregivers: **27.8 percent** were adopted by foster parents and **48.3 percent** were adopted by relatives. The remaining **23.9 percent** of these children were adopted by families who were recruited for them. Over the last four years, the number and therefore the percentage of relative caregiver adoptions have increased. As documented in the table below, the percentages of these three adoptive populations do vary by circuit, with the highlighted cells showing the highest percentage for each circuit.

**Table 18. Percentage of Adoptions by Circuit by Type of Adoptive Family**

CIRCUIT	FOSTER PARENTS	RELATIVES	RECRUITED PARENTS	CIRCUIT	FOSTER PARENTS	RELATIVES	RECRUITED PARENTS
Circuit 01	15%	53%	32%	Circuit 11	29%	54%	17%
Circuit 02	25%	49%	26%	Circuit 12	28%	31%	41%
Circuit 03	26%	55%	19%	Circuit 13	35%	47%	18%
Circuit 04	39%	51%	10%	Circuit 14	24%	46%	30%
Circuit 05	17%	54%	29%	Circuit 15	27%	52%	21%
Circuit 06	29%	48%	24%	Circuit 16	38%	62%	0%
Circuit 07	27%	51%	22%	Circuit 17	34%	44%	22%
Circuit 08	13%	51%	36%	Circuit 18	22%	52%	26%
Circuit 09	27%	43%	30%	Circuit 19	26%	48%	25%
Circuit 10	19%	50%	30%	Circuit 20	47%	30%	23%



**State Plan Desired Result #3 – Promotion of Adoption** – By 30 June 2015, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights (TPR) for more than 12 months will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 53.19 percent. (Note: In the original plan submission the figures for SFY 2008-2009 were based on a different calculation and have been updated retroactively to improve the quality of the metric. Previously, these figures were calculated based on the date of removal to the end of the fiscal year. The modified metric instead uses the last date of TPR until the end of the fiscal year.)

Table 19 shows the same population breakouts as found in Table 13 above, but for a different snapshot of time. These counts were taken on 27 June 2010 and provide for end of State Fiscal Year 2009-2010 counts as well as a starting base for the beginning of the next State Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

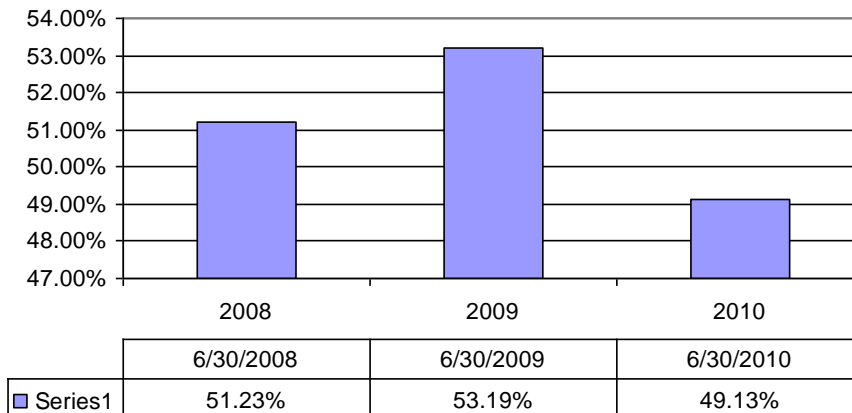
**Table 19. Adoption-Related Populations as of 27 June 2010**

POPULATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
a. Children TPR'ed or who have a primary goal of adoption	5,370
b. Children with a primary goal of adoption regardless of TPR status	4,507
c. Children TPR'ed, regardless of goal	3,787
d. Children who have been TPR'ed and have a primary goal of adoption	1,995
e. Children who have been TPR'ed, have a primary goal of adoption, do not have an identified family and are eligible to be featured on the DCF Web site	823

Source June 27, 2010 AFCARS Extract.

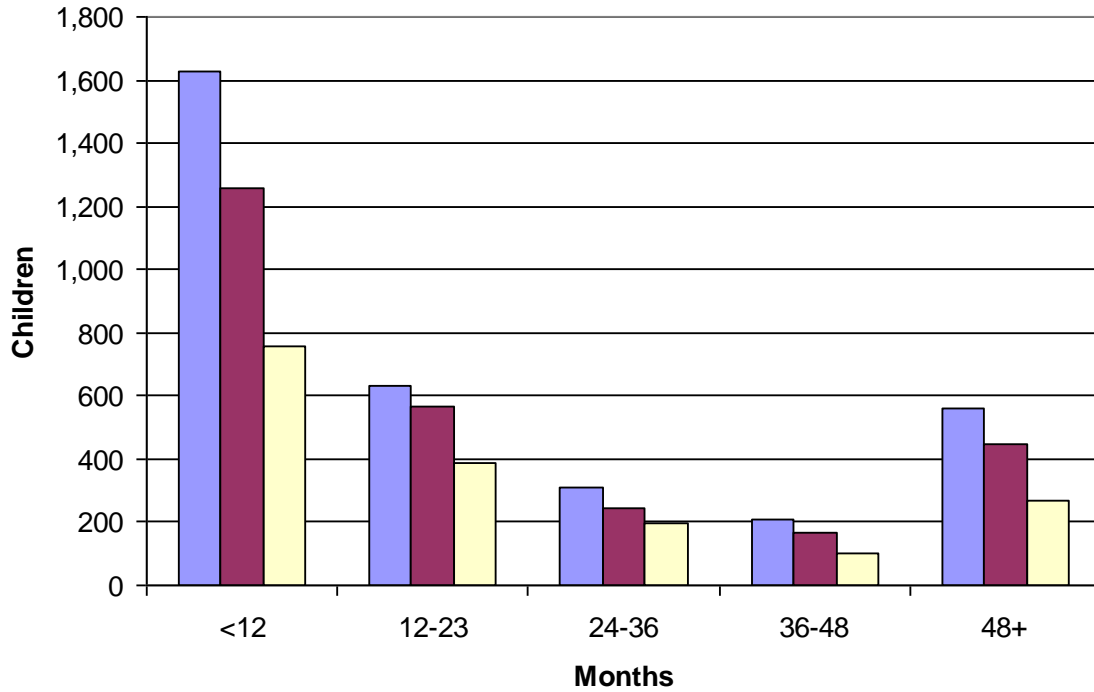
As shown in Table 19 above, 1,995 children who were still waiting to be adopted as of 27 June 2010. Of these, 1,717 have TPR dates entered in the system providing an 86 percent non-random sample for analysis. Of those, 960 (49%) have been waiting longer than 12 months from the date of their TPR. As shown in Chart 3 below, the percent has decreased from the prior year percent of 53 percent.

