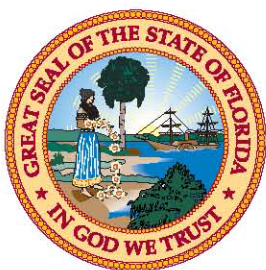

***Office of Adoption
and Child Protection***



**Annual Report
2011**



*Executive Office of
the Governor*



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

Office of the Governor

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0001

www.flgov.com
850-488-7146
850-487-0801 fax

December 30, 2011

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 fifth Annual Report of the 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. The annual reports for the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council due by February 1, 2012, and the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* due December 31, 2011 are also included in this report.

The main objective of the Office is to empower Florida's communities and strengthen 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 Florida's foster care system is as temporary as possible. With a sense of urgency, Florida's foster children who have experienced profound trauma 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. With few state resources with which to work, the 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 has been created and is effectively addressing child well-being in our state.

Florida's award winning *Explore Adoption* and *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* public awareness campaigns highlight our children in state care who wait the longest for their adoption through a wide array of marketing materials. As a result of these campaigns, Florida's interactive and user friendly *Explore Adoption* website (www.AdoptFlorida.org) is being visited by more and more people each and every month. In November 2011, the website had a record number of webpage views – over 300,000 page views by visitors from over 89 countries. On Twitter, *Explore Adoption* had a record breaking month, having over 100,000 impressions on November 2, 2011. Concerted efforts are now underway by Florida's Foundation to recruit support early next year for expanding the *Explore Adoption* campaign to continue to raise public awareness statewide regarding the benefits of foster care adoption.

In addition and to complement our *Explore Adoption* campaign, the Florida Association of Heart Galleries was created to unite Florida's 16 local Heart Galleries and enhance their efforts to recruit adoptive families through child-specific awareness. The Office of Adoption and Child Protection in conjunction with the Florida Association of Heart Galleries and the Department of Children and Families launched the *Florida Heart Galleries* exhibit of 50 personality-filled portraits of children in foster care available for adoption in Florida. The exhibit was on display on the State Capitol's 22nd floor for two months, and photos continue to be on display in the Governor's Office lobby on the Capitol's Plaza Level. A Communications major at Florida State University also created a documentary about Heart Galleries and foster care adoption in Florida. The video is posted on the *Explore Adoption* website for Florida's providers to utilize for adoption recruitment.

Florida has become a national model for public adoptions, collecting a total of more than \$18 million in federal adoption incentive awards in 2009, 2010, and 2011 for improving adoption performance throughout the state. Nearly 17,000 children have been adopted from Florida's child welfare system in the last five years and statewide records were set two years in a row. Credit for Florida's adoption successes

is shared by many committed partners that have rallied the multitude of Floridians who have answered the call and opened their hearts and homes to our children in care.

Governor Rick Scott appointed Secretary David Wilkins, Department of Children and Families as the Chairman of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet in May 2011. Under the leadership of Chairman Wilkins, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet has made remarkable progress this year. The Cabinet is working on 11 different initiatives through the Office of Adoption and Child Protection with support from the Cabinet members, their staff and the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care as workgroup leads.

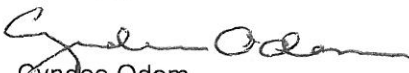
The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet was recently recognized in a ceremony on Capitol Hill by the Forum for Youth Investment for the first Ready by 21® Policy Leadership Awards. The awards were presented to federal and state policymakers who have made tremendous strides in aligning policies, maximizing scarce resources and coordinating services across departments to help ensure that all children grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to join the workforce. The members of the Children and Youth Cabinet were honored as a collaborative set of policymakers that are improving outcomes for Florida's children and youth.

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection has assumed administrative functions and support for the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council. Under the leadership of Chairman Tom Lukasik, Executive Director, 4KIDS of South Florida and Vice-Chair Sheila Hopkins, Associate Director, Florida Catholic Conference the Council is committed to supporting Florida's promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families initiatives, encouraging partnerships, highlighting best practices, collaborating with state government and assisting as needed with communication, planning and support of the state's disaster response and recovery systems.

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 developed 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. Significant progress has been made over the last year with our legislatively mandated implementation of the five-year state plan on prevention and permanency. The Office, the 33-member Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council in collaboration with the state leads for the 40 state objectives and 20 local planning teams comprised of almost 600 individuals from across our state, are reporting and monitoring on the implementation of Florida's five-year plan on prevention and permanency. One major feature of our plan is the incorporation of the *Five Protective Factors*, as researched and developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, which are proven to reduce child maltreatment through strengthening families and empowering communities, thus improving child well-being. These *Five Protective Factors* are being readily embraced and incorporated cost effectively into already existing state and local efforts related to child well-being with potentially significant results.

The staff members of the 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 Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott for their 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 the decision-making process.

Sincerely,



Cyndee Odom

Director

Office of Adoption and Child Protection

Executive Office of the Governor

Table of Contents

Part 1 – Summary of Activities of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection	1
Office of Adoption and Child Protection	1
Chief Child Advocate.....	1
Highlighted Activities of the Chief Child Advocate During 2011.....	2
Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection	3
National Leadership.....	3
State Leadership.....	3
Highlighted Activities of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection During 2011	4
Florida’s Award Winning Campaigns.....	6
<i>Explore Adoption</i>	6
<i>30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption! National Adoption Month Campaign</i>	6
Constituent Support and Assistance.....	7
Florida’s Foundation.....	8
Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.....	9
Representation and Membership on the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.....	9
2011 Meetings of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet	11
Initiatives of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.....	12
Child Death Review Teams Workgroup.....	12
Community Services Delivery Models Workgroup.....	12
Human Trafficking Workgroup	13
Interagency Background Screening Workgroup	13
Headline Indicators on Child Well-being	14
Administrative Flexibility Workgroup.....	15
Youth Commission	15
Information Sharing Workgroup.....	16
Children’s Budget Workgroup.....	17
State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care.....	18
Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council.....	20
Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council.....	20
Highlighted Initiatives of the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council.....	20
Representation and Membership on the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council.....	21
Current Work of the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council	22
Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency	22
Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council.....	22
Representation and Membership on the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council	22
Statutory Charge to the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council.....	24
Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council Efforts	24
Local Planning for Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency	24
Monthly Local Planning Team Convener Meetings via Conference Call.....	25
Local Planning Team Conveners and Key Contacts	26
<i>Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015</i>	27
Research Guiding Development of the Plan	28
Summary of the Plan.....	30
Arrangement of the Plan	31
<i>Florida Child Abuse Prevention Plan: July 2010 – June 2015</i>	31
<i>Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015</i>	32
<i>Florida Support of Adoptive Families Plan: July 2010 – June 2015</i>	33
First Year of Plan Implementation State Highlights July 2010 – June 2011	34
First Year of Plan Implementation Local Highlights July 2010 – June 2011	38

Part 1 Tables

Table 1. Representation and Membership on the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet..... 9
Table 2. State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care Membership 19
Table 3. Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Membership..... 21
Table 4. Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council Membership..... 22
Table 5. Local Planning Team Leadership and Key Contacts..... 26

Part 2 – Status of Child Maltreatment and Adoptions in Florida.....43

Summary of Child Maltreatment Data 44
Status of Child Maltreatment in Florida..... 44
State Plan Desired Result 1 – Child Maltreatment Prevention 44
The Story Behind the Baseline..... 44
Verified Maltreatment..... 46
Allegations and Investigations of Child Maltreatment 48
Reasons for Removal 51
Services Recommended 51
Child Abuse Death Review 52

Summary of Adoption Data and the Timeliness of Adoptions 55

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)..... 55
AFCARS Measure 1 – Percent Discharged in Less than 24 Months 55
AFCARS Measure 2 – Median Length of Stay in Foster Care 56
AFCARS Measure 3 – Finalized Adoptions 57
AFCARS Measure 4 – Legally Free for Adoption 57
The Adoption Process for Children Adopted from within the Child Welfare System 58
Timeliness of Adoption..... 60
State Plan Desired Result 2 – Promotion of Adoption..... 60
State Plan Desired Result 3 – Promotion of Adoption..... 62
Dissolutions of Adoptions..... 62
State Plan Desired Result 4 – Support of Adoptive Families..... 65
Status of Support of Adoptive Families 66
Support Groups 67
Adoption Competency 68
Post Adoption Services Counselors 69

Part 2 Charts

Chart 1. Verified Child Maltreatment Rate (Per 1,000)..... 44
Chart 2. Length of Stay in Foster Care from the Date of Termination of Parental
Rights to the Date of Adoption Finalization..... 61
Chart 3. Percent of Children Awaiting Adoption Who Have Been Waiting
Longer than 12 Months 62
Chart 4. Children Awaiting Adoption by Length of Time Since TPR..... 63
Chart 5. Age Groups of Children without Identified Homes Awaiting Adoption..... 64
Chart 6. Race, Amount of Time Waiting and Gender of Children without Identified
Homes Awaiting Adoption..... 64

Part 2 Tables

Table 1. Rate of Children with Verified Maltreatment per 1,000 Children in the General Population
July 2008 – June 2009, July 2009 – June 2010, and July 2010 – June 2011..... 46
Table 2. Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of
Verified Abuse by Age Range, July 2010 – June 2011 Statewide 47
Table 3. Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of
Verified Abuse by Age Range, July 2010 – June 2011 by Circuit..... 47

Part 2 Tables (continued)

Table 4. Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) for July 2010 – June 2011 Statewide..... 48

Table 5. Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) for July 2010 – June 2011 by Circuit 48

Table 6. Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) July 2010 – June 2011 49

Table 7. Allegations and Verifications of Abuse (Duplicated Child Counts) July 2010 – June 2011 50

Table 8. Reasons for Removal Reported (Duplicated Child Counts) July 2010 – June 2011 51

Table 9. Services Recommended for Alleged Victims at Investigation Disposition July 2010 – June 2011 52

Table 10. Leading Causes of Child Abuse Deaths in 2009 52

Table 11. Percent Discharged to Adoption in Less than 24 months (by Circuit) 56

Table 12. Median Length of Stay in Foster Care (by Circuit) for Children Discharged to Adoption 56

Table 13. Percent of Finalized Adoptions (by Circuit) 57

Table 14. Percent of Children Legally Free for Adoption (by Circuit) 57

Table 15. Adoption-Related Populations as of July 1, 2010 59

Table 16. Length of Time between TPR and Adoption Finalization for SFY 2010 – 2011 Finalized Adoptions 59

Table 17. Length of Time Since TPR for Children Remaining Available for Adoption as of June 30, 2011 60

Table 18. Percentage of Adoptions by Circuit by Type of Adoptive Family 61

Table 19. Adoption-Related Populations as of June 30, 2011 62

Table 20. Dissolutions by Circuit and Child-Related Reasons Cited 65

Table 21. Dissolutions by Circuit and Adoptive Parent-Related Reasons Cited 66

Table 22. Quantity of Adoptive Parent Support Groups by Circuit 67

Table 23. Quantity of Adoption Competent Mental Health Professionals by Circuit 69

Table 24. Quantity of Post Adoption Services Counselors by Circuit 70

Part 3 – Agency Recommendations and Requests 71

Agency for Persons with Disabilities 71

Department of Children and Families 71

Department of Corrections 74

Department of Education 74

Department of Health 74

Department of Juvenile Justice 75

Department of Law Enforcement 75

Guardian ad Litem 75

Office of Early Learning 76

Supplemental Documents (found on www.flgov.com/child_advocacy)

Florida Statutes 39.001, 39.0011, 402.56 and 14.31

First Year Monitoring Reports for the *Florida Child Abuse and Neglect Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

First Year Monitoring Reports for the *Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

First Year Monitoring Reports for the *Florida Support of Adoptive Families Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

First Year Monitoring Reports for the local *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plans: July 2010 – June 2015*

Five-Year Plan Development

Five-Year Planning Partners

Part 1 – SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF ADOPTION AND CHILD PROTECTION

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection

On June 12, 2007, the bill creating the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, was signed into law. The duties and responsibilities of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection are enshrined in Section 39.001, Florida Statutes (§39.001, FS). The Office was created for the purpose of establishing, implementing, and monitoring a cross-agency comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families and prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. As of December 2011, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection has a dedicated staff of two full-time employees including Cyndee Odom (Director), Christina Pacelle, MSW (Special Projects Manager), and one part-time employee, Megan Gil (Program Support). Together, this team has the passion and expertise to create efficiencies and achieve remarkable results.

Throughout 2011, the Office assisted with the transition to the new administration and successfully continued and expanded the work of the Office with fewer resources. The Office accomplished this through providing education and background information for the new Florida Children and Youth Cabinet members on the work of the Cabinet. Six Cabinet meetings and meetings for 11 different workgroups were planned, staffed, and supported by the Office. The Office also assumed administrative responsibilities for the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council. The Office worked closely with the Appointments Office and other staff to ensure that the Governor, Speaker of the House, and Senate President's appointments were made to these entities. The Office also worked closely with the state agencies to appoint new members to the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, which is staffed, supported, and chaired through the Office.

The Office also oversaw the plan implementation and monitoring for the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* and provided support and guidance to the leads of the 40 state objectives and the 20 local planning teams. The Office continued to manage the award winning *Explore Adoption* and *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* public awareness campaigns.

Chief Child Advocate

In June 2011, First Lady Ann Scott began serving as the “Honorary Chief Child Advocate of Florida”. Florida’s First Lady Ann Scott volunteers to promote literacy, foster care adoption, and healthy lifestyles for children. First Lady Ann Scott works to ensure that Florida’s children are on an early path to success and serves as a good-will ambassador promoting state and local solutions that ensure Florida’s children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn.

The First Lady has met many children and youth while she has traveled throughout the great state of Florida. She enjoys spending time with and learning about each child she meets. To promote literacy for children in Florida, First Lady Ann Scott has read to hundreds of children and kicked off Literacy Week. During the summer, First Lady Ann Scott promoted her Summer Literacy Initiative. She was also featured in a reading poster that has been promoted statewide.

Ann Scott is passionate about all children being in safe, stable and nurturing environments. She is committed to ensuring that all children available for adoption from foster care are placed in permanent, loving families. To raise the awareness of the children and teens waiting for their permanent families, First Lady Ann Scott authored two opinion-editorials this year – one for Mother’s Day and the second for National Adoption Month.

The First Lady is committed to ensuring that Florida’s children are living active, healthy lifestyles. She encourages children to go outside and play every day, as well as to eat healthy, balanced, nutritious meals. “I am committed to making Florida a place where all of our children are safe, healthy, ready to learn, and prepared to achieve their full potential.”

Highlighted Activities of the Chief Child Advocate During 2011

First Lady Ann Scott was new to politics and to public office when she moved into the Florida Governor's Mansion in January 2011. However, as a mother and now a new grandmother, Mrs. Scott immediately focused her time and energy as First Lady on the children of Florida.

Throughout 2011, First Lady Ann Scott has established herself as a visible and volunteer advocate for children's issues. She has spent the past year promoting reading, literacy and early learning, encouraging healthy active lifestyles for children, supporting foster care and adoption, and making the Florida Governor's Mansion more welcoming to school children and the public alike.

Her first public event as First Lady was a visit to Kirby Smith Middle School in Jacksonville, where she read aloud to children and helped launch Celebrate Literacy Week 2011. Since then, Mrs. Scott has visited many schools, early learning centers, and voluntary pre-kindergartens across the state, reading to children and promoting healthy habits.

It's important for Mrs. Scott as a mother and as First Lady to encourage Florida's children to be healthy, active children. First Lady Ann Scott brought local children into the Governor's Mansion kitchen to learn how to safely prepare healthy after-school snacks at home. She filmed a healthy back to school message in the fall to remind students throughout the state to eat a healthy breakfast, use nutritious food to fuel their minds, and get out and play every day.

She has hosted several reading events for children at the Florida Governor's Mansion, including inviting Florida children's book authors for a special reading with children, a tradition she hopes to continue throughout the state in the coming years. She launched her Summer Literacy Initiative, visiting libraries and state parks across the state and encouraging school children to pledge to read as many books as they could during the break.

The First Lady has helped spread her message of reading and literacy through a READ poster that was distributed to schools and libraries statewide. She invited foster children to participate in the poster with her, using the opportunity to raise awareness for reading and encourage adoption. Since then, all four have found their forever families. Mrs. Scott has met many of the foster care children available for adoption in Florida and they have touched her heart. The First Lady hosted a first annual Easter celebration on the grounds of The Grove, inviting foster children from surrounding counties to participate in the egg hunt and other festivities. She has spent time with the Corey's Kids summer camp for foster children, made several visits with Boys Town North Florida, and helped launch Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Ann Scott is thrilled by the number of foster children who have found their forever family this year. She kicked off National Adoption Month with a video message about Florida's initiative, *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!*. She personally sent a special letter of appreciation and congratulations to many of the adoptive families. Mrs. Scott enjoys every child she gets to meet as First Lady. She works every day to ensure that Florida's children are safe, healthy, ready to learn, and on an early path to success, and will continue to work toward those goals throughout her time as First Lady.

Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection

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 Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, include 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, assisting in rule development, advising the Governor and Legislature, and developing public awareness campaigns.

National Leadership

The Director serves on the Ready by 21® Leadership Council founded and managed by the Forum for Youth Investment with support from the Ready by 21® National Partnership. The Leadership Council plays an active role in strengthening leadership for collective impact, increasing the quality and quantity of investments in children and youth in the United States, defining readiness and desired outcomes broadly so that young people are productive, connected and healthy. The Council also advises on and leverages major ideas and initiatives to ensure that all youth are ready for college, ready for work, and ready for life.

The Ready by 21® National Partnership brings together prominent national organizations from education, business, government, research, nonprofits and philanthropy to help leaders carry out best practices and policies. Partners include the United Way Worldwide, American Association of School Administrators, America's Promise Alliance, Corporate Voices for Working Families, The National Collaboration for Youth, the National Conference of State Legislatures, Search Institute, Child Trends, The Gallop Organization, and other leading organizations that help improve outcomes for youth.

In the past six months the Director has emerged as a leader within the Children's Cabinet Network. The Children's Cabinet Network is managed by the Forum for Youth Investment and consists of the chairs, staff and members of state children cabinets, who come together to share best practices, to receive technical support, coaching and tools, and to bring efficiency and effectiveness to state policies and services to improve child and youth outcomes.

State Leadership

The Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection is a member of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, Chairs the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, and is also a member of the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care. The Director co-authored the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* and leads the implementation and monitoring of the five-year plan for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promotion of adoption; and support of adoptive families.

The Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection 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.

Additionally, the Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection represents the Executive Office of the Governor on the federally funded State Maternal and Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (ECCS) implemented by the Department of Health Statewide Multi-Agency Team. 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 Office of Adoption and Child Protection During 2011

Policy Related Efforts

The Office collaborated with the Forum for Youth Investment and Ready by 21® on numerous meetings and symposiums. Below are a select few that the Office was a part of:

- Attended the *Coordinating Policies for Kids* briefing held in Washington, DC. The event unveiled the results of the *Ready by 21 State Policy Survey: Child and Youth Policy Coordinating Bodies in the U.S.* – the first-ever survey of state coordinating bodies. The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet was recognized by the Forum for Youth Investment during the briefing for the first Ready by 21® Policy Leadership Awards.
- On behalf of Florida, participated in the State Strategy Symposium in Chattanooga, Tennessee hosted by the National Conference of State Legislatures State and the Ready by 21® National Partnership. Select state leader teams that influence youth policy and practices in their state were convened from six southeastern states.
- Attended the Ready by 21® Leadership Council meeting in Washington, DC. The Council plays an active role in strengthening leadership for collective impact, increasing the quality and quantity of investments in children and youth in the United States, defining readiness and desired outcomes broadly so that young people are productive, connected and healthy. The Council also advises on and leverages major ideas and initiatives to ensure that all youth are ready for college, ready for work, and ready for life.
- On behalf of Florida, attended the Forum for Youth Investment’s 2011 Children’s Cabinet Network Symposium in Washington, DC. The Children’s Cabinet Network Symposium brought together state leaders to learn more about how policy coordinating bodies can improve the lives of children and youth through building broader interagency partnerships to promote coordination and alignment of policies affecting youth. In addition, state leaders learned about setting bigger interagency goals; collecting better data to track progress, and use the data to drive decision-making; and using bolder strategies to raise the visibility of child and youth issues, improve the quality of programs and systems, and engage young people in policymaking.

The Office also coordinated and facilitated conference calls and meetings with state and federal agencies, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) staff and national experts on increasing administrative flexibility for states and innovative initiatives to improve outcomes for children and improve governmental performance.

Made presentations at various state and national conferences and webinars including:

- State Strategy Symposium – presentation and demonstration on the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System.
- Ready by 21® Leadership Council – presentation on the work of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.
- Children’s Cabinet Network Webinar – presentation on data and information sharing.
- Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Meeting – presentations on the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* and *Administrative Flexibility: Supporting Interagency Efforts to Reconnect Disconnected Youth*.
- Department of Children and Families Adoption Webinar – joined Secretary David Wilkins in a conversation about adoption recruitment and post adoption services in Florida.

Highlighted Activities of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection During 2011

Continued

Child Maltreatment Prevention and Adoption Related Efforts

Supported the First Lady's activities including the Heart Gallery exhibit at the Easter Egg Hunt and READ poster photo shoot and unveiling at the Governor's Mansion, a meet and greet and visit to a Florida Children and Youth Cabinet meeting, taping of the First Lady's video message for National Adoption Month and congratulations letters for new adoptive families.

Attended conferences and trainings including, Pathway to Independence Summit, Rutgers School of Social Work Adoption Certification Program, and the Center for Child and Family Health and Duke University Medical School Attachment Difficulties, Childhood Trauma, and Reactive Attachment Disorder: Clinical Guidelines for Assessment, Diagnosis and Treatment Training.

Coordinated and worked with a Communications major at Florida State University to create a documentary about Heart Galleries and foster care adoption in Florida. The video is posted on the Department of Children and Families and the *Explore Adoption* websites for Florida's providers to utilize for adoption recruitment, and well as individuals and families interested in adoption.

Planned, coordinated and launched the *Florida Heart Galleries* exhibit of 50 personality-filled photos of children in foster care available for adoption in Florida in conjunction with the Florida Association of Heart Galleries (FLAHG) and the Department of Children and Families. The exhibit was on display on the State Capitol's 22nd floor for two months. Photos continue to be on display in the Governor's Office lobby on the Capitol's plaza level.

Participated in training workshops focused on crisis communications, branding, strategic planning and developing grassroots campaigns at the 73rd Florida Public Relations Association's Annual Conference in Naples, Florida. The Office of Adoption and Child Protection and the Department of Children and Families staff received a Golden Image Award during the conference for Florida's *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* 2010 campaign. The zero-budget campaign also won a Judges' Award from the Florida Public Relations Association Capital Chapter.

Hosted *Explore Adoption* exhibit booths and disseminated materials at numerous local and state conferences, events and trainings. Participated in press conferences, radio, television, and other media events promoting adoption. Witnessed adoption ceremonies where multiple adoptions were finalized in the same day, and had the opportunity to meet with many new adoptive families and discuss their experiences.

Led the five-year prevention and permanency plan implementation and monitoring, coordinated and led the five-year plan Learning Community Meeting, and attended statewide workgroup meetings for the five-year prevention and permanency plan. Continued work on an automated online reporting system for the five-year plan. Also planned and coordinated monthly calls with the Local Planning Team leaders for the local five-year prevention and permanency plans.

Interacted with many concerned citizens and local leaders from across the state to listen to their issues and ideas, and then conveyed those messages to appropriate state and interstate discussions.

Florida's Public Awareness Award Winning Campaigns

Explore Adoption



The 2007 Legislature appropriated funding to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, 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 Office of Adoption and Child Protection has continued to promote public adoption through *Explore Adoption* and distributed 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 or call 1-800-96-ADOPT.

During 2011 the Office of Adoption and Child Protection and the Department of Children and Families partnered together to continue to raise the awareness about foster care adoption in Florida and to expand *Explore Adoption's* social media footprint. In April 2011, *Explore Adoption* began using the name @ExploreAdoption on Twitter, and in less than six months after beginning the initiative, had over 600 followers. These followers range from individuals and families to agencies, non-profits, and businesses in Florida, and throughout the world.

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection hosted an *Explore Adoption* exhibit at the 2011 Pathway to Independence Summit. *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. The Office also hosted the *Explore Adoption* exhibit at the National Day of Prayer in Tallahassee, the Governor and First Lady's Easter Egg Hunt at the Governor's Mansion, and the Statewide Adoption Conference in Orlando.

Florida has become a national model for public adoptions, collecting a total of more than \$18 million in federal adoption incentive awards in 2009, 2010, and 2011 for improving adoption performance throughout the state. Almost 17,000 children have been adopted from Florida's child welfare system in the last five years and statewide records were set two years in a row. Credit for Florida's adoption successes is shared by many committed partners, including the *Explore Adoption* campaign, the 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 others.

30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption! – National Adoption Month Campaign



During 2011 the *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* zero-budget 2010 campaign won a Judges' Award from the Florida Public Relations Association Capital Chapter and a state Golden Image Award from the Florida Public Relations Association.

On November 1, 2011 First Lady Ann Scott launched a wonderful video message about National Adoption Month in Florida. This video encouraged Floridians to learn about the joys of adoption and to consider making a difference in the life of a child by becoming their forever family. This video was viewed by thousands of people throughout Florida and the nation, and can be found on the *Explore Adoption* website and YouTube Channel. The First Lady also authored an opinion-editorial about foster care adoption that was published in several newspapers throughout November. New adoptive families that finalized their

adoption during National Adoption Month received a congratulations letter on becoming a forever family from the First Lady.

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection Director Cyndee Odom, Department of Children and Families Secretary David Wilkins, and Park Manager of Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park Beth Weidner kicked off National Adoption Month on November 1, 2011 with a news conference at the state park in Tallahassee, Florida. During the news conference, Florida unveiled the *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* 2011 campaign, a month-long initiative featuring daily videos and pictures of children in foster care available for adoption on the *Explore Adoption* website: www.adoptflorida.org. Over 13% of the children in foster care available for adoption without an identified family were featured on the website during November 2011. At the news conference the Department of Environmental Protection announced that they were giving free passes to state parks to all families finalizing adoptions of children in foster care during November.

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, daily tweets via Twitter, website links and media coverage. Due to strong public interest in viewing the personal messages of the children featured during the campaign, the *Explore Adoption* website set a record number of page views in November – over 306,000 (by visitors from 89 different countries). Over 68% of the visitors to the site were new visitors – they had not been on the *Explore Adoption* website previously. The number of pages per visit doubled from 3.0 in November 2010 to 6.86 pages per visit in November 2011. Additionally, the length of time users were on the *Explore Adoption* website significantly increased from 3:06 minutes in November 2010 to 5:10 minutes in November 2011. The *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* campaign was so successful that all of the children and pictures featured in November were also featured in December 2011.

On Twitter, *Explore Adoption* had a record breaking month, having over 100,000 impressions on November 2, 2011, and averaged 26,000 impressions per day throughout the rest of November 2011. The *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* campaign also produced more than 700 phone calls to the *Explore Adoption* hotline, including 23 calls requesting information on specific children featured in the campaign.

Constituent Support and Assistance

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, 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 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 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 Office of Adoption and Child Protection has assisted numerous individuals and/or families in 2011. Representative examples of the more prevalent cases include assisting:

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

Florida's Foundation



Pursuant to §39.0011, FS, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, 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 the 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 Office of Adoption and Child Protection and in the best interest of the state.

In accordance with the Florida Statutes, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection assisted with the creation and launch of the Trust for Florida's Children (the Trust). 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 designated the Foundation as the fiscal agent of the Trust. During 2011 the Trust lost several board members, and after much deliberation, the Trust for Florida's Children was dissolved by majority vote of the Board of Directors. The dissolution papers were filed with the Secretary of State and the IRS forms in August 2011.

In September 2011, the Executive Office of the Governor and Florida's Foundation (the Foundation) agreed to partner together to raise awareness and support for permanency for Florida's children. Florida's Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and registered Charity in Florida. The mission of the Foundation is to strengthen Florida by making positive changes in the lives of Florida's families through initiatives developed under the leadership of the State of Florida and its citizens. The Foundation has worked with two previous administrations as well as the current administration on various public/private partnerships and initiatives. In 2011, the Foundation partnered with the Office of Adoption and Child Protection to raise awareness and support for *Explore Adoption*, a statewide adoption initiative aimed at promoting the benefits of public adoption and urging families to consider creating or expanding their families by adopting one or more of the 800 children available from Florida's foster care system on any given day. This includes the children who wait the longest to be adopted: teenagers, sibling groups and children with medical conditions.

The Foundation has utilized its network of contacts which include major donors to the Foundation, non-profits funded by the Foundation, Faith- and Community-Based organizations to help raise awareness for *Explore Adoption*. During National Adoption Month in November, the Foundation reached out to their network through e-blasts as well as talking with their major corporate donors about supporting the public awareness campaign. The Foundation is also scheduling a meeting with the Florida Lottery to enlist their support for *Explore Adoption*.

The Foundation has also made *Explore Adoption* part of its website to highlight the need for public awareness about the children in foster care available for adoption without identified families. Florida's Foundation has recently presented at a Florida Children and Youth Cabinet meeting to ask for the Cabinet's suggestions and ideas for a 2012 campaign to support *Explore Adoption*.

Florida's Foundation is also working with the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet and the Forum for Youth Investment to host a Policy Roundtable in early January 2012 to share findings from a recent policy scan and to begin a discussion with Florida leaders about innovative low cost/no cost policy solutions to address the needs of Florida's young people and their attainment of a credential with labor market value.

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet



The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet was signed into law on July 11, 2007. The Cabinet is codified in §402.56, FS (Please see <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>). The Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, serves as the administrative staff and support for the Cabinet.

The charge of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet is to promote and implement 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:

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

As set forth in statute, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet consists of the membership below, as of December 2011.