**Chart 3. Percent of Children Awaiting Adoption Who Have Been Waiting Longer than 12 Months**



The children awaiting adoption can be further illustrated by the length of time (in months) since they became legally free for adoption (TPR). This graph reflects the children who have been TPR'd and have a primary goal of adoption for the last three state fiscal years. Of note, the numbers of children available for adoption have declined by almost half over the last three years. The pattern remains the same in that the majority of the children available for adoption at the end of the fiscal year have been waiting less than 12 months. The next most prevalent time period is for those waiting 12 to 23 months and then for those waiting for more than four years to be adopted.

**Chart 4. Children Awaiting Adoption by Length of Time Since TPR**



■ 6/30/2008	■ 6/30/2009	■ 6/30/2010
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Total Number of Children	3,412	2,863	1,954
Number with Complete Data	3,342	2,681	1,717
Percent in Non-Random Sample	98%	94%	87%

As previously shown in Table 19, there were 1,995 children legally available for adoption with a primary goal of adoption as of 27 June 2010. Of these, 823 (41%) do not have identified adoptive families as of 30 June 2010 and are listed on the Web site as available for adoption. Only the 823 children available without identified adoptive families are described below. Chart 5 describes these 823 children by age groupings. Youth who are 15-16 years old represent 243 (30%) of the waiting children. Over half (64%) are youth age thirteen or older. Less than ten percent of the available children are eight years of age or younger while 91 percent are between the ages of nine and seventeen.

**Chart 5. Age Groups of Children without Identified Homes Awaiting Adoption**

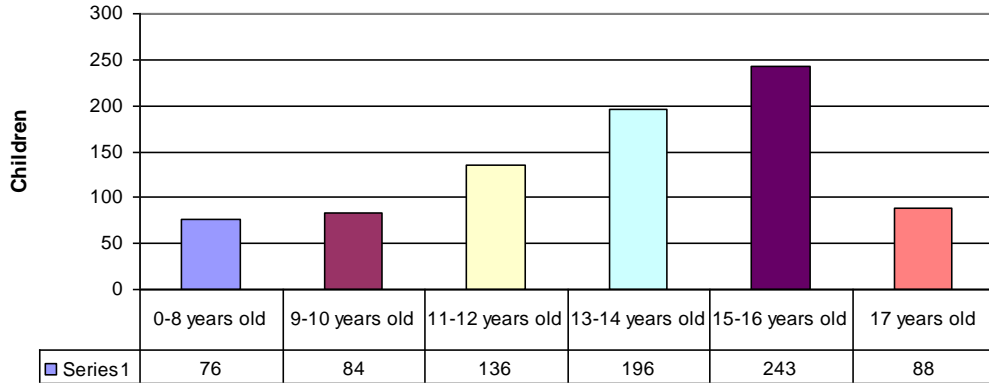
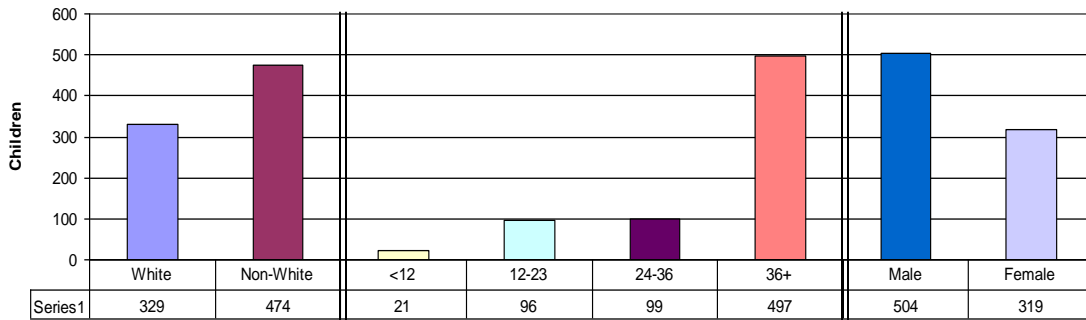


Chart 6 describes the races, lengths of time waiting to be adopted and the genders of non-random samples of the 823. Over half (58%) of the available children with race data are non-white. Over two-thirds (70%) have been legally available and waiting for three or more years. 504 (61%) of these children are male and 39 percent are female.