Table 1. Representation and Membership on the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

AREA OF APPOINTMENT, CABINET MEMBER, TITLE, ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATION
<p>Members based on state positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David E. Wilkins, Cabinet Chairman, and Secretary of the Department of Children and Families • Alan Abramowitz, Statewide Executive Director of the Guardian ad Litem Office • Elizabeth Dudek, Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration • Dr. Frank Farmer, State Surgeon General at the Department of Health • Mike Hansen, Director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities • Dr. Mel Jurado, Director of the Office of Early Learning • Cyndee Odom, Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor • Gerard Robinson, Commissioner of the Department of Education • Wansley Walters, Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice
<p>Ex-officio members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative Gayle Harrell for the Speaker of the House • Justice Barbara J. Pariente for the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court • Senator Nan Rich for the Senate President • Berthy de la Rosa-Aponte for the Attorney General • Abby Vail for the Chief Financial Officer • Youth Commissioner for the Children and Youth in Florida
<p>Governor’s appointees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antonia Crawford, Chairman of the Early Learning Coalition • Dr. Steven Wallace, President of Florida State College at Jacksonville • David Lawrence Jr., President of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation in Miami and “University Scholar for Early Childhood Development and Readiness” at the University of Florida • Dr. Judy Schaechter, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Miami’s Miller School of Medicine • Steven J. Uhlfelder, Uhlfelder and Associates, PA

Governor Rick Scott appointed Secretary David Wilkins, Department of Children and Families as the Chairman of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet in May 2011. Under the leadership of Chairman Wilkins, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet has made remarkable progress this year. Chairman Wilkins welcomed new Cabinet members this year including:

- **Abby Vail** for the Chief Financial Officer
- **Alan Abramowitz**, Statewide Executive Director of the Guardian ad Litem Office
- **Berthy de la Rosa-Aponte** for the Attorney General
- **Cyndee Odom**, Director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
- **Dr. Frank Farmer**, State Surgeon General at the Department of Health
- **Dr. Mel Jurado**, Director of the Office of Early Learning
- **Dr. Steven Wallace**, President of Florida State College at Jacksonville
- **Gerard Robinson**, Commissioner of the Department of Education
- **Mike Hansen**, Director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- **Representative Gayle Harrell** for the Speaker of the House
- **Wansley Walters**, Secretary of the Department of Juvenile Justice
- **Youth Commissioner** for the Children and Youth in Florida

The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet along with seven other winners from different states were recognized this year in a ceremony on Capitol Hill by the Forum for Youth Investment for the first Ready by 21® Policy Leadership Awards. The awards were presented to federal and state policymakers who have made tremendous strides in aligning policies, maximizing scarce resources and coordinating services across departments to help ensure that all children grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to join the workforce. Cyndee Odom, Director, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Wansley Walters, Secretary, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Vivian Myrtetus, Chief of Staff, Department of Children and Families, accepted the award on behalf of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. The members of the Children and Youth Cabinet were honored as a collaborative set of policymakers that are improving outcomes for Florida's children and youth.

Approximately 20 states operate some form of a Children's Cabinet. At a national meeting of cabinet administrators, Florida's relatively new Cabinet was also 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. Under Chairman Wilkins' leadership the Cabinet is working on 11 different initiatives through the Office of Adoption and Child Protection with support from the Cabinet members, their staff and the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care as workgroup leads.

In compliance with state law (§402.56, FS), six Cabinet meetings were held in different regions of the state including: Tallahassee, Orlando, Jacksonville and Clearwater in an effort to provide an accessible and open forum for the public. In an effort to streamline efficiencies, the Cabinet members had four meetings over two days in two separate locations, to reduce travel expenses and travel time. The public has had opportunities to make comments or presentations before the Cabinet at every meeting. When and where feasible, Cabinet meetings were co-located with other related conferences and workshops around the state to enhance citizen opportunities and attendance and were published in the Florida Administrative Weekly. When feasible, the meetings were 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 http://www.flgov.com/child_advocacy_cyc/ that contains information about the Cabinet, its members, activities, work products, subcommittees, as well as meeting dates and locations.

2011 Meetings of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

Six meetings were held during 2011 as described below.

June 15 – Tallahassee. During the first meeting under Chairman Wilkins' leadership, new Cabinet members heard presentations explaining the history and background of the Cabinet, as well as major Cabinet initiatives. Discussions included: The Child Abuse and Neglect Headline Indicator, Kindergarten Readiness Headline Indicator, Florida State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care, Forum for Youth Investment national issues and policy recommendations, and Children's Budget Analysis. There were also presentations on the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Information Sharing System and Florida "Sunshine" laws.

August 31 – Orlando. Chairman Wilkins announced the creation of four new Cabinet workgroups: Community Services Delivery Models Workgroup, Child Death Review Teams Workgroup, Human Trafficking Workgroup, and Interagency Background Screening Workgroup. Informative agency presentations were given by the Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Education, Agency for Workforce Innovation, and Department of Children and Families to allow the agency leaders an opportunity to discuss the initiatives of their agencies, and how their agencies interface. Each agency leader provided several opportunities for change and collaboration with other state agencies.

September 1 – Orlando. Chairman Wilkins announced that at each Cabinet meeting a Youth Commissioner will be at the table to give a voice to the children and youth in Florida. Informative agency presentations were given by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Health, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Guardian ad Litem to allow the agency leaders an opportunity to discuss the initiatives of their agencies. Each agency presentation provided suggestions for collaboration and opportunities for change. There was also a presentation on Federal policy recommendations for Administrative Flexibility, which provided the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet with the first opportunity to work on the national level to influence federal policies and reduce barriers to reconnect disconnected youth.

October 25 – Jacksonville. The Commissioner of the Department of Education and the Director of the Office of Early Learning briefed the Cabinet members on the status of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. There was a presentation from the Youth Commission updating the Cabinet on their efforts to collaborate with other youth groups in Florida, and their partnership with the Gubernatorial Fellows Class VII. A presentation was given on the Every Florida Child has a Stable and Nurturing Family Headline Indicator. The leads from three workgroups, Human Trafficking, Interagency Background Screening, and Community Services Delivery Models provided updates on their work to the Cabinet.

November 30 – Clearwater. The Cabinet was presented with an overview of the successful National Adoption Month campaign. There were discussions on the Children's Budget, Children with Health Insurance Headline Indicator, and Every Kindergarten Readiness Headline Indicator. The new Chair of the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council gave a presentation about the Advisory Council, as well as opportunities for the Council to collaborate with the Cabinet.

December 1 – Clearwater. Cabinet members heard presentations on the "Teens Only" Town Hall Meeting and Children's Week activities for 2012. Cabinet members were also given an informative presentation on the Blaine Amendment. Updates were provided by the Child Death Review Teams and Community Services Delivery Models Workgroups. There were also presentations on Administrative Flexibility and Opportunities for Change – how the Cabinet can facilitate agencies to identify barriers and ways to collaborate to overcome those barriers.

Initiatives of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

Child Death Review Teams Workgroup

The Child Death Review Teams Workgroup (CDRTW) was formed in August 2011 as an ad hoc committee of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. Chaired by Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Elizabeth Dudek, the CDRTW intends to assist the Cabinet in its efforts to focus on the consolidation of possibly duplicative or unutilized child death review processes. The goal is to maximize use of those processes identified as most effective.

To fulfill its charge, the CDRTW will leverage existing state data sources regarding child death as a means to evaluate existing processes for child death reviews, to improve communication and collaboration across agencies regarding the investigation of child deaths and to recommend ways to improve the response to the investigation of deaths.

The CDRTW members have reviewed an inventory of state government data sources on child death, their suitability to death reviews and other technical details such as storage method and potential for connectivity. The workgroup discussed statutory and structural obstacles to child death reviews, including timely access to information and data and duplicative parallel reviews. It was agreed that a master record of all state and local contacts/interventions with families and children would be an “ideal” tool for reviewers. The workgroup will focus on ways to begin to identify and consolidate informational resources in order to expedite and streamline death reviews.

The CDRTW is planning to meet again in mid-January to complete the review of the statutory requirements in place for child death reviews, the scope of such reviews and how the results of these reviews are used. Secretary Dudek will present these findings to the Children and Youth Cabinet early next year.

Community Services Delivery Models Workgroup

The workgroup was created at the request of Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Chairman David Wilkins in August 2011. Chaired by Guardian ad Litem Executive Director Alan Abramowitz, the workgroup is identifying more efficient ways for local organizations to work together to maximize state and local resources and produce better outcomes for children and families. This includes recommending a framework to implement the statutory charge of a “shared strategic vision and child outcomes for an integrated delivery of children’s services” as stated in the 2007 Strategic Plan of the Children and Youth Cabinet of Florida.

The workgroup includes members of the business community, child advocates and representatives from state agencies that serve children. Other experts in child welfare, advocacy groups and agencies provide technical assistance, as needed.

Three priority areas have been identified:

1. Identify the statutorily created and administratively created through administrative rule: managing entities, lead agencies, advisory committees, coalitions, and government and non-government organizations that are guiding the spending of federal and state, dollars on services for children and families in the community. For each, identify the child outcomes they are to impact, their funding structure and amounts, and whether they achieved their intended purpose based on the data available.
2. Identify underlying Guiding Principles that would help define a structure designed to improve collaboration and achieve improved child outcomes for the state and/or local community using all federal and state resources in the most effective manner. This includes a goal to eliminate duplication and adopt best practices, and redirect savings from improved operational efficiencies into direct services to children, thereby increasing service capacity, and ensuring accountability.

3. Make recommendations to the Cabinet including the Guiding Principles and key child outcomes and key infrastructure requirements which an integrated service delivery system should include.

Human Trafficking Workgroup

In August 2011, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Chairman David Wilkins selected Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Wansley Walters to lead a newly created Human Trafficking Workgroup. This new initiative arose at a critical time, considering that:

- Florida has the third highest call volume to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center;
- Between 100,000 and 300,000 American children are being commercially prostituted each year;
- 498 Florida children were reported as potential human trafficking victims between 2009 and 2011;
- At least 400 Florida youth went unidentified as victims of commercial sexually exploitation between 2000 and 2006; and,
- 503 Florida children were charged with prostitution between 1998 and 2008, just in Miami.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery which affects children, adults, citizens, residents and foreign nationals alike. A complex issue, human trafficking is generally categorized as either sex trafficking or labor trafficking. Initially, the workgroup chose to narrow its focus to the intricate issue of child sex trafficking in Florida. The workgroup hopes to expand this focus in the future.

In September, the workgroup hosted its first meeting with representatives from the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights and other stakeholders. Workgroup members also began researching best practices throughout the nation.

Since then, the workgroup has both developed and reported on its intended organizational structure and scope of work to the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. The workgroup also began monitoring proposed legislation addressing child sex trafficking.

Members of the workgroup have conducted research into shelter-specific services for commercially sexually exploited victims. In December, members of the workgroup requested a proclamation from Governor Scott declaring January 11, 2012, as Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and began planning a ribbon awareness campaign for the same date. Workgroup members are also conducting research on training programs and screening tools that could be proactively implemented at DCF, DJJ and licensed shelters.

Interagency Background Screening Workgroup

During the 2011 Legislative Session, the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate passed Senate Bill 1992 relating to Background Screening. Governor Rick Scott subsequently vetoed the legislation and noted his concerns with it. In the veto message, the Governor agreed with the importance of creating a workgroup to look at the background screening process. Accordingly, under the direction of the Executive Office of the Governor, in coordination with the Office of Policy and Budget for Health and Human Services, a statewide Interagency Background Screening Workgroup was created. Chaired by Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Charles Corley, this workgroup was tasked with developing a strategy for the criminal background screening of the professionals, laypersons and volunteers that serve vulnerable populations within Florida, and recommending potential legislative changes to implement this strategy.

The workgroup membership is composed of the Department of Children and Families, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Department of Elder Affairs, the Department of Health, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Law Enforcement, and the Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Division of Blind Services. Executive

leadership of each agency appointed appropriate individuals to represent the agency on the workgroup. Activities of the workgroup were coordinated by the Department of Elder Affairs. The workgroup had three full workgroup meetings, a public testimony meeting, an operational subgroup meeting, and a legislative subgroup meeting. It is through these meetings and the submission of additional public comments that the workgroup developed its recommendations.

The workgroup addressed 10 issues. For each issue, the workgroup provided one or more recommendations. These issues and recommendations are intended to be applicable to specific agencies that license or conduct background screening for persons working or volunteering with vulnerable populations (children, elderly and persons with disabilities). In addition, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) has been working with this group to ensure state and federal requirements are met. The workgroup continues to work with members of the Florida Legislature in an attempt to implement its recommendations.

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 government 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. In July 2011, Chairman David Wilkins requested that the Chair of the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care lead the workgroups for two of the areas of focus, "Every Florida child is healthy" and "Every Florida child is ready to learn and succeed." Action plans are currently being created for these two headline indicators.

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, is leading implementation of the action plan for "Every Florida child has a stable and nurturing family." In July 2010, the Office launched the five-year plan to prevent child maltreatment at the state and local levels. The five-

year plan seeks to build the capacity for Floridians to prevent child maltreatment before it ever occurs. To do this, Florida's five-year child maltreatment prevention strategies focus on building resilience in Florida families through *Five Protective Factors*.

The fourth area of focus, "Every Florida child lives in a safe and supportive community," was also tasked to the Chair of the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care. The Advisory Council will begin work on an action plan in early 2012.

Administrative Flexibility Workgroup

On February 28, 2011, President Obama released a Presidential Memorandum on "Administrative Flexibility, Lower Costs and Better Results for State, Local and Tribal Governments." In early July 2011, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) asked the national organization, Children's Cabinet Network, to identify policy changes that can both improve efficiency and achieve better outcomes for children and families. The Children's Cabinet Network, managed by the Forum for Youth Investment, submitted a report of recommendations to OMB. As part of the Children's Cabinet Network, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet's recommendations were included. A meeting was arranged in August 2011 with representatives from the Children's Cabinet Network and federal agencies to discuss ideas for flexibility that would reduce barriers to agency collaboration. In early August, the Forum for Youth Investment prepared a white paper using the same barriers and solutions provided by the states focusing solely on reconnecting disconnected youth.

A formal workgroup was then created at the request of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet to continue this work and has been actively working to address real and perceived administrative barriers at the federal, state and local levels to improve services to children and youth. The group includes representatives from the Governor's Office and a variety of state agencies that serve children. With the encouragement of the White House and OMB, the group is identifying opportunities for change to federal regulation and policy guidance to enable better decision making, shared information and improved access to sometimes siloed funding.

Three priority areas have been identified in which to pursue greater flexibility:

- Skill development for disadvantaged youth.
- Residential placement, treatment and aftercare for multisystem youth.
- Youth transitioning to adulthood.

Potential strategies for improvement identified thus far include:

- Aligning and reevaluating confidentiality rules for the release of information regarding substance abuse as well as school records, when necessary to assure health and well-being of children in the dependency and delinquency systems.
- Easing rules for access to student financial aid for youth with non-violent felonies.
- Placing priority on funding for workforce development services for youth.
- Identifying potential pilot projects and locations to test changes.

Members meet weekly and are coordinating with OMB, the Forum for Youth Investment and seven other states that are developing similar initiatives. A co-chair gave a presentation to Cabinet members at the December 1 meeting. Members made excellent comments and suggestions, including the need to develop a more accurately descriptive name for the workgroup. Updates on that item and others will be provided at the January Cabinet meeting.