**Chart 6. Race, Amount of Time Waiting and Gender of Children without Identified Homes Awaiting Adoption**



	Race	Months Since TPR	Gender
Total Number of Children	823	823	823
Number with Complete Data	803	713	823
% in Non-Random Sample	98%	87%	100%

## Dissolutions of Adoptions

**State Plan Desired Result #4 – Support of Adoptive Families** – By 30 June 2015, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 number of 98.

The Department of Children and Families Office of Family Safety submitted data provided by the Circuits on the number of adoptions that were dissolved and the reasons for the dissolutions based on those adopted children returning to foster care during the year. There were 41 adoption dissolutions reported across the state during SFY 2009-2010. The number of dissolutions statewide was greatly reduced this past fiscal year from 98 in SFY 2008-09 to a total of 41 in SFY 2009-10. Five circuits (Circuits 2, 5, 6 14 and 20 highlighted in green), as compared to two circuits last fiscal year, reported no dissolutions. The two most prominent reasons for dissolutions of adoption were behavioral issues and mental health issues. Because these are so closely tied, many of the reported dissolutions cited both reasons. In those cases, the counts are provided for both. Again, a comprehensive analysis of each of these dissolutions will assist the local circuits in assessing their post adoption services program.

**Table 20. Dissolutions by Circuit and Child-Related Reasons Cited**

CIRCUIT	NUMBER OF DISSOLUTIONS (UNDUPLICATED COUNTS)	REASONS CITED FOR THE DISSOLUTIONS (DUPLICATED COUNTS)					
		BEHAVIORAL ISSUES	MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES	PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES	JUVENILE JUSTICE ISSUES	SAFETY OF OTHER CHILDREN	OTHER
Circuit 01	4	2	1	1			
Circuit 02	0						
Circuit 03	1		1				
Circuit 04	5	5	3	0		1	
Circuit 05	0						
Circuit 06	0						
Circuit 07	1						Child requested adoption by relative
Circuit 08	2	2	2			1	
Circuit 09	3	3					1 Never bonded
Circuit 10	3	2	2			1	
Circuit 11	2	2	2				
Circuit 12	4	4					1 Not given
Circuit 13	5	4	1		1	1	
Circuit 14	0						
Circuit 15	3	2				1	
Circuit 16	1						
Circuit 17	1	1					
Circuit 18	2	2	2			1	
Circuit 19	4						
Circuit 20	0						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>

Although the number of dissolutions that occur each year should be tracked, an analysis of the reasons and circumstances for each dissolution needs to be completed to assist the local and state post adoption services programs determine if existing post adoption services are effective and if additional services are needed. Many adoptive parents do not request post adoption services for many months or even years rather than as soon as problems or issues arise because some post adoption services may be perceived as ineffective or too cumbersome to access. The sooner effective services are implemented, the sooner stress can be reduced within an adoptive family.

A research study published by the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute in October 2010 supports the need for an ongoing analysis of the post adoption services in each community.

Circuits also cited that there were dissolutions due to the inability of the adoptive parents to either care for or provide a safe and stable home for the adopted child(ren). Many more dissolutions occurred during SFY 2009-2010 than are reported in this section; those resulting from the death or terminal illness of the parents were not included in the 41 dissolutions reported in Tables 20 and 21. Of the 41 dissolutions reported, two were due to family instability and eleven (27%) were due to abuse or neglect in the home by the adoptive parent. These issues are of concern and should be addressed through seeking safe and stable families for the children when promoting adoption and the support of adoptive families through counseling and assistance for the children and their adoptive parents and siblings.

**Table 21. Dissolutions by Circuit and Adoptive Parent-Related Reasons Cited**

CIRCUIT	NUMBER OF DISSOLUTIONS (UNDUPLICATED COUNTS)	REASONS CITED FOR THE DISSOLUTIONS (DUPLICATED COUNTS)		
		PARENT UNABLE TO CONTINUE CARE (DIVORCE, ETC.)	ABUSE OR NEGLECT BY THE ADOPTIVE PARENT(S)	OTHER
Circuit 01	4		2	
Circuit 02	0			
Circuit 03	1			
Circuit 04	5			
Circuit 05	0			
Circuit 06	0			
Circuit 07	1			
Circuit 08	2			
Circuit 09	3			1 Never bonded
Circuit 10	3		1	
Circuit 11	2			
Circuit 12	4	1	2	
Circuit 13	5		1	
Circuit 14	0			
Circuit 15	3		1	
Circuit 16	1	1		
Circuit 17	1			
Circuit 18	2			
Circuit 19	4		4	
Circuit 20	0			
<b>Statewide Totals</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>

### Support of Adoptive Families

To assess the status of support of adoptive families, the Department of Children and Families Office of Family Safety submitted data provided by the Circuits on the number of adoptive parent support groups, number of adoption competent mental health professionals and number of post adoption services counselors who provide information and referral, temporary case management for emotional support, and educational advocacy. These data were checked against the numbers submitted in the local five-year plans for the support of adoptive families. Where discrepancies were found between the two sets of information, the circuits were contacted to assist with providing the final numbers used below.

## Support Groups

Adoptive parent and youth support groups provide opportunities for adoptive parents and youth to meet with other adoptive parents and youth who are struggling with similar challenges and concerns, generally meet once a month and are appropriate for the languages, cultures and needs of the participants in each community; receive support from umbrella organizations and qualified facilitators when appropriate (e.g., teen support groups); etc.

The twenty circuits reported 41 adoptive parent support groups across the state. Circuit 3 (highlighted in orange) is the only circuit without a support group but there is a plan to initiate a group this upcoming year. Several support groups include foster and adoptive parents. Because over 30 percent of the adoptions each year are by foster parents, a support group inclusive of both parent types is appropriate. One of the new support groups in Circuit 17 is also inclusive of relative caregivers.

**Table 22. Quantity of Adoptive Parent Support Groups by Circuit**

CIRCUIT	NUMBER OF ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS	COMMENTS
Circuit 01	3	
Circuit 02	3	One is adoptive parents only and two are foster and adoptive parents; one meets quarterly.
Circuit 03	0	
Circuit 04	2	New group started in Clay County.
Circuit 05	1	
Circuit 06	2	One group is in Pasco and one is in Pinellas.
Circuit 07	1	Considering meeting quarterly in one or more of the outlying areas.
Circuit 08	2	
Circuit 09	5	Also, one for children 5-12, one for children 12-18; two of the support groups are for foster and adoptive parents.
Circuit 10	2	
Circuit 11	4	
Circuit 12	2	Both are foster and adoptive support groups.
Circuit 13	1	Also have a teen support group.
Circuit 14	2	Both are foster and adoptive support groups and one meets quarterly.
Circuit 15	3	One group includes adult adoptees.
Circuit 16	1	
Circuit 17	2	One group includes foster, adoptive and relative caregivers.
Circuit 18	3	All are foster and adoptive parent support groups.
Circuit 19	2	One is for foster and adoptive parents.
Circuit 20	1	
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>41</b>	

Almost 17,000 children have been adopted from Florida's child welfare system in the last five years. Research has shown that essential to family resilience are social connections, knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development, parental resilience, and concrete support in times of need. All of these could be made available to families through adoptive parent support groups. There are a total of 41 support groups across the State of Florida as of June 2010, which is an improvement from the 37 support groups reported last fiscal year. Post adoption services counselors have the opportunity to connect to the support groups in their area to provide community resources and as speakers for some of the support group meetings.

## Adoption Competency

Adoption competent mental health professionals are mental health professionals who have completed the Rutgers *Adoption Competency* or an equivalent curriculum and provide educational and therapeutic services for adoptive families that focuses on strengthening relationships within the family unit and assist families in understanding the developmental stages of adoption and how adoption impacts each family member and the family as a unit.

**Table 23. Quantity of Adoption Competent Mental Health Professionals by Circuit**

CIRCUIT	QUANTITY OF ADOPTION COMPETENT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS	COMMENTS
Circuit 01	2	
Circuit 02	11	
Circuit 03	3	
Circuit 04	5	
Circuit 05	0	
Circuit 06	8	
Circuit 07	4	
Circuit 08	3	
Circuit 09	8	
Circuit 10	7	
Circuit 11	10	
Circuit 12	10	
Circuit 13	7	An adoption competency curriculum created by the North American Council on Adoptable Children has been taught to 7 mental health professionals in Hillsborough and has been reviewed and determined to include all of the same training objectives of the University of Rutgers curricula.
Circuit 14	7	
Circuit 15	4	
Circuit 16	3	
Circuit 17	6	
Circuit 18	6	
Circuit 19	6	
Circuit 20	3	
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>113</b>	

As shown in Table 23, 113 mental health professionals have completed the adoption competency training. All of the circuits have one or more adoption competent mental health professionals with the exception of Circuit 5 (highlighted in orange). Circuit 5 is planning to work more closely with their mental health community and will be offering the training again in 2011. Eleven adoption competent mental health professionals are located in Circuit 2, ten are located in Circuit 11 and another ten are located in Circuit 12.

Many of the mental health specialists who have completed the training have reported that they just “did not know what they did not know” and have become enthusiastic about the application of their more in-depth knowledge of the special needs resulting from trauma, loss of family and adoption. In one circuit, a group of these mental health professionals have formed a learning community that meets weekly to discuss and assist one another with their most complex cases.

Again, almost 17,000 children have been adopted from the child welfare system in the last five years alone. Having a total of 113 adoption competent mental health professionals across the State of Florida as of June 2010 is not sufficient to meet the needs of Florida's adoptive families. However, additional classes were completed this fall in several areas and more classes are being scheduled beginning January 2011. The sixteen trainers across the state are working with their local communities to register mental health professionals, educational professionals, child welfare staff and other interested stakeholders for classes beginning in January and February of 2011. The goal is to have at least 100 more adoption competent mental health professionals in place by June 2011.

### Post Adoption Services Counselors

A post adoption services counselor is a staff person designated to respond to the requests and service needs of adoptive parents and their families after adoption finalizations have occurred. The response to requests and service needs includes, at a minimum, information and referrals, temporary case management, assistance with subsidy and Medicaid issues and assistance in establishing and maintaining one or more adoptive parent support groups. Across the state 27 counselors were identified by the circuits as providing these post adoption services. This is an increase from last year. However, only fifteen (highlighted in green) of the 27 are designated as full time post adoption services counselors.