Youth Commission

In September 2011, Chairman David Wilkins announced that the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet would now have a seat for the Youth Commission at every Cabinet meeting. The Youth Commission is made up of 12 youth from around the state. The first of its kind in Florida, the first class of Youth Commissioners convened in October 2011, and began to lay the foundation for future Commissioners. This

young group of individuals worked closely with the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet and the Office of Adoption and Child Protection to ensure that the Commission advises the Cabinet on youth issues.

The Youth Commission's first appointed and completed task was to create and finalize a set of operational guidelines that future Youth Commissions will follow. This task was completed by the Commissioners themselves, and assisted by the Gubernatorial Fellows.

The Florida Gubernatorial Fellows is a group that believes that the best way to ensure Florida's greatness is to actively educate and cultivate its future leaders. The Fellows have taken on the Youth Commission as one of their projects for the current class and nine-month tenure, and have made the decision to keep the Youth Commission as one of their projects for future classes to come through the program.

The Commissioners identified and researched one issue important to Florida youth and will present it to the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet at a future Cabinet meeting. The Youth Commission also has had the opportunity to work on Cabinet workgroups throughout their tenure.

Some of the other accomplishments thus far include:

- Attending all of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Meetings since October 2011.
- Presentations to the Cabinet with updates for the current Youth Commission.
- Implementing an action plan to be put into place with the 2012 Youth Commissioners.
- Monthly conference calls.
- Monthly meetings with local Commissioners in Tallahassee.
- Currently developing logo and slogan to go along with the Youth Commission – "YC".
- Developed text and information for the website that can be found at:
http://www.flgov.com/child_advocacy_cyc_youthcommission/.

The current Commissioners will meet again on January 31, 2012 for the next Florida Children and Youth Cabinet meeting, as well as meeting the new Youth Commissioners that have been selected for 2012.

Information Sharing Workgroup

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 nine 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:

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

Planned and anticipated benefits of the CYCISS include:

- Facilitate better decision-making and service delivery through a single sign-on system.
- Operate as a query system only, not a data warehouse.
- 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).
- Preserve each individual agency's data integrity and security.
- Provide in a single view, as much real time, up-to-date data and data exchange capability on a child or family as possible.
- Quickly identify and resolve barriers to sharing information.
- Serve as a portal that accesses read-only information from agency data sources.
- Utilize role-based security.

Phase 1 – Part A of the initiative included setting up eight data sources and having a small group of staff from the agencies test the system and provide feedback to the design consultants and NWRDC staff.

Phase I – Part A data sources to be fully deployed include:

1. Florida Online Recipient Integrated Data Access (FLORIDA)
2. Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN)
3. State Health Online Tracking System (SHOTS)
4. Vital Statistics (VS)
5. Medicaid Prior Authorization for Durable Medical Equipment
6. Florida Medicaid Management Information System (FMMIS)
7. Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS)
8. Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP)

Northwest Regional Data Center conducted a webinar in 2011 for test users from state agencies. A user manual was created and is available for users. Currently, data from SHOTS, FMMIS, and FETPIP is not in production due to pending approval either from the data source state agency or federal agency. On July 12, 2010, the Agency for Health Care Administration submitted a letter to the Associate Regional Director, Division of Medicaid and Children's Health Operations requesting approval from CMS to allow the data and information sharing of the FMMIS information. As of December 2011, this request is still pending. The JJIS data will be available upon connection to the JIS/JDX system.

Phase 1 – Part B of the initiative is to add access for up to 1,000 users and connecting the participating Cabinet agencies data sources with the existing sources provided through JIS. This phase also includes 10 data exchanges that will allow the Cabinet agencies to effectively exchange data between all agencies. In December 2011, Chair Wilkins appointed Director Mike Hansen, Agency for Person's with Disabilities as the Chairman for the Information Sharing Workgroup. This cross-agency workgroup will analyze the status of information sharing in Florida, identify what Florida's needs are, and perform a feasibility study to provide direction to the Cabinet on data and information sharing in order to promote a continuum of integrated and comprehensive services for Florida's children and youth.

Children's Budget Workgroup

The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet established a Children's Budget Workgroup to oversee this initiative. The purpose of the Children's 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 effective way.

Previously, the Cabinet identified the four headline indicators as priorities associated with children and youth well-being and selected accompanying indicators to measure program success. A budget exercise represented the first time select child outcomes were examined in terms of the state's investment across agencies and programs. The first *Draft Children's Budget Report* was presented to the Cabinet in May 2010. The second version of the draft 2010 Children's Budget was presented to the Cabinet in December 2010.

In October 2011 Chairman Wilkins appointed Brittany Birken, Chief Executive Officer of the Florida Children's Services Council, to build upon the important work of the initial Children's Budget Workgroup. Under Birken's leadership, the workgroup will convene their first meeting in early 2012. They will:

- Advance the crosswalk of programs and services offered by agencies, aligned to the outcomes and indicators identified by the Cabinet.
- Analyze how much is being spent toward achieving each of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet's outcomes and indicators.
- Create a delineation of funding sources (e.g., state general revenue, federal funding source, match requirements and sources, private sources) which will provide clarity in total budget funding.
- Identify benchmarks/child outcomes currently used by state agencies/national sources.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen outcomes in areas lagging in funding.
- Provide a high level view of the extent to which dollars have been budgeted to desired outcomes.
- Work with state level agencies to form the best method to collect the data.

This is a long-term project that will require a period of years to refine the process, solidify the definitions and develop reliable and valid reporting on the funding of programs and services statewide.

State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care

The State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (State Advisory Council) was created in 2010. The federal government made funding available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to support states in the creation of Advisory Councils as mandated in the Head Start Reauthorization Act 2007. The purpose of the State Advisory Councils is to lead the development of a high-quality, comprehensive system of early childhood education for children ages birth to five that ensures statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide array of early childhood education programs and services in the state, including Head Start, child care and prekindergarten. Through partnerships 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. Children and families will receive more coordinated, responsive services, and funding will support these priorities. To support Florida and other states in meeting established goals, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) solicited applications to carry out the activities of the State Advisory Councils. The funding opportunity was a non-competitive, collaborative, three-year grant to assist states in establishing an Advisory Council and to initiate creative infrastructure improvement projects. Florida received a grant and has accomplished several milestones.

In addition to completing the federal requirements of the grant, the State Advisory Council serves as an advisory council for the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. The State Advisory Council met five times in 2011, with one meeting held in conjunction with a Cabinet meeting. The State Advisory Council has commissioned an early childhood educator workforce study and anticipates a final report in the summer of 2012. The State Advisory Council has also supported the long-standing work of the *Florida Steps to Success* initiative, which is the comprehensive, statewide early childhood educator professional development system designed to provide career pathways and quality staff training and educational opportunities.

In July 2011, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Chairman David Wilkins requested that the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care lead the development and implementation of action plans for three of the four areas of focus for the Cabinet. The three areas of focus are: Every Florida child is

healthy as measured by the headline indicator of children with health insurance, 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, and Every Florida child lives in a safe and supportive community as measured by the headline indicator of homeless children. With leadership from the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, the Office of Early Learning, 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. As of December 2011, below is a table of the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care membership, as well as their areas of representation.

Table 2. State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care Membership

AREA OF REPRESENTATION	COUNCIL MEMBER
Chair/ Convener	Brittany Birken, PhD , Chair, Chief Executive Officer, Florida Children’s Services Council
Executive Office of the Governor	Cyndee Odom , Director, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
State Agency Responsible for Child Care	Mel Jurado, PhD , Director, Florida’s Office of Early Learning
Head Start Agencies located in State	Louis Finney, Jr. , Director, Hillsborough County Head Start, Board of County Commissioners
Head Start Agencies located in State	James Finnegan , Head Start Administrator, East Coast Migrant Head Start Project
Local Educational Agencies	Robert Chilmonik , Lee County School Board, Professor, Edison State College
Local Educational Agencies	Heather Fiorentino , Superintendent, District School Board of Pasco County
Local Providers of Early Childhood Education and Development Services	Lucia Zaikov , Owner, Helping Hands and Peppermint Tree Schools
State Agency responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	David Sofferin , Asst. Sec., Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Department of Children and Families
State Agency responsible for programs under Section 619/Part C of IDEA	Lynn Marie Firehammer , Bureau Chief, Children’s Medical Services, Early Steps, Florida Department of Health
State Director of Head Start Collaboration	Lilli Copp , Director, Head Start State Collaboration Office
State Educational Agency	Stuart Greenberg , Executive Director, Office of Early Learning, Department of Education
US DOD/NACCRRRA Military Liaison	Noelle Bee , Military Child Care Liaison, United States Department of Defense/ National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
Children’s Services Council	Linda Lanier , Chief Executive Officer/ Executive Director, Jacksonville Children’s Commission
Association of Early Learning Coalition	Susan Main , Representative of the Association of Early Learning Coalitions
Child Care Licensing	Deborah Russo , Director of Child Care Services, Department of Children and Families
Other	Sandra Murman , Consultant

The State Advisory Council efforts 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 continue to use grant funding over the next two 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.

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council

The Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council was created in 2006 in Florida Statutes 14.31. State leadership felt increased involvement of faith-based and community organizations were not a substitute for necessary public funding of services to individuals, families and communities in need. They believed that public expenditures without the involvement of these groups limit the effectiveness of government investments. The cost effectiveness of public expenditures can be improved when government is focused on results and public-private partnerships are used to leverage the talent, commitment and resources of faith-based and community organizations.

Although Federal officials are creating a more supportive environment for public/private partnerships, challenges remain on both sides. Many faith-based and community organizations lack access to information about availability of public funding. Since local agencies are responsible for most of the outlay of resources, there is a need to facilitate better communication to organizations at a local level. Many faith-based and community organizations lack the administrative capacity to effectively partner with public agencies. Many state agencies are not aware of the resources that faith-based and community groups can utilize to improve the effectiveness of local service delivery. Complex accounting, financial and program reporting overwhelm the administrative capacity of these smaller organizations. Uncertainty of the “uncharted territory” has led some faith-based organizations to fear collaboration with public agencies. State leadership continues to be necessary to facilitate better collaborations between government and these organizations.

In October 2006, after the Council’s review of the State’s process for notifying community organizations of funding resources, MyFlorida Marketplace unveiled a web portal of their Vendor Bid System specifically designed to house grant and contract opportunities for Florida non-profits.

In person meetings were held by the Council with key mayoral leaders from across the state in order to better learn about effective partnerships. Meetings were held with the cities of Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville, Miami, Bradenton, Eatonville, St. Petersburg, Ormond Beach, Palm Coast, Ft. Lauderdale and Hialeah. These meetings allowed the opportunity to gather specific information on positive collaboration in many service areas directly affecting the local community. This information was bound into an informative resource guide utilized by local community leaders so more effective partnerships can be made and more Floridians can be served. The Council had the opportunity to present this information to twenty-six representatives from Governor’s offices nationwide at a meeting led by the White House. As a result, many other states realized the opportunity to highlight local best practices to drive enthusiasm in serving citizens in need, and this toolkit was released in 2007.

The Council has built a strong network of faith-based organizations, community groups, foundations, civic, grassroots and state leaders to provide outreach support to state agencies and their specific programs by notifying grassroots organizations of these programs and encouraging their participation. The representative state agencies included the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Corrections, Department of Education, the Department of Health and Department of Juvenile Justice.

Highlighted Initiatives of the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council

Neighbors to the Rescue was recognized by the Council as an innovative program and it also received national accolades from the Sagamore Institute’s FASTEN awards. *Neighbors to the Rescue* emphasizes greater local involvement in disaster recovery by identification and use of hitherto untapped community material donations. *Neighbors to the Rescue* workshops took place in: Lee, Hendry, Collier, Lake, Martin, Palm Beach, Orange, St. Lucie, Escambia Broward and Dade counties. These workshops resulted in the creation of seven virtual warehouses that are used by communities to locate and transfer needed services and household goods during disaster recovery periods. *Neighbors to the Rescue* affiliates are located in both faith-based and community-based organizations.

The Council also supported the creation and maintenance of long-term recovery organizations (LTROs) in every Florida County. These are to be made up of faith-based and community-based groups working in communication and cooperation with government and nongovernmental response agencies, so communities will more quickly recover from disasters such as hurricanes and tornadoes. Florida now has a strong network of over 40 LTROs throughout the state.

The Compassion Florida program, a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, was launched with support from the Council. In just two years the Compassion Florida program has trained and provided technical assistance to over 500 organizations, accumulated over 520 hours of technical assistance to faith and community-based organizations and provided 36 grants for capacity building activities.

In 2010, the Council chose to support the Florida’s promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families initiatives by collaborating with the Office of Adoption and Child Protection through the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council (CAPPAC). The effective partnering of faith-based and community-based organizations may be one of the most important defenses in creating safe and healthy environments for children. The Council has continued to focus on identifying faith communities who will engage, according to their interest and abilities, in the promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families through the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. The Council has assisted with recruitment of adoptive families through the use and support of *Explore Adoption* tools and materials and the Heart Galleries efforts to promote public adoption and recruit families for the children and youth in foster care who are available for adoption.

Below is a table of the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council membership as well as their areas of representation, as of December 2011.

Table 3. Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based State Advisory Council

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Lukasik, 4KIDS of South Florida, Chairman, Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council • Sheila Hopkins, Florida Catholic Conference, Vice Chair, Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council • Arto Woodley, Jr., Frontline Outreach • Blaine Whitt, President, Xtreme Solutions • Carl Reeves, Greater Mount Lily Baptist Church • Chaplain James Perry Davis, Christ to Inmates • Dr. Andre Estevez, Christian Medical Concepts • Dr. Carolyn Stewart, Assistant Vice President Council, FAU • Dr. Jerry Haag, Florida Baptist Children's Homes • Dr. Joel Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland • Dr. Leonel Mesa, CEO, Reflections Wellness Center • Elizabeth Barbella, House of Hope • Gloria Baker, Statewide Advocate • Imam Muhammad Musri, Islamic Society of Central Florida • Jay Polachek • Jo Anne (Jody) Hill, Florida Interfaith Networking in Disaster • Juda Attkisson, Florida4Marriage.org • Rabbi Schneur Oirechman, Chabad of the Panhandle • Rabbi Sholom Ciment, Chabad-Lubavitch of Greater Boynton • Samuel Sipes, President, Lutheran Services Florida, Inc. • Yvonne Sawyer, Family & Children Faith Coalition

Current Work of the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council

During the 2010 legislative session, the Sunset requirement for the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council was repealed through legislation sponsored by Senator Mike Bennett and Representative Clay Ford.

In October 2011, the Executive Office of the Governor made a decision to move the administrative functions and support for the Council to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection. A re-launch meeting of the Council was held in the Governor's Large Press Conference Room in November 2011. At this meeting Tom Lukasik, Executive Director, 4KIDS of South Florida was voted Chair and Sheila Hopkins, Associate Director, Florida Catholic Conference was voted Vice-Chair of the Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council. In this changing economic climate, the Council, composed of members from grassroots and faith-based organizations statewide is committed to encouraging partnerships, highlighting best practices and collaborating with state government.

The Council will partner with the State of Florida by enlisting the assistance of faith-based and community-based organizations to volunteer with various state agencies and their service providers in an effort to help improve outcomes for Florida's children and families. The Council is creating a webpage on the Executive Office of the Governor's website for faith-based and community-based organizations to connect with the volunteer opportunities with the state agencies and their providers. In 2012, the Council will host an annual statewide conference for faith-based and community-based organizations. The Council will also assist as needed with communication, planning and support of the state's disaster response and recovery systems.

Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency

Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council

In accordance with §39.001(8)(b)1, FS, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection within the Executive Office of the Governor established a Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. As of December 2011, the Advisory Council is comprised of thirty (30) 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 2011.

Table 4. Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council Membership

AREA OF REPRESENTATION	COUNCIL MEMBER
01. Chair/ Convener, EOG – Exec. Office of the Governor	Cyndee Odom , Director, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
02. DCF – Dept. of Children and Families	Jamie Self, PhD , Executive Director, Family and Community Services Office, Florida Department of Children and Families
03. DOC – Dept. of Corrections	Jennifer Parker , General Counsel, Department of Corrections
04. DOE – Dept. of Education	Mary Jane Tappen , Deputy Chancellor, Curriculum, Instruction and Student Services, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education
05. DOH – Dept. of Health	Peggy Scheuermann, MEd, CPM , Deputy Division Director, Prevention and Interventions, Child Protection & Special Technology, Children's Medical Services, Department of Health
06. DJJ – Dept. of Juvenile Justice	Andy Hindman , Director, Faith and Community Based Partnerships, Office of Prevention and Victim Services, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
07. DLE – Dept. of Law Enforcement	Terry Thomas , Special Agent, Crimes Against Children Unit, Florida Department of Law Enforcement

AREA OF REPRESENTATION	COUNCIL MEMBER
08. APD – Agency for Persons with Disabilities	Mac McCoy, MA, BCBA , Operations Officer, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
09. OEL – Office of Early Learning	Michele Watson , Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Office of Early Learning
10. Parent with adopted child	Deborah Polston , Adoptive Parent
11. Community mental health centers	Leonel “Leo” Mesa, Jr., PsyD, LMHC , President/CEO, Reflections Wellness Center
12. Guardian ad Litem	Alan Abramowitz, JD , Executive Director, Statewide Guardian ad Litem
13. School boards	Georgia “Joy” Bowen, MEd , Past President, Florida School Boards Assoc.
14. Florida local advocacy council	<i>(Vacant) 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	Patricia “Trish” Nellius-Guthrie, PhD , CEO, Community Based Care of Brevard, Inc.
16. Private/ public child abuse prevention programs	Anita Odom , Director, Prevent Child Abuse Florida
17. Private/ public programs working with children/ families of children who are abused, abandoned or neglected	Andrea Raasch, LCSW , 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	Donna Hagan , Executive Director, Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor Counties, Inc.
19. Multi-disciplinary child protection teams	Mark Perlman, MA , Founder and President, Center for Growth and Development
20. Child day care centers: Federal/State representation	Lilli Copp , Director, Head Start State Collaboration Office
21. Child day care centers: FLAEYC representation	Suzanne Gellens, MS , Executive Director, Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
22. Law enforcement agencies	Connie Shingledecker , Major, Investigative Bureau Chief, Manatee County Sheriff’s Office
23. Circuit courts	Daniel Dawson, JD , Circuit Judge, Ninth Judicial Circuit
24. Office of Adoption and Child Protection	Christina Pacelle, MSW , Special Projects Manager, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor
25. Child advocate/community philanthropy	Graciela “Graci” McGillicuddy , Child Advocate and Community Philanthropist
26. Children’s advocacy center	Julie Hurst, MPA , Executive Director, Emerald Coast Children’s Advocacy Center, Inc. <i>(Also affiliated w/Florida Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers)</i>
27. Community alliance	Marilyn “Bunny” Finney , 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	Nancy Crawford , Executive Director, Kids House of Seminole, Inc. Children’s Advocacy Center
29. Medical doctor, university researcher, children’s services council	Peter A. Gorski, MD, MPA , Chief Health and Child Development Officer, The Children’s Trust
30. State court administration	Sandy Neidert, MSW , Senior Court Operations Consultant, Office of the State Courts Administrator, Office of Court Improvement
31. Faith-based and community-based efforts	Sheila Hopkins , Associate Director for Social Concerns/ Respect Life, Florida Catholic Conference, Chairman, Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council

Statutory Charge to the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council

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

- Served as a research arm for the 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 (circuit) 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.

Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council Efforts

The *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* was submitted to the Governor, the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives in June 2010 and launched in July 2010. The Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council chose to wait until after the first year and a half of plan implementation before meeting to review and discuss the plan's progress. The Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council will hold their next meeting in the Spring 2012.

The importance of a five-year plan for prevention of child maltreatment, promotion of adoption, and support of adoptive families is underscored by the great and increasing need of Florida's children for safe and stable families and communities. The plan was prepared by the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, with the input and guidance of the 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 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.

Local Planning for Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency

In September 2007, the 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 Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. At a minimum, the 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, VI.2* developed by the Office with input from the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. The five-year local plans developed by the circuit teams are incorporated into the state's five-year state plan the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and*

Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015. The Governor’s website provides electronic copies of the current state and local plans: http://www.flgov.com/child_advocacy.

Monthly Local Planning Team Convener Meetings via Conference Call

Conference calls were initiated in November 2007, and were held monthly through December 2011. Those participating on the calls included: the planning team conveners, key contacts, all interested members of the local planning teams, 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 plan implementation.

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

- February 8, 2011 – Discussion about child maltreatment data sets.
- March 8, 2011 – Review of child maltreatment data and discussion about the Prevention Learning Community.
- April 12, 2011 – National Child Abuse Prevention Month and monitoring reports.
- May 10, 2011 – Monitoring reports, *Explore Adoption* campaign, National Day of Prayer, and Florida Heart Galleries exhibit opening.
- June 14, 2011 – Local planning team monitoring reports, discussion of “Principles for Successfully Implementing Evidence-Based Practices and Programs”, and direction of the Department of Children and Families.
- July 12, 2011 – Annual monitoring report, office website, and *Florida Heart Galleries* Exhibit.
- August 9, 2011 – Local planning team monitoring reports, *Explore Adoption* calendar, Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, updates about the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, and National Adoption Month.
- September 13, 2011 – Administrative Flexibility reports, and updates about the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.
- October 11, 2011 – Update on the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, Florida’s Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council, and the Office of Child Welfare at the Department of Children and Families.
- November 8, 2011 – Progress of National Adoption Month, updates from the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, and the next monitoring report.
- December 13, 2011 – Forum for Youth Investment Policy Roundtable, Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council, National Adoption Month, the next monitoring report, and updates about the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.

In addition to the monthly conference calls with the local planning team conveners, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection also provided individual technical assistance and support when requested by the local planning team conveners. The points of contact for the local planning teams as of December 2011 are provided in the following table.

Table 5. Local Planning Team Leadership and Key Contacts

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

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

The central focus of *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, Florida Statutes), the 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 plan was developed with the guidance and input of 166 planning partners representing 107 organizations and agencies, the 33 member Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council and the Local Planning Teams for the 20 Florida Circuits. The vision, mission, overarching goal and desired results of the plan are:

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

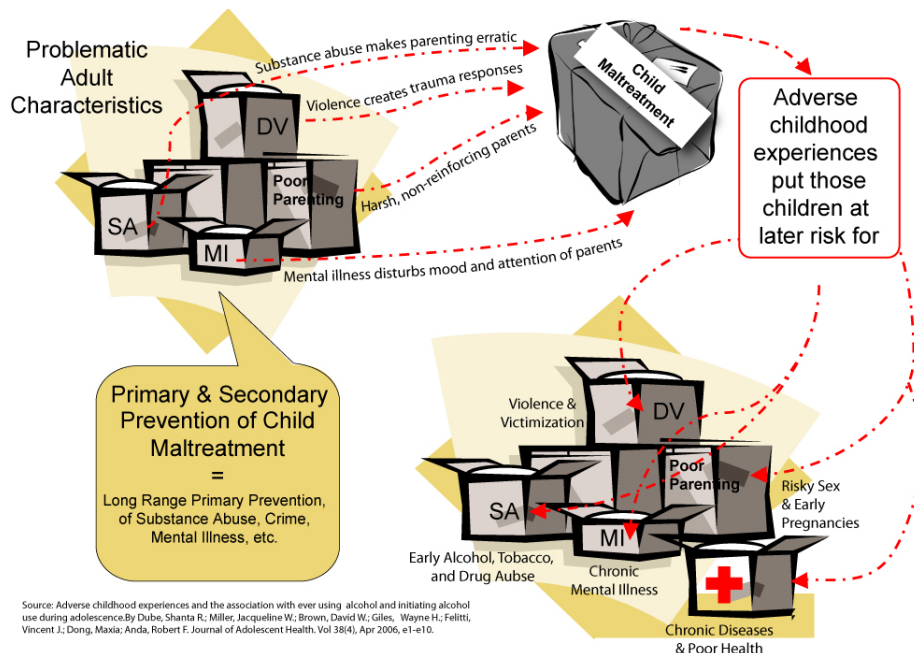
- 1. Child Maltreatment Prevention** – By 30 June 2015, the verified findings of child abuse rate will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009 statewide rate of 10.94 per 1,000 children.
- 2. Promotion of Adoption** – By 30 June 2015, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming 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.

Research Guiding Plan Development

Recent research has identified the physical and mental conditions increasingly being associated with adverse childhood experiences, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Neurologic imaging and traumatology studies have delineated the chronic physiologic and structural changes that occur after chronic stress and abuse (De Bellis, 2005; Eluvathingal et al., 2006). Chronic stress and abuse are also associated with specific disease processes and poor mental health outcomes in adults. These adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have been associated with increased rates of teen pregnancy, promiscuity, depression, hallucinations, substance abuse, liver disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, coronary artery disease, and identifiable permanent changes in brain structure and stress hormone function (Anda et al., 2002; Dube et al., 2003; Felitti et al., 1998; Middlebrooks et al., 2008). The National Research Council (1993) and others studied clinical conditions associated with abuse and neglect, including depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and conduct disorders, all of which compound any direct physical injuries inflicted on individual children. Associated trauma and increased risk of low academic achievement, drug use, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminology were also noted. Although treatment after the fact can improve mental and physical health and prolong life and productivity, the direct and indirect costs of child maltreatment for both children and adults in lost health, pain, and suffering themselves warrant our taking action to prevent child abuse and neglect.

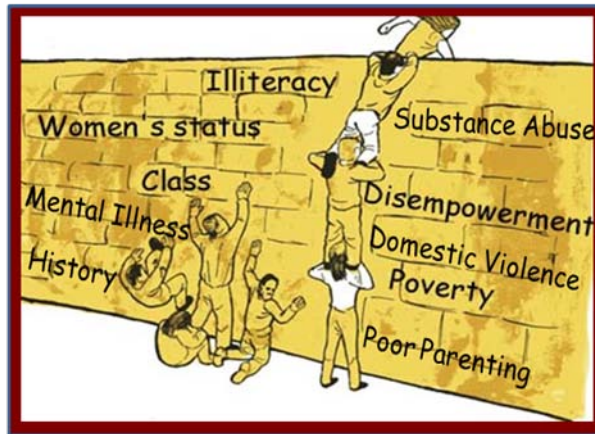
We as a nation, state, and communities are confronted with the problems of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The Centers for Disease Control have declared child maltreatment to be the largest public health threat that we face today. Early adverse experiences put children at risk. Problematic adult characteristics may result in child maltreatment and these adverse experiences put those children at risk for poor child well-being which in turn predisposes them to engage in the very problematic adult characteristics that will put their own children at risk. The underlying causes are complex. They include such things as poor health, social isolation, poor academic performance, mental health issues, history of abuse or neglect, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, homelessness, poor parenting, and on and on. The federal government, state government, local governments and communities invest millions in response to these problems which, being complex and slow to eradicate will be with our communities, families and children for some time to come.

Diagram 1. Early Experiences Put Children at Risk



The means for building family resilience was developed through research and application efforts of the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The Center developed a research effort based upon the *Positive Deviance Premise* that in every community there are certain individuals whose uncommon practices and behaviors enable them to find better solutions to problems than their neighbors who have access to the same resources. As discussed in the peer reviewed *British Medical Journal* (Marsh et al., 2004), although most problems like these have complex, interlinked underlying causes, the presence of Positive Deviants demonstrates that it is possible to find successful solutions today before all the underlying causes are addressed.

Diagram 2. Positive Deviance



Research conducted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy found that there *Five Protective Factors* that make a difference for families. When families experience the stressors that are highly correlated with child maltreatment, some families maltreat their children and others do not. The Center found that in the homes that do not maltreat their children, although they are experiencing the same stressors, the difference in these homes is the presence of *Five Protective Factors*. These *Five Protective Factors* reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect by providing parents with what they need in order to parent effectively, even under stress. By building relationships with families, programs can recognize signs of stress and build families' protective factors with timely, effective help.

Strengthening Families – the intentional incorporation of the *Five Protective Factors* to prevent child maltreatment – has widespread support from social science researchers, state child welfare officials, early childhood practitioners, and policy experts. Currently, the Strengthening Families approach is being applied in 36 states. This strategy for dealing with child abuse and neglect shows great promise because the *Five Protective Factors* have been demonstrated to work and are informed by extensive, rigorous research. Activities that build the *Five Protective Factors* can be built into programs and systems that already exist in every state, such as early childhood education and child welfare, at little cost.

The *Five Protective Factors* are:

- **Nurturing and Attachment** – A child's ability to interact positively with others, to self-regulate, and to effectively communicate his or her emotions has a great impact on the parent-child relationship. A child's social and emotional development is highly dependent on the quality of a young child's primary relationships. How caregivers respond to children's emotional expression profoundly influences how they learn to process, understand, and cope with such feelings as anger, happiness, and sadness. Promoting positive behavior and responses in children could strengthen parent-child relationships.

- **Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development** – Extensive research links healthy child development to effective parenting. Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve.
- **Parental Resilience** – Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, or domestic or community violence; and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.
- **Social Connections** – Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Research has shown that parents, who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.
- **Concrete Supports for Parents** – Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Providing concrete supports may also help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.

Note: While the plan addresses ways to build the *Five Protective Factors* in Florida families through multiple avenues, it will be incumbent on the State's natural and specialized service systems to ensure that accessible quality concrete supports are available for Florida families in times of need.

Summary of the Five-Year Plan for Prevention and Permanency

The focal point 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), the 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.

Through the implementation of 12 strategies with 40 objectives, the five-year plan is the most ambitious and comprehensive low cost/no cost effort in the country crafted to strengthen families and empower communities where children are raised in safe, nurturing homes that support well-being. 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.

Included in this report is a brief overview of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. For the five-year plan in its entirety as well as the first year monitoring reports for each objective, please visit www.flgov.com/child_advocacy.

Arrangement of the Plan

Three plans are incorporated within this *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. They are:

Prevention

1. *Florida Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. The prevention plan also includes the:
 - a. *Florida Cooperative Education Child Abuse Prevention Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*.
 - b. *Florida Cooperative Law Enforcement Child Abuse Prevention Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*.