**Table 24. Quantity of Post Adoption Services Counselors by Circuit**

CIRCUIT	QUANTITY OF POST ADOPTION SERVICES COUNSELORS	COMMENTS
Circuit 01	2	The Children's Home Society Adoption Support Team has two post adoption services counselors, a supervisor and a family support worker.
Circuit 02	1	
Circuit 03	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption supervisor.
Circuit 04	2	
Circuit 05	1	
Circuit 06	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption specialist.
Circuit 07	1	
Circuit 08	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption supervisor.
Circuit 09	1	
Circuit 10	2	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption specialist.
Circuit 11	3	One of these three positions is handling post adoption services full time.
Circuit 12	1	
Circuit 13	3	
Circuit 14	1	
Circuit 15	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption supervisor.
Circuit 16	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption supervisor.
Circuit 17	1	
Circuit 18	3	Currently is part of the job duties of three adoption specialists.
Circuit 19	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption supervisor and the adoption therapist.
Circuit 20	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption specialist.
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15 of the 27 positions are providing post adoption services full time.</b>



With almost 17,000 children adopted from foster care during the last five years, a full time designated post adoption services counselor in each circuit is critical for responding to the needs of adoptive families after finalization of an adoption. The State of Florida and its partners will have to increase the capability of circuits to provide accessible and appropriate information and referrals, temporary case management, assistance with subsidy and Medicaid issues and assistance in maintaining one or more adoptive parent support groups for the many adoptive families who need these post adoption services.



## **PART 3 - AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS**

The following is a summary of the policy and budget recommendations as submitted to the Executive Office of the Governor by the various affected state agencies for the further development of services and programs for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families and prevention of child abuse and neglect. This summary is by no means to be considered all inclusive, by error or intent.

The agencies recommendations are listed in alphabetical order by agency name. This order does not reflect in any way the priorities of the Executive Office of the Governor. This summary of agency recommendations may or may not even reflect the priorities of an agency, but it does show their level of commitment to these particular issues. By identifying the different, and sometimes similar, recommendations among the various state agencies, a dialogue will be created, duplicity of effort will diminish and better cooperation and collaboration between the agencies will be the result.

Seven (7) state agencies provided policy recommendations related to the prevention of abuse, abandonment and neglect. These recommendations are summarized below by state agency.

### **Agency for Persons with Disabilities**

As part of the Agency's legislative budget request (for FY 2011-01), the Agency's requested \$15,500,000 (\$6,771,950 in the General Revenue Fund and \$8,728,050 in the Operations and Maintenance Trust Fund) to offer waiver enrollment to 2,000 people who are not currently enrolled on the APD Home and Community Based Services Waiver. Those 2,000 individuals may include individuals who are aging out of the foster care system and are unable to live on their own without the supports of the Medicaid waiver as well as including children who have been removed from their family homes due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment who are approved to receive waiver services via the crisis enrollment process. Other individuals may include those children in foster care currently on the waiting list for services (based upon the date upon which they were first placed on the waiting list).

### **Agency for Workforce Innovation**

The Agency for Workforce Innovation continues to be supportive of our role in Florida's Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Plan. Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation's Office of Early Learning is the lead agency for the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF). We currently serve 240,000 children in our School Readiness (SR) program and 156,000 4-year-olds in our State funded Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program. With close to 12,000 child care providers participating in our SR program and 6000 participating in our VPK program, Florida is poised for statewide implementation of strategies that embed the *Five Protective Factors* within our early education and care system.

**Prevention Strategy 1: Tactic 1.1.1** of Florida's Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Plan initially requires the Agency to identify and develop training modules and materials, explore delivery options, and identify and develop supplemental materials for front-line staff (i.e. CCR&R & eligibility). To fulfill these requirements, we are currently in the

process of evaluating national family strengthening training programs and determining the best approach to reach early child care providers in Florida. Discussions with local early learning coalitions have been insightful. Through our statewide trainings on the *Five Protective Factors*, we have had the opportunity to speak with local trainers who work directly with child care providers. This has brought us to evaluate current national training programs that target three audiences: early child care providers, front-line staff, and parents. The possibility of embedding the Five Protective Factors training into an already established system is also being evaluated. We are exploring outside funding opportunities to support these initiatives. By December of 2011 we plan to have the core components of our statewide training program implemented.

**Tactics 1.1.2 and 1.1.3** and their subsections are dependent upon the identification, development and implementation of the statewide training program.

**Tactic 1.1.4** requires assessment tools for monitoring the effectiveness of the *Five Protective Factors* training program. From our participation in the local councils we have ascertained that many early learning coalitions are beginning to implement their own strategies to help meet locally identified goals. In order to better plan and prepare for the implementation of statewide strategies that embed the *Five Protective Factors* into Florida's early learning system, a statewide survey assessing current practices is being developed. This will help gauge what early learning coalitions are doing and provide valuable baseline data for future evaluation.

**Action Step 1.1.1.5** consists of aligning the *Five Protective Factors* to the Core Competencies. This project is in process.

#### **Budget Request**

Although we are not currently requesting a budget we are pursuing outside opportunities to fund this large scale project.

### **Department of Children and Families**

The Department advocates for programs that support all families and prevent child abuse and neglect through community-based planning and service delivery.

As adopted in the Executive Office of the Governor's *Florida's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*, the Department recommends the following prevention strategies:

- **Prevention Strategy 1** Infuse the *Five Protective Factors* into Florida Systems that Serve Parents and Children.
- **Prevention Strategy 2** Strengthen Florida's Family Support Systems to Better Serve the Needs of Florida Families.
- **Prevention Strategy 3** Provide Information on Ways to Ensure that Children are Safe and Nurtured and Live in Stable Environments that Promote Well-being.
- **Prevention Strategy 4** Inform and Instruct Education Communities (*The Florida Cooperative Education Child Abuse Prevention Plan*).
- **Prevention Strategy 5** Inform and Instruct Law Enforcement Communities (*The Florida Cooperative Law Enforcement Child Abuse Prevention Plan*).
- **Prevention Strategy 6** Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.

As evident in our role as either the lead or co-lead with the Department of Health and the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida's Prevent Child Abuse Florida, our agency will specifically focus on the following action steps:

- **1.5 Technical Assistance to Circuits.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have provided assistance to circuits seeking to incorporate the *Five Protective Factors* within local prevention services and systems.
- **3.1 Public Awareness and Education.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented statewide, year-round public awareness campaigns with an emphasis in April by providing information to the general population on child development, positive parenting practices, child safety and community action that promotes and supports each of the *Five Protective Factors* for Florida's families.
- **3.2 Evidence-Based Parenting Programs.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have provided information and resources to promote and build evidence-based parenting programs that support the *Five Protective Factors* as enhancement within circuit planning team local prevention services and systems.
- **3.3 Child Death Review.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented selected prevention efforts based upon the findings of an All Child Death Review process that provides for the review of the deaths of all children from birth until the age of 18 who died in Florida

As adopted in the Executive Office of the Governor's *Florida's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*, the Department recommends the following adoption promotion strategies:

- **Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1:** Infuse the *Five Protective Factors* into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents. By 30 June 2015, Florida-based adoptive parent recruitment systems will have intentionally incorporated the *Five Protective Factors* as a foundation for their work.
- **Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2:** Strengthen Florida Recruitment Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption. By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented systems and efforts to better target recruitment of families to meet the needs of children and youth awaiting public adoption.

As evident in our role as sharing the lead with our Community-Base Care partners, our agency will specifically focus on the following action steps:

- **1.1 Local Recruitment Efforts.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the *Five Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.
- **1.2 Parent Preparation and Training.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents, instruction on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the *Five Protective Factors*.

- **2.2 Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted and child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of *Explore Adoption* tools and materials and the Heart Galleries.
- **2.3 Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented fully the state adopted Customer Service Protocol for supporting families through the adoption process and after finalization of child adoption.

As adopted in the Executive Office of the Governor's *Florida's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*, the Department recommends the following adoption support strategies:

- **Support of Adoptive Families Strategy 1:** Strengthen Florida Service Systems to Better Support Adoptive Families to Meet the Needs of Their Adopted Children and Youth. By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented post adoption services that provide for mental health, emotional, physical and other needs of adoptive families.
- **Support of Adoptive Families Strategy 2:** Provide Information and Supports to Adoptive Families. By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have provided information and supports to Florida adoptive families on ways to build competence in meeting the needs of their adopted children and youth.
- **Support of Adoptive Families Strategy 3:** Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation. By 30 June 2015, leadership of plan implementation will have monitored and annually assessed the progress and effectiveness the plan-based initiatives.

As evident in our role as co-lead, our agency will specifically focus on the following action steps:

- **1.1 Information and Support for Adoptive Families.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented fully the state adopted Customer Service Protocol for supporting families with adopted children.
- **1.2 Adoption Competent Professionals.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have increased the number and accessibility of adoption competent mental health, education, and child welfare professionals, so that sufficient numbers are accessible as defined by each circuit.
- **1.3 Post Adoption Services Counselors.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have increased the number of post adoption services counselors in Florida so that each Community Based Care Lead Agency has a sufficient number (a minimum of one full-time staff person) dedicated to responding to the needs and inquiries of adoptive families after finalization.
- **2.1 Adoption Support Groups.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have increased the number and sustainability of quality adoptive parent and youth support groups so that each community has a local support group or, in rural communities, at least a quarterly newsletter or warm-line that informs adoptive parents of nearby support groups and upcoming educational opportunities and information related to the Five Protective Factors.

- **2.2 Education Opportunities for Adoptive Parents.** By 30 June 2015, the State of Florida will have increased the number and accessibility of quality educational opportunities for adoptive parents that include education related to the *Five Protective Factors*, caring for the needs of adoptive children, and supporting the needs of adoptive families.

### *Prevention and Adoption Support and Budget Needs*

#### Prevention

The prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect is a priority in Florida and access to preventive services for all children needs to be available.

- The Department recognizes that the Healthy Families Florida (HFF) program is designed to enable children to grow up healthy, safe, and be nurtured by promoting positive parenting and healthy child development. It is our single largest voluntary child abuse and neglect prevention program. The Department's 2011-2012 Legislative Budget Request includes a request for \$11,983,849 to restore HFF funds lost in state fiscal year 2010-2011. (Issue number 3008200)

The Department requests General Revenue for Healthy Families Florida to restore the funding that was eliminated from the base budget and appropriated at non-recurring in Fiscal Year 2010-2011. The loss of funding for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 meant 3,500 families did not receive Healthy Families services. In FY 2011-2012, an additional 625 families will lose services.