Permanency

2. *Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*.
3. *Florida Support of Adoptive Families Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*.

This configuration was adopted in order to comply with the requirements of §39.001(8)(a), §39.001(8)(b)2, §39.001(8)(b)3, and §39.001(8)(b)5, Florida Statutes. Please visit www.flgov.com/child_advocacy for the full language in §39.001, Florida Statutes.

Florida Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Plan: July 2010 – June 2015

The focus of the prevention plan of action is on primary and secondary prevention and universal and targeted strategies. These are defined as:

- **Primary prevention using universal strategies**
 - Primary prevention is geared to the general public to prevent child abuse, abandonment and neglect from occurring.
 - Universal strategies are activities accessible to anyone in the general population with the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect from ever occurring in the first place. Universal strategies are available to everyone, rather than targeting populations based on risk factors or specific characteristics. Examples include:
 - Broad-based public awareness campaigns on positive discipline.
 - Developmental screenings for children in primary health care settings.
 - Post-partum home visits for all parents of newborns.
- **Secondary prevention using targeted strategies**
 - Secondary prevention is geared to communities and/or families who are vulnerable and at risk of child abuse, abandonment and neglect.
 - Targeted strategies are those activities or services that are targeted to a group with specific risk factors with the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect from ever occurring in the first place within that target group. Risk factors correlated with child maltreatment include parent age, poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, or maternal depression. Examples include:
 - Intensive home visitation programs for first time low-income mothers who meet a particular threshold on a screening instrument.
 - Parent training for adolescent mothers.
 - Respite care for parents of children with special needs.
 - Parent support groups for single parents.

Over the five years covered by the plan, the prevalence rates for these risk factors that are correlates of child maltreatment can be anticipated to increase. Already, Florida hotlines, helplines and assistance call

centers have seen an exponential increase in requests for help. Now, more than ever, Florida should take a concerted look at strategies that will help families become resilient when faced with multiple stressors due to economic and other challenges that are predicted. The plan seeks to build the capacity for Floridians to **prevent child maltreatment before it ever occurs**. To do this, Florida's five-year child maltreatment prevention strategies will focus on building resilience in Florida families.

The prevention of child maltreatment is one of the four critical areas that the Florida 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:

- Child death reviews.
- Early education and care.
- Education services for parents/caregivers of newborns/young infants.
- Evidence-based parenting programs.
- Faith-based and community-based efforts.
- Head Start programs.
- Healthy Families Florida programs.
- Healthy Start programs.
- Home visiting programs.
- Law Enforcement *Memorandum of Understanding* implementation reviews and updates.
- Medicaid Child Health Check-Up services.
- Monitoring and evaluating implementation of prevention strategies.
- Multidisciplinary approaches to prevention in schools.
- Professional development for school personnel.
- Public awareness and education.
- Resource awareness for educators and parents.
- Resources for parents of school children.
- Technical assistance to circuit prevention efforts.
- Whole Child communities.

Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015

Florida's five-year promotion of adoption strategies focus on ensuring that Florida families best suited to support the children and youth served in the child welfare system adopt these children and youth in a timely manner. This is being accomplished through the five-year adoption promotion plan.

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 the 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.

Florida Support of Adoptive Families Plan: July 2010 – June 2015

Florida's five-year adoption support strategies focus on ensuring that Florida families adopting children and youth from the child welfare system receive the supports necessary to provide loving and permanent homes that help these children heal from their trauma histories. This is being accomplished through the areas of focus over the five-year period – July 2010 through June 2015.

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.

First Year of Plan Implementation State Highlights July 2010 – June 2011

Included in this report are highlights from the first year of plan implementation and monitoring for the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. For the five-year plan in its entirety as well as the first year monitoring reports, please visit www.flgov.com/child_advocacy.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 1.1: Early Education and Care.

Lead: Michele Watson, Intergovernmental Affairs Director, Office of Early Learning

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) has produced a draft proposal aimed at developing and implementing a statewide family support training initiative that would embed the *Five Protective Factors* into the training. OEL is currently exploring outside funding opportunities to support this endeavor. OEL has also submitted interest to the National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds to participate in the development phase for the Strengthening Families Online Module Development. OEL has begun discussions involving inclusion of the *Five Protective Factors* and other family support initiatives within the Child Care Development Fund agreement.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 1.2: Home Visiting Programs.

Lead: Carol McNally, Executive Director, Healthy Families Florida

The partner organizations for objective 1.2 developed a collaborative self-assessment tool, field tested that tool and received wide spread support for the initiative. The team also identified additional partners around the state and nearly doubled its membership to its workgroup. This initiative is receiving national attention from the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The Center expressed an interest in following Florida's progress and invited the Workgroup to share their work with other states via conference call on February 28, 2011 as well as present at the Strengthening Families Leadership Summit in Washington, DC on June 23 – 24, 2011.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 1.3: Head Start.

Lead: Lilli Copp, Director, Florida Head Start State Collaboration Office

In April, at the Florida Head Start Association Spring Institute, Head Start Strengthening Families committee members met with the Office of Adoption and Child Protection to review the Strengthening Families toolkit and discuss plans to strengthen the committee and develop a plan for implementation and monitoring the plan. This meeting provided the momentum needed to move forward with implementation of the objective.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 1.4: Medicaid Child Health Check-Up.

Lead: Ronique Hall, Medical Health Care Program Analyst, Agency for Health Care Administration

The workgroup lead identified twelve Child Health Check Up coordinators in Medicaid Area Offices Statewide as potential contributors. An email blast was sent out introducing the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan and received enthusiastic responses, including volunteers for the workgroup and suggestions for implementation and outreach.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 1.5: Technical Assistance to Circuits.

Lead: Johana Hatcher, Prevention Manager, Department of Children and Families

Live webcast entitled "Incorporating the Five Protective Factors into Home Visiting" was provided by the Department of Children and Families on April 25, 2011 to members of the Home Visiting Coalition. The workgroup would like to develop a web-based application.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 2.1: Whole Child.

Lead: Kitty Chiles, Executive Director, Whole Child Florida

At the Annual Meeting of Whole Child (WC) held on June 9-11, 2011 a course correction was accomplished for some of the Whole Child Programs through presentations and discussions. A deeper understanding of the importance of community building as opposed to the simple use of

technology was accomplished among the directors. WC Leon hosts a monthly Professional Network meeting that includes providers from more than 60 agencies and organizations. By providing a forum for networking and information exchange, agencies are committed to attending and therefore intra-agency relationships are built and/or enhanced.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 2.2: Healthy Families Florida.

Lead: Carol McNally, Executive Director, Healthy Families Florida

New statewide partnerships were established with the Florida Sheriffs Association, the Florida Catholic Conference, the Florida Kiwanis and the Florida Afterschool Network. Thirty-four former or current Healthy Families participants across the state received parent leadership training and agreed to serve as an advocate for the program.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 2.3: Healthy Start.

Lead: Annette Phelps, Division Director, Family Health Services, Department of Health

The Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR), Child Abuse Death Review (CADR), Domestic Violence Fatality Review (DVFR) and Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review (PAMR) teams as well as representatives from Healthy Start Coalitions and the Department of Health are engaged and working to streamline efficiencies.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 2.4: Educational Services for Parents/Caregivers of Newborns and Young Infants.

Lead: Jane Murphy, Executive Director, Healthy Start Coalition in Hillsborough

The Workgroup's major accomplishment was entering into a collaborative agreement with the University of Central Florida Marriage and Family Research Institute. The University of Central Florida Marriage and Family Research Institute has agreed to collaborate with the Leadership Team on the development of a survey, and conduct data analysis of the survey to community level providers of educational services for parents/caregivers of newborns.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 3.1: Public Awareness and Education: Prevent Child Abuse Florida at the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida.

Lead: Anita Odom, Director, Prevent Child Abuse Florida

Prevent Child Abuse Florida distributed 96,975 Parent Resource Packets and Guides in English, Spanish and Creole. Their public service announcements aired over 6,000 times through television and nearly 12,000 times through radio. Also during this reporting period, the SunCoast Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized the series of the three PSAs for Florida's Pinwheels for Prevention campaign with an Emmy Award in the Community/Public Service category.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 3.2: Evidence – Based Parenting Programs.

Lead: Johana Hatcher, Prevention Manager, Department of Children and Families

The evidence-based parenting programs workgroup is a large and dedicated group of individuals representing state level agencies and organizations, local level agencies and organizations, as well as FRIENDS, National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Program (CBCAP).

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 3.3: Child Abuse Death Review.

Lead: Major Connie Shingledecker, Investigative Bureau Chief, Manatee County Sheriff's Office

In February of 2011 the Child Abuse Death Review met with the State Domestic Violence Fatality Review Committee for the first time. The Child Abuse Death Review was accepted as a new member of the team. Both teams agreed on having an annual joint meeting to discuss common trends, strategies and prevention efforts.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 4.1 –Objective 4.4: Education Cooperative Child Abuse Prevention Plan.

Lead: Mary Jane Tappen, Deputy Chancellor K – 12, Department of Education

Curriculum efforts have been very successful. The Summer Academy has generated relevant, school- and district-level feedback for the team’s projects. Additionally, obtaining authority to allow the use of the online system needed to host the online training in health education was a significant milestone.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 5.1 – Objective 5.3: Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan.

Lead: Terry Thomas, Special Agent, Department of Law Enforcement

Work has begun on establishing a website, accessible by all state agencies, where training opportunities can be posted. Additionally, agency contact information will be posted to obtain further details of the training through the *Memorandum of Understanding of Training*.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 6.1 – 6.3, Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.1 – 3.3 & Support of Adoptive Families Objective 3.1 – 3.3: Monitoring and Evaluation of Implementation.

Co-Lead: Cyndee Odom, Director, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor

Co-Lead: Christina Pacelle, Special Projects Manager, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor

The composition of the Design Team has lent itself to well formed and grounded discussions with the facility for idea building through group processing and deliberations. The ability to examine the ideas of experts through the lenses of state implementers and local implementers has been invaluable. It is anticipated that the final product will be more useful and usable as a result of the work of this team.

Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.1: Local Recruitment Efforts.

Lead: Kathy Waters, Adoption Manager, Department of Children and Families

The Child Welfare Office within the Family and Community Services at the Department of Children and Families is completing a Child Protective Investigation redesign which will include new pre-service curriculum that will focus on family centered practice and support of families from the initial contact with the Department.

Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.2: Parent Preparation and Training.

Lead: Kathy Waters, Adoption Manager, Department of Children and Families

The Quality Parenting Initiative for foster parents has been providing significant training for a year. This training focuses on the importance of identifying the strengths of birth families, understanding of the developmental stages of children, and of being supportive of reunification. Foster parents are responsible for 40% of Florida’s foster care adoptions each year.

Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.2: Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment.

Lead: Christina Pacelle, Special Projects Manager, Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor

On November 1, 2010, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection partnered with the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Environmental Protection for a kick-off event of *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption!* for National Adoption Month. This event was broadcasted on several media stations throughout Florida. During National Adoption Month on the Explore Adoption website, each day a new child or sibling group was featured in a short video. In April 2011, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection and the Department of Children and Families created a Twitter account for the Explore Adoption initiative. In May 2011, the Florida Association of

Heart Galleries held a photographic exhibit of 50 children available for adoption on the 22nd floor of Florida's Capitol Building as well as in the Governor's Lobby.

Support of Adoptive Families Objective 1.1 & Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.3: Information and Support for Adoptive Families/Prospective Adoptive Parents.

Lead: Kathy Waters, Adoption Manager, Department of Children and Families

The Customer Service Protocol has been incorporated into the Community Based Care contracts by reference. Post Adoption Services Counselors have agreed to request, during an adoptive parent support group meeting, input from adoptive parents on the draft customer satisfaction evaluation when completed.

Support of Adoptive Families 1.2: Adoption Competent Professionals.

Lead: Kathy Waters, Adoption Manager, Department of Children and Families

Adoption competency trainings have been conducted with mental health professionals across the state with 125 mental health professionals that have completed the training. The materials and training was provided at no cost to attendees. Another purchase order has been approved to train 100 more mental health professionals to complete the training over the next several months.

Support of Adoptive Families Objective 1.3: Post Adoption Services Counselors.

Lead: Kathy Waters, Adoption Manager, Department of Children and Families

Two new full time positions to provide post adoption services have been created within Big Bend Community Based Care Lead Agency, one for Circuit 2 and another position for Circuit 14. The adoption competency trainers have been asked to include the Post Adoption Services Counselors in the next round of training, whenever possible.

Support of Adoptive Families Objective 2.1: Support of Adoptive Families.

Lead: Kathy Waters, Adoption Manager, Department of Children and Families

The Adoption Manager at the Department of Children and Families will partner with Circle of Parents or the North American Council on Adoptable Children to provide trainings on strategies for establishing new adoptive parent and youth support groups as well as maintaining support groups over time and responding to educational needs. Monthly conference calls are conducted with post adoption services counselors. Each of these counselors are facilitators for the local adoptive parent and youth support groups.

Support of Adoptive Families Objective 2.2: Education Opportunities for Adoptive Families.

Lead: Kathy Waters, Adoption Manager, Department of Children and Families

One of the recommendations regarding post adoption services will require that an annual survey be completed with adoptive parents by each Community Based Care Lead Agency. A discussion will be held on the next post adoption services call to determine what should some of the standard questions be and one standard will be related to educational needs of adoptive parents.

Support of Adoptive Families Objective 2.3, Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.1 & Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Objective 1.6: Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts.

Co-Lead: Cyndee Odom, Director, Office of Adoption and Child Protection

Co-Lead: Christina Pacelle, Special Projects Manager, Office of Adoption and Child Protection

The Faith-Based and Community-Based workgroup had a web page online on the Governor's website until early 2011. A new web page is currently being developed. A faith-based and community-based contact list for disseminating information has also been created and used for the dissemination of information in 2011.

First Year of Plan Implementation Local Highlights July 2010 – June 2011

Included in this report are highlights from the first year of plan implementation and monitoring for the local plans of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. For the five-year plan in its entirety as well as the first year monitoring reports for Florida's local communities, please visit www.flgov.com/child_advocacy.

Circuit 1.

Lead: Randall N. Fleming, Community Relations Consultant, Department of Children and Families (DCF) Circuit 1

Circuit 1 has seen improvements in the number of children who are in "matched" pre-adoptive placements prior to termination of parental rights. During the period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 of the 172 children whose adoption finalized, 147 were in "matched" pre-adoptive homes prior to termination of parental rights. During the period of July 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011 FamiliesFirst Network sub-provider Children's Home Society's Adoption Support Team has served 577 families and 922 children. Services include assistance to pre- and post adoptive families for adoption specific needs to include three and six months post adoption follow-up calls; linked pre- and post adoptive families, either in person or by mail, to community resources.

Circuit 2.

Lead: Jeanna Olson, Community Development Administrator, DCF Circuit 2

An informational brochure has been created for potential adoptive families and includes information about local resources and services. In May 2011 Children's Home Society hired a full time Post Adoption Services Counselor. This position serves families that reside in the Big Bend area and have adopted a child or sibling group.