Children in these families are at high risk of abuse and neglect. Due to reductions made to the FY 2010-2011 budget, Healthy Families Florida statewide eliminated services entirely in twelve counties, Baker, Columbia, Gulf, Hamilton, Jefferson, Nassau, Lafayette, Madison, Osceola, Seminole, Taylor, and Walton.

- Consistent with Florida's family centered practice approach and Legislative intent, which directs that prevention and intervention should: (1) engage families in constructive, supportive, and non adversarial relationships; (2) intrude as little as possible into the life of the family, be focused on clearly defined objectives, and take the most parsimonious path to remedy a family's problems; and (3) be based upon outcome evaluation results (i.e., evidence-based practice) that demonstrate success in protecting children and supporting families, families have been brought to the attention of the Department and not clients that have been sought through outreach or actual requests for services.

Children and families who receive the most appropriate and timely resources to address conditions that can deteriorate over time without intervention are less likely to require long-term, more expensive state care.

Given that, the Department's 2011-2012 Legislative Budget Request includes a request for \$2,812,473 in General Revenue to establish 40.00 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) to assist child protection professionals with 'Parent Needs Assistance' calls to the Florida Abuse Hotline as well as to assist in improving engagement and follow-through of the family with the recommended service referral(s). These positions will ensure that families are connected in their local community. This program will also reduce caseloads for Child Protective Investigators (CPIs). (Issue number 4000780)

As part of the Department's prevention framework, the Florida Abuse Hotline began accepting referrals via the category of 'Parent Needs Assistance' on January 22, 2010. With this type of referral, a family is brought to the attention of the Department, but the situation does not meet the criteria, of an abuse report.

The Department has increased the number of referrals accepted through the abuse hotline via the category of 'Parent Needs Assistance'. From January 22, 2010 through June 30, 2010, there were a total of 10,513. By December 31, 2010, the total number of 'Parent Needs Assistance' is projected to be 21,026. 'Parent Needs Assistance' referrals, in addition to abuse and neglect reports, are currently responded to by Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) even though these calls do not meet the criteria of the abuse and neglect reports, which require a full investigation. If the statutory criteria of abuse or neglect are not met, dependency proceedings cannot be initiated even if risk is present for the child and family. CPIs refer families for services when a formal child welfare case is not opened; however, CPIs do not have ongoing follow-up or monitoring of the family after the investigation is closed. This increased attention to the most vulnerable child population (0-5 years of age) is critical because the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) Children's Bureau 2008 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) indicates that children in this age group typically account for over 48% of all child victims in general and 84% of all child fatalities.

The addition of Family Connections Specialists will enhance the Department's capacity to implement preventative activities and support at the earliest possible point for families that have been brought to the attention of the Department.

Priority populations for Family Connections Specialists will be families with children 0-5 years of age. These referrals, and the problematic conditions that brought the family to the attention of the Department, can frequently be better served through timely linkage with community programs and resources. Family Connections Specialists will assist in alleviating the workload that is currently being handled solely by the CPIs. Family Connections Specialists would have access to parenting tools and empirically researched child safety strategies. (Issue number 4000780)

### **Adoption**

As a result of the Maintenance Adoption Subsidy Program, thousands of children are growing up with permanent families. Section 409.166, Florida Statutes, recognizes the need for financial assistance for families that adopt children who require a special commitment because of their significant challenges. Every child should have the stability and security of a permanent family. In Fiscal Year 2009-2010, there were 3,368 new final adoptions recorded in the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) as of July 31, 2010.

Since more foster children will be adopted, fewer will remain in foster care. Families with median incomes as well as foster parents and relative caregivers have proven that they are able and willing to successfully adopt because of this financial assistance.



The Department's 2011-2012 Legislative Budget Request includes requests for Maintenance Adoption Subsidies. The requests are described below.

- The Department requests \$3,996,990 of General Revenue budget authority to authorize ongoing activities performed in the Community Based Care (CBC) lead agencies for Maintenance Adoption Subsidies. This action is needed to restore non-recurring budget authority that was appropriated in Fiscal Year 2010-2011. This issue has a corresponding growth issue of \$8,080,154, (issue number 4006020) and a corresponding restore of maintenance adoption subsidies of \$966,594, (issue number 4409000) for a total request of \$13,043,738 for Maintenance Adoption Subsidies. Restoration of nonrecurring budget for programs supported by this budget will prevent the elimination of critical services. (issue number 4003020)
- The Department requests \$8,080,154 (\$7,746,699 in General Revenue and \$333,455 in the Federal Grants Trust Fund) to continue ongoing and new maintenance adoption subsidies for those children who have been adopted while in foster care. These subsidies enable families to consider special needs adoptions. This issue, in addition to issue number 4003020 for \$3,996,990 and issue number 4409000 for \$966,594 requests a total of \$13,043,738 for Maintenance Adoption Subsidies. (issue number 4006020)
- The Department requests \$966,594 of General Revenue budget authority to authorize ongoing Maintenance Adoption Subsidies. This action is needed to replace non-recurring budget authority appropriated in Fiscal Year 2010-2011. This issues has a corresponding growth issue request of \$8,080,154, issue number 4006020 and a corresponding restore of nonrecurring CBC Services of 3,996,990, issue number 4003020 for a total request of \$13,043,738 for Maintenance Adoption Subsidies. (issue number 4009000)

### **Department of Corrections**

Many inmates and persons on probation are parents or are a part of or associated with family units with children; placing these families and, in particular, these children in a higher risk category. Targeted services for this population (either while in custody, or state supervision) offer opportunities to develop healthy parental skills and bring stability to these family units.

The Department of Corrections is not making any budget requests at this time.

## Florida Department of Education

### FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Dr. Eric J. Smith  
Commissioner of Education

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November 17, 2010

Jim Kallinger  
Chief Child Advocate  
Executive Office of the Governor  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Mr. Kallinger,

The Commissioner of Education, Dr. Eric J. Smith asked the Bureau of Family and Community Outreach to respond to your e-mail dated October 27, 2010, in which you requested input for the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection's annual report as required by Florida Statute. We thank you for contacting the Department of Education.

As you know, the Department has the privilege of serving on the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Council. While serving on the Council, Department staff offered input which was incorporated into the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. At this time the Department has no further recommendations. Additionally, the Department will not be submitting a budget request for this area.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Council and its partner agencies and organizations. If we may be of further assistance or respond to any additional questions, please contact Julie Collins, Program Consultant, Office of Safe Schools, by phone at (850) 245-0676 or by e-mail at [Julie.Collins@fldoe.org](mailto:Julie.Collins@fldoe.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph Davis".

Joseph Davis, Chief  
Bureau of Family and Community Outreach

JD:jc

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325 W. GAINES STREET • TALLAHASSEE, FL 32399-0400 • (850) 245-0505 • [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org)

## Department of Health

The Department of Health (DOH) has indicated that it fully supports the five-year plan for prevention and permanency. DOH has a leadership role in a number of the objectives, as well as participating in the Education Cooperative Plan and the Law Enforcement Plan as defined by Florida Statute 39.

### ***Budget***

The Department of Health endorses the five-year plan for prevention and permanency and the budget items within the plan.

## Department of Juvenile Justice



### FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Charlie Crist, Governor

Frank Peterman, Jr., Secretary

November 30, 2010

Mr. Jim Kallinger  
Chief Child Advocate  
Executive Office of the Governor  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Mr. Kallinger,

The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice fully supports the vision of the 5-Year Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan that; Florida's highest priority is that children are raised in healthy, safe, stable and nurturing families. We appreciate your strong leadership and the work of the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Council to develop and implement an effective plan that will provide for a brighter future for Florida's children. Child abuse, neglect, and abandonment are critical risk factors that contribute to a number of Florida's children being involved in the juvenile justice system.

We will continue our efforts to assist in the implementation of the 5-Year Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan by:

Supporting the implementation of the 5 Protective Factors for children and families through our faith and community-based partners;

Assisting in the development and implementation of an effective faith and community-based effort that encourages adoption and provides support to adoptive families;

Participating in the Law Enforcement Planning Team's efforts to implement the Cross Agency Training related to child abuse, neglect and abandonment.

Thank you again for your leadership to ensure Florida's children are raised in healthy, safe, stable and nurturing families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Peterman, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frank Peterman, Jr.  
Secretary

2737 Centerview Drive • Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3100 • (850) 488-1850  
<http://www.djj.state.fl.us>

*The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.*

## **Department of Law Enforcement**

There is one area that we would again like to bring to your attention. It is our understanding, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), in an effort to do the right thing, were assisting in providing criminal history record checks on private adoptions. After a recent FBI audit, DCF had to cease that process as it was not authorized by state law and the information, due to privacy issues, could not be released to private attorneys. In order for these private adoptions to be subjected to state and national criminal record checks, the Florida legislature would have to state in law that these checks shall be done and what governmental agency would screen the results. On a related note, there is also a gap in that persons can host foreign exchange students without a state and national criminal history record check. This was discussed recently by a congressional committee with comments published in the Federal Register, however, state law does not require these checks nor provide a screening agency to adjudicate the results.

We understand that these two issues may appear to be simple in solution, however, in actuality the details in how to accomplish these tasks can at times be quite complex. That being said, we believe that they merit further discussion on how to better protect these children who are privately adopted and who are sent into homes in what they believe to be a trusted environment in an educational exchange program.

### **Therefore, we continue to move forward the following recommendation:**

- Consider establishing a requirement in state statute for background check screening for private adoptions, and for persons who house foreign exchange students.

We have no budget request specific to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families. We do, however, have an LBR issue to restore a fund shift and a trust fund sweep from our Criminal Justice Standards & Training Trust Fund which funds the operation of our Professionalism Program. This program provides funding to the state's 41 certified training centers that provide advanced and specialized training to law enforcement and corrections officers that includes the following topics.

#### **Advanced Training courses**

Sex Crimes Investigations

Domestic Intervention

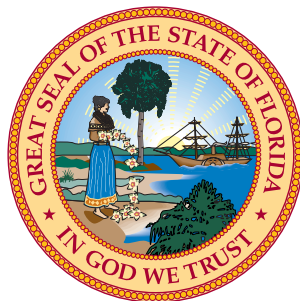
Computer Crime Investigations

Advanced Investigative Techniques of Human Trafficking

#### **Specialized Training Program courses:**

STP 1135 Crimes Against Children

STP 1136 Domestic Violence



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Executive Office of the Governor  
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