Circuit 3 & Circuit 8.

Morgan Rockey, Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuits 3 & 8

A new parenting and child development program called Families Involved in Reaching Success Together (F.I.R.S.T.) began in April 2011. Financial Literacy Program offered to families and new support group started to help participants achieve financial goals. All Department of Children and Families and Partnership for Strong Families staff have received training on Family Centered Practice and Solution Based Casework. Both are now part of the pre-service training for all new Department of Children and Families and Partnership for Strong Families staff.

Circuit 4.

Lead: Jackie Green, Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 4

In Duval County, the Schell Sweet Community Resource Center on the campus of Edward Waters College continues to offer "One-Stop" approach to providing services to the community. During 2010, the partnership between Family Support Services (FSS), Circuit 4's Community Based Care Lead Agency, and Edward Waters College continues to be a value to the New Town Community and the larger service area of the Schell Sweet Center. Offering services centered on the needs of the community, FSS and 29 additional service providers support pre-natal and birthing projects, GED-Prep/GED, Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (STEPS) Prevention, WorkSource, ACCESS, Senior Wellness Program, Mental Health Counseling and several other family help agencies.

Circuit 5.

Co-Lead: Philip Scarpelli, Community Relations Manager, DCF Circuit 5

Co-Lead: Ann Doyle, Program Director, Devereux Kids

Circuit 5 partners continue to work together to impact the child abuse rate and prevent harm to children. Kids Central Inc., the Community Based Care Lead Agency, continues to support prevention services and encourages innovation. The circuit now has seven fully implemented projects, with two of them having designated centers that have been donated from the cities in which they are located: Ocala and Eustis. The circuit also has a Center in Marion Oaks in a local church. The community has also made a concerted effort to reduce SIDS deaths with an awareness initiative that is taken to public gatherings such as Health Fairs. For the preventable death goal, Phil Scarpelli and a Devereux Kids Facilitator became Certified Trainers of the SIDS Risk Reduction presentation. It has a version for providers as well as a version for parents. The trainers have presented the workshop to Child Protective Investigators (CPI) and day care providers and on September 30 will be presenting to 50 Early Learning Center (ELC) members.

Circuit 6.

Lead: Lourdes Benedict, Regional Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 6

The “family friendly” brochure of the *Five Protective Factors* on a colorful umbrella was distributed at the Child Abuse Prevention Conference where over 350 people attended. Banners of the *Five Protective Factors* and the umbrella were displayed throughout the Annual Child Abuse Conference. The Pinwheels for Prevention as well as Strengthening Families Resource Guide 2011 have been distributed throughout Pasco and Pinellas Counties. Eckerd Community Alternatives keeps an ongoing supply of both handbooks in the lobby for parents. The feedback from both parents and case managers is very positive.

Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) Prevention Team will continue to provide ‘lunch and learn’ workshops to present the *Five Protective Factors* in a focus group setting for case managers, supervisors, and ECA staff. Eckerd Community Alternatives Community Facilitator/Trainer will follow up on the training with Child Protective Investigators and Case Managers.

Circuit 7.

Co-Lead: Clay LaRoche, Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 7

Co-Lead: Kellie Daniels, Program Operations Administrator, Community Partnership for Children

The Post Adoption Services Counselor has partnered with Easter Seals in the community who has developed a screening process to identify children on the Autistic spectrum. After the screening process, Easter Seals will assist with the child’s educational plan. Parents are provided a listing of schools in the area that specialize in Autism.

As part of the partnership with A Helping Hand and ASK training, the Post Adoption Specialist and A Helping Hand are working on developing a therapeutic adoption support group with new prospective adoptive families and current adoptive families. This approach is similar to the mentor program developed through Quality Parenting Initiative for foster parents.

Circuit 9.

Lead: Kristi Gray, Community Relations Manager, DCF Circuit 9

Pre-Adoption Preparation Groups occurring monthly since July 2010, and have been successful. These groups generated the attendance of – 7 families each month affording them additional training opportunities from professionals within the community. The adoption family support plan process has been very successful in transitioning children into adoption placements. The committee monitored visits through communication and ensured that all services were in place for the children and families.

Circuit 10.

Lead: Julia Hermelbracht, Community Development Administrator, DCF Circuit 10

The teen dating violence prevention program, the Yellow Dress has served four audiences in Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties for a total of 812 participants in 2010 – 2011. Students self report through the survey that they are more aware of early warning signs of an abusive relationship, and why victims stay in the relationship as well as how to help both the victim and the perpetrator.

Circuit 11.

Lead: Claudia Arias, Operations Management Consultant, DCF Circuit 11

There is training available through Wholeheartedly, a parent support and training organization. Training has been given to adoptive parents on such subjects as trans-racial adoption, mental health issues and special needs at adoption support groups. In March 2011 Our Kids has provided adoption support training through their annual Foster/Adoptive Conference.

Circuit 12.

Lead: Brena Slater, Regional Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 12

A meeting was held with community partners who meet the needs of the therapeutic children in foster care. Discussion was based around the therapeutic provider's assistance to transition a child to an adoptive placement, and then provide stabilization of the child once in the adoptive home. Services such as TBOSS which is a six month post placement therapeutic service who can work with the prospective adoptive parents and the child. Also, the Foster/Adoptive Parent Night Out committee met to discuss respite activities and engaging other Circuit 12 churches (3 in Manatee; 6 in Sarasota) wanting to partner with giving both foster and adoptive parent respite opportunities.

Circuit 13.

Jan Gregory, Deputy Regional Director, DCF SunCoast Region

The Safe Baby social marketing campaign, under the leadership of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, provided informational outreach and staff training on the 3 areas of choosing a safe care giver, safe sleeping, and prevention of shaken baby syndrome to local hospitals, high schools and home visitation program staff. The Child Welfare/Domestic Violence Policy Group, under the shared leadership of the Family Justice Center and Hillsborough Kids, Inc, provided 12 trainings on 12 different topics regarding cross systems issues of child welfare and domestic violence to a total of 252 local professionals. In a partnership among Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Hillsborough Kids, and Success for Kids and Families, the new Successful Families program was implemented to respond to families under investigation in which the children's ages range from 0 – 5. This addresses an identified key target risk population for child injury and death.

Circuit 14.

Lead: Becky Siebert, Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 14

Faith-based organizations have been contacted throughout the Circuit and key child welfare leadership have joined faith-based coalitions to enhance relationships. The Department of Children and Families Circuit 14 Operations Administrator has joined with the Bay County Sheriff's Department to participate in a public awareness spot on News Channel 7/WJHG TV Monday Noon Show. The spot is a chance for law enforcement and the Department to provide public awareness regarding issues related to trends within the Circuit. Topics have included child death, co-sleeping, and abuse and neglect statistics within the six county area.

Circuit 15.

Co-Lead: Bryan Lindert, Child Abuse Prevention Manager, Children's Services Council Palm Beach County

Co-Lead: Toby Pina, Director of Clinical Services, Child and Family Connections

All cases of youth waiting for adoption who are between the ages of 10 – 17 are reviewed every 90 – 120 days to discuss permanency and long term plans and goals for the children. Child and Family Connections has led Permanency Round Tables as a way to review cases including past options that may now be viable, new options not thought of, and to identify an action plan towards permanency. In addition, all youth with the goal of adoption have a detailed recruitment plan.

Circuit 16.

Lead: Amy Baldree, Program Administrator, Child Protective Investigations and Adult and Aging, DCF Circuit 16

Wesley House, Circuit 16's Community Based Care Lead Agency has partnered with the Guidance Care Center to utilize attachment and trauma specific therapists to prepare a family for adoptive child placement. Guidance Care Center has two therapists that have training in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Circuit 17.

Co-Lead: Monica King, Resource and Systems Manager, Children's Services Council of Broward County

Co-Lead: Yasmin Mendoza, Specialized Adoption Supervisor, ChildNet

During the first three quarters, various agencies, known to work closely with the Black community, were contacted to recruit for prospective adoptive parents for prospective Black adoptive children. Agencies include the National Black MBA Association, Lauderdale Regional Chamber of Commerce, South Florida Caribbean News, Black Nurses Association-Miami Chapter, and the National Association of Black Hotel Owners. ChildNet's Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter conducted child-specific recruitment by contacting the 5Minus P Society to recruit for a sibling group of 2 affected by the Cri-du-chat syndrome. A partnership was developed with the society, and 5 Minus P Society featured the siblings in their June Newsletter.

Effective on October 1, 2010, ChildNet Safeplace created a formal process for staffing separated siblings. Cases are staffed within 7 days of children being separated with the Child Advocate, Child Advocate Supervisor, Intake Placement Coordinator (IPA), and Intake Placement Advocate Supervisor. IPA assigned to the case provides weekly updates on efforts made to place the children together. Additionally, the IPA assigned conducts a search and home studies of potential relatives to reunify the children with. As of June 30, 2011, Sixty-One (61) percent of sibling groups removed were placed together upon first placement into foster care.

Circuit 18.

Lead: Heather Howlett, OPS Management Consultant II, DCF Circuit 18

Throughout the year, champions have been trained in the delivery of a locally developed *Five Protective Factors* training and there are currently five identified trainers in the Circuit with several more volunteers in the process of learning the curriculum. To date almost five hundred individuals have received some form of *Five Protective Factors* training this year.

Pathways to Home has continued to provide Concrete Resources to families who are at risk of becoming homeless through collaborations with the faith-based and social services community. In addition, Pathways to Home has established a Resource Center in their new service center to promote knowledge of Concrete Supports. Pathways to Home has successfully trained many clients in the FDIC training which teaches financial literacy and increases a family's resilience. In the past

18 months, the program has stably housed 111 children. Out of the 81 families, 49 of them have established a savings account and have added to it. In addition, through job coaching, training and assistance they have assisted 55 adults who were not previously employed with obtaining jobs.

Circuit 19.

Lead: Cheri Sheffer, Community Relations Consultant, DCF Circuit 19

The circuit launched a “Have a Safe Summer” campaign to educate families on leading causes of preventable summertime child deaths with the assistance of donated time and materials from a local public relations firm. The campaign has generated interviews on two radio stations, articles in two local newspapers, and editorial in the area’s leading newspaper and radio station public service announcements. Additionally, flyers were distributed through 172 area child care centers, potentially impacting 4,728 children.

Through the donated services of an independent consultant, the circuit developed a self – guided training that teaches individuals in routine contact with families how to identify signs and symptoms of acute stress in parents, and provide simple solutions for reaching out to parents under stress and building the relationships that will better empower and support the families’ efforts to seek assistance.

Circuit 20.

Co-Lead: Kim Kutch, Operations Manager, DCF Circuit 20

Co-Lead: Karen Turcotte, Director, Staff Development, Children's Network of Southwest Florida

The news-press wrote an article about the Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Department of Children and Families collaborating to ensure children who are in the adoptive process receive appropriate services. A child, who is available for adoption and met the criteria, was featured in this article. Two local magazines also wrote adoption related articles and featured the Heart Gallery – Southwest Parent and Child and Neapolitan Magazine – during the month of November. Lastly, The News-Press also featured the entire Heart Gallery, to include photographs and narratives for children who are available for adoption but do not have an identified placements for National Adoption Month.

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), the 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. Below are Florida's desired population-level results after the five-year plan has been completed. Florida is using the data outlined above and governed in Florida Statutes to benchmark the success.

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.

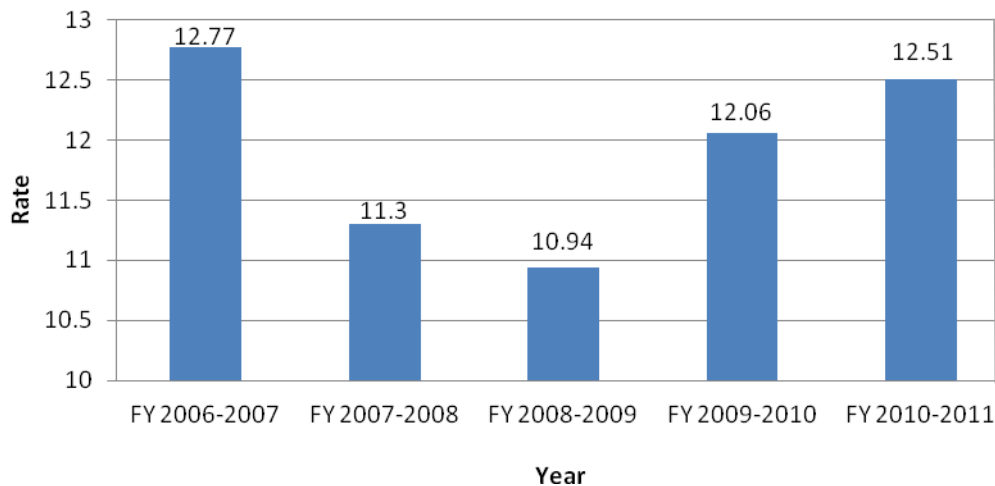
Summary of Child Maltreatment Data

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 2011 for State Fiscal Year 2010 through 2011. 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 September 12, 2011. The data contained in the Tables 2 – 7 were extracted on October 6, 2011 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, used for both case management and reporting, the time lag between different run dates allows for additional data entry and correction.

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 – 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 2011 for State Fiscal Year 2010 – 2011, the hotline accepted calls to commence investigations for **228,018 alleged victims of child maltreatment**. This is a **statewide rate of 55.32 alleged victims** per 1,000 children (birth – 17) in Florida. Of these commenced investigations, **51,555 (22.61%) resulted in verified findings** of child maltreatment. This results in a **statewide victimization rate of 12.51 maltreated children** per 1,000 children (birth – 17) in Florida.

This increase is at least partially attributable to the fact that:

- The 0 – 17 year old child population in Florida is *lower than that of the previous fiscal year* (4,142,498 in SFY 2009 – 2010 vs. 4,121, 741 in SFY 2010 – 2011).
- The number of alleged victims in commenced investigations is *higher than that of the previous year* (211,092 in SFY 2009 – 2010 vs. 228,018 in SFY 2010 – 2011).
- The number of children with verified findings is *higher than last year* (49,964 in SFY 2009 – 2010 vs. 51,555 in SFY 2010 – 2011).

Verified Maltreatment

As stated earlier, the rate of children with verified maltreatment was 12.51 during SFY 2010 – 2011. The table below provides the rates statewide and for each of the twenty (20) circuits for SFY 2008 – 2009, 2009 – 2010, and 2010 – 2011. As shown in the table below, the rate of children with verified maltreatment declined for nine (45%) of the circuits (i.e., Circuits 3, 5, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20 highlighted in green), but increased statewide. As previously stated, the statewide increase can partly be contributed to the fact that the child population (age 0 – 17) in Florida is lower than the previous fiscal year, the number of alleged child victims is higher than the previous year, and the number of verified findings from allegations is higher than last year. Environmental, physical, and emotional stressors can also be attributed to the higher rate of verified maltreatment. It should be noted that the increase has significantly slowed down from SFY 2009 – 2010 to 2010 – 2011.

**Table 1. Rate of Children with Verified Maltreatment
per 1,000 Children in the General Population
July 2008 – June 2009, July 2009 – June 2010, and July 2010 – June 2011**

Circuit	2008 – 2009				2009 – 2010				2010 – 2011				↑ ↓
	Number Alleged Victims	Number Verified	Total Population	Maltreatment Rate	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	12,031	2,879	161,052	17.88	↑
Circuit 02	4,654	932	80,286	11.61	4,185	900	81,048	11.1	4,549	1,057	79,319	13.33	↑
Circuit 03	3,058	597	41,212	14.49	2,893	804	41,568	19.34	3,398	794	41,473	19.14	↓
Circuit 04	16,473	3,350	290,913	11.52	15,770	3,651	289,082	12.63	17,101	3,782	283,383	13.35	↑
Circuit 05	14,709	3,361	193,662	17.35	14,213	3,254	191,647	16.98	14,625	3,028	191,177	15.84	↓
Circuit 06	18,195	4,101	268,896	15.25	16,939	4,881	261,831	18.64	18,316	5,055	262,114	19.29	↑
Circuit 07	11,640	1,807	172,187	10.49	11,698	2,162	171,309	12.62	12,641	2,421	169,125	14.31	↑
Circuit 08	5,566	1,822	75,946	23.99	5,216	1,662	77,158	21.54	5,632	1,763	77,388	22.78	↑
Circuit 09	19,815	4,196	362,471	11.58	18,757	4,844	359,495	13.47	20,132	4,910	358,055	13.71	↑
Circuit 10	11,474	2,277	167,840	13.57	11,063	2,163	165,466	13.07	11,401	2,063	164,776	12.52	↓
Circuit 11	15,114	2,777	598,735	4.64	14,501	3,294	594,557	5.54	16,799	3,964	591,780	6.70	↑
Circuit 12	8,458	2,012	136,203	14.77	8,116	2,024	134,629	15.03	9,114	2,258	133,451	16.92	↑
Circuit 13	14,257	2,976	302,651	9.83	13,893	3,159	298,584	10.58	14,947	3,019	298,184	10.12	↓
Circuit 14	5,417	917	62,987	14.56	5,232	943	63,781	14.78	5,433	740	62,669	11.81	↓
Circuit 15	13,134	2,536	277,701	9.13	12,621	2,900	270,882	10.71	13,553	2,717	271,266	10.02	↓
Circuit 16	788	226	13,434	16.82	682	214	12,828	16.68	723	207	13,296	15.57	↓
Circuit 17	14,959	3,253	415,698	7.83	14,911	4,225	407,694	10.36	15,702	4,556	407,498	11.18	↑
Circuit 18	12,673	2,582	211,352	12.22	11,998	2,422	206,267	11.74	12,817	2,504	204,466	12.25	↑
Circuit 19	6,597	1,719	123,369	13.93	6,118	1,807	120,130	15.04	6,446	1,790	120,204	14.89	↓
Circuit 20	11,613	1,816	238,597	7.61	11,552	2,068	231,967	8.92	12,658	2,048	231,065	8.86	↓
Statewide	220,189	45,901	4,197,287	10.94	211,092	49,964	4,142,498	12.06	228,018	51,555	4,121,741	12.51	↑

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 2010 – 2011 was in the birth to four year old range. This was followed by elementary school age children. It should be noted that there is a very small percentage difference (0.63%) between middle school children and high school children with verified maltreatment during SFY 2010 – 2011.

Table 2. Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of Verified Abuse by Age Range, July 2010 – June 2011 Statewide

Child's Grade (Age Range)	Total with Verified Abuse	Percent of Total
Preschool (0 – 4)	23,319.00	45.23%
Elementary School (5 – 10)	16,218.00	31.46%
Middle School (11 – 13)	5,838.00	11.32%
High School (14 – 17)	6,159.00	11.95%
18+	19.00	0.04%
Unknown	6.00	0.01%
Total	51,559.00	100%

Table 3. Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of Verified Abuse by Age Range, July 2010 – June 2011 by Circuit

Circuit	Child's Age						Totals
	0 – 4 Years	5 – 10 Years	11 – 13 Years	14 – 17 Years	18+ Years	Unknown	
Circuit 01	1,249	928	312	352	–	–	2,841
Circuit 02	435	345	132	119	–	–	1,031
Circuit 03	345	259	95	70	–	–	769
Circuit 04	1,686	1,186	436	449	2	–	3,759
Circuit 05	1,315	957	331	361	–	–	2,964
Circuit 06	2,305	1,533	567	520	2	2	4,927
Circuit 07	1,030	725	292	274	1	–	2,322
Circuit 08	896	584	195	212	2	–	1,889
Circuit 09	2,183	1,498	561	614	1	1	4,857
Circuit 10	902	626	244	240	1	–	2,013
Circuit 11	1,718	1,231	475	480	4	–	3,908
Circuit 12	992	749	226	256	2	–	2,225
Circuit 13	1,529	938	343	358	–	–	3,168
Circuit 14	374	264	72	71	–	–	781
Circuit 15	1,225	796	299	328	–	2	2,648
Circuit 16	93	57	22	32	–	–	204
Circuit 17	2,155	1,445	514	559	3	1	4,676
Circuit 18	1,115	828	289	365	1	–	2,598
Circuit 19	793	571	198	253	–	–	1,815
Circuit 20	979	698	235	246	–	–	2,158
Statewide	23,319	16,218	5,838	6,159	19	6	51,559
Statewide Percent	45.23%	31.46%	11.32%	11.95%	0.04%	0.01%	100.00%

Allegations and Investigations of Child Maltreatment

This pattern continues when looking at allegations of child maltreatment. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, the largest percentage of allegations is for children between the ages of birth and four years old, with the next highest group being ages five to ten years old (highlighted in orange). These two age groups include 160,929 children who were alleged victims of maltreatment, or 70.40% of all children who were alleged victims.

Table 4. Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) for July 2010 – June 2011 Statewide

Child's Grade (Age Range)	Total with Verified Abuse	Percent of Total
Preschool (0 – 4)	84,697	37.05%
Elementary School (5 – 10)	76,232	33.35%
Middle School (11 – 13)	31,037	13.58%
High School (14 – 17)	36,400	15.92%
18+	144	0.06%
Unknown	72	0.03%
Total	228,582	100%

Table 5. Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) for July 2010 – June 2011 by Circuit

Circuit	Child's Age						Totals
	0 – 4 Years	5 – 10 Years	11 – 13 Years	14 – 17 Years	18+ Years	Unknown	
Circuit 01	4,703	3,887	1,486	1,855	1	8	11,940
Circuit 02	1,682	1,531	611	670	4	5	4,503
Circuit 03	1,272	1,149	462	431	3	–	3,317
Circuit 04	6,470	5,664	2,326	2,570	11	10	17,051
Circuit 05	5,376	4,946	1,989	2,193	4	4	14,512
Circuit 06	6,818	5,846	2,478	2,844	8	3	17,997
Circuit 07	4,597	4,134	1,723	1,928	9	5	12,396
Circuit 08	2,434	1,890	756	820	4	–	5,904
Circuit 09	7,150	6,673	2,814	3,451	11	4	20,103
Circuit 10	4,179	3,817	1,547	1,741	12	1	11,297
Circuit 11	5,705	5,472	2,508	3,036	15	8	16,744
Circuit 12	3,489	3,121	1,130	1,316	7	4	9,067
Circuit 13	5,761	5,140	2,066	2,447	6	2	15,422
Circuit 14	2,122	1,873	693	853	3	1	5,545
Circuit 15	5,007	4,538	1,822	2,055	9	7	13,438
Circuit 16	265	231	90	135	1	–	722
Circuit 17	5,951	5,211	2,149	2,750	11	6	16,078
Circuit 18	4,781	4,375	1,727	2,200	11	2	13,096
Circuit 19	2,271	2,225	892	1,118	6	–	6,512
Circuit 20	4,664	4,509	1,768	1,987	8	2	12,938
Statewide	84,697	76,232	31,037	36,400	144	72	228,582
Statewide Percent	37.05%	33.35%	13.58%	15.92%	0.06%	0.03%	100.00%

The largest percentage of children and youth who were alleged victims of maltreatment were white (62.80%), from eighteen circuits. For ethnicity, the largest portion was non – Hispanic (82.64%) from every circuit in Florida. Investigations were conducted for nearly equal numbers of boys and girls, with only four circuits having more boys than girls. In Table 6 the highlighted cells show the highest numbers of race, ethnicity, and gender per circuit and for the state.

Table 6. Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated) July 2010 – June 2011

Circuit	Race				Ethnicity		Gender		
	White	Black	Multiracial	Other	Hispanic	Other	Male	Female	Unknown
Circuit 01	8,009	3,013	515	403	482	11,458	5,974	5,914	52
Circuit 02	1,885	2,338	105	175	117	4,386	2,241	2,232	30
Circuit 03	2,516	641	138	22	207	3,110	1,658	1,656	3
Circuit 04	9,074	6,838	357	782	886	16,165	8,505	8,473	73
Circuit 05	11,284	2,417	282	529	1,583	12,929	7,388	7,073	51
Circuit 06	13,114	3,541	701	641	1,840	16,157	9,015	8,924	58
Circuit 07	9,079	2,550	231	536	1,109	11,287	6,196	6,153	47
Circuit 08	3,530	2,037	247	90	284	5,620	2,935	2,956	13
Circuit 09	11,458	6,744	357	1,544	5,958	14,145	10,076	9,888	139
Circuit 10	7,756	2,735	258	548	2,062	9,235	5,722	5,534	41
Circuit 11	8,329	6,909	121	1,385	7,751	8,993	8,064	8,559	121
Circuit 12	6,649	1,821	338	259	1,589	7,478	4,578	4,464	25
Circuit 13	9,150	5,315	483	474	3,454	11,968	7,729	7,652	41
Circuit 14	4,254	969	188	134	223	5,322	2,785	2,735	25
Circuit 15	6,616	5,833	208	781	2,732	10,706	6,701	6,677	60
Circuit 16	615	87	5	15	232	490	366	356	–
Circuit 17	6,605	7,905	213	1,355	3,261	12,817	8,011	7,985	82
Circuit 18	9,244	2,832	715	305	1,584	11,512	6,579	6,491	26
Circuit 19	4,480	1,658	182	192	1,021	5,491	3,206	3,293	13
Circuit 20	9,904	2,325	320	389	3,314	9,624	6,476	6,436	26
Statewide	143,551	68,508	5,964	10,559	39,689	188,893	114,205	113,451	926
Statewide Percent	62.80%	29.97%	2.61%	4.62%	17.36%	82.64%	49.96%	49.63%	0.41%

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 October 6, 2011, statewide there were 51,559 children with verified child maltreatment (unduplicated child count). For these children, there were 70,969 verified allegations of child maltreatment (duplicated child count). 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 threatened harm. The lowest verification rates were for mental injury, asphyxiation, and physical injury. 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 2010 – June 2011**

Type of Abuse Allegation	Number of Allegations	Number of Allegations Verified	Percent of Allegations Verified
Family Violence Threatens Child	84,766	22,347	26.36%
Substance Misuse	105,998	16,763	15.81%
Inadequate Supervision	67,849	9,793	14.43%
Physical Injury	58,176	4,994	8.58%
Environmental Hazards	51,596	4,787	9.28%
Threatened Harm	10,167	4,616	45.40%
Sexual Abuse	17,335	2,420	13.96%
Failure to Protect	3,948	1,910	48.38%
Medical Neglect	7,478	1,078	14.42%
Abandonment	993	678	68.28%
Mental Injury	9,974	501	5.02%
Bone Fracture	1,099	261	23.75%
Bizarre Punishment	2,195	209	9.52%
Burns	1,492	163	10.92%
Failure to Thrive	324	118	36.42%
Asphyxiation	1,954	106	5.42%
Death	342	100	29.24%
Internal Injuries	90	48	53.33%
Human Trafficking	411	39	9.49%
Malnutrition/Dehydration	127	38	29.92%
Total	426,314	70,969	16.65%

Reasons for Removal

The Department of Children and Families' *Florida Safe Families Network* (FSFN) data system recorded the primary reasons for removal of the children entering into foster care. If a child was removed more than once during the year, all sets of reasons are included in this analysis. Of the 15,542 children entering foster care in the twelve month span from July 2010 – June 2011, 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 Counts)
July 2010 – June 2011**

Removal Reason	Number of Children	Percent of Children
Parental Drug and Alcohol Abuse	6794	44%
Physical and Sexual Abuse	2854	18%
Inadequate Supervision, Medical and Physical Neglect	4946	32%
Domestic Violence	2442	16%
Death of Parent/Caretaker Unable to Cope	2131	14%
Child Behavior/Relinquishment/Abandonment	2097	13%
Incarceration of Parents	1963	13%
Inadequate Housing	1915	12%
Child Alcohol and Drug Abuse	278	2%

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. The least cited reason for a child removal was child alcohol and drug abuse, followed by inadequate housing.

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 case management services, court appointed representatives, and other services 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 2010 – June 2011**

Recommended Service	Number	Percent	Recommended Service	Number	Percent
Case Management Services	45,550	34.30%	Educational Training Services	198	0.15%
Court Appointed Representative	20,043	15.09%	Health Related Home Services	176	0.13%
Other Services	15,191	11.44%	Family Planning Services	162	0.12%
Counseling Services	15,186	11.44%	Pregnancy Parenting Services	143	0.11%
Services Offered Refused	10,891	8.20%	Juvenile Court Petition	138	0.10%
Informational Referral Service	10,731	8.08%	Day Care Services Child	133	0.10%
Substance Abuse Services	6,453	4.86%	Adoption Services	133	0.10%
Family Support Services	3,434	2.59%	Referral Possible False Report	96	0.07%
Family Preservation Services	1,456	1.10%	Special Juvenile Delinquent	84	0.06%
Home Based Services	985	0.74%	Transportation Services	44	0.03%
Mental Health Services	760	0.57%	Independent Transition Living	34	0.03%
Family Builders	592	0.45%	Employment Services	31	0.02%
Foster Care Services	497	0.37%	Petition Dismissed by Judge	30	0.02%
Legal Services	465	0.35%	Respite Care Services	29	0.02%
Housing Services	317	0.24%	Special Services Disabled	24	0.02%
Intensive Crisis Counseling Program	231	0.17%	Total (duplicated counts across services)	134,237	100.00%

Child Abuse Death Review

In 2010 the State Child Death Review Committee prepared a report of its reviews of deaths that occurred in 2009. During 2009, 2,638 children under the age of 18 lost their lives in Florida. Of those children who died, 513 were reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline. Of the 513 child deaths reported to the hotline, 192 were the result of verified child abuse or neglect. During 2010, the State Committee reviewed all of the child abuse deaths. The State Committee reviewed an additional five child deaths that occurred in previous years, bringing the total number of child deaths reviewed by the State Committee in 2010 to 197.

The committee found that in 2009, there was a slight decrease in the number of child abuse deaths in Florida from 2008 where 201 children died from verified child abuse or neglect. As shown in the table below, during calendar year 2009, the leading causes of the 192 verified child deaths reviewed were drowning (highlighted in orange), followed by physical abuse and then unsafe sleep environments.

Table 10. Leading Causes of Child Abuse Deaths in 2009

Cause	Number of Deaths	Percent of Deaths
Drowning	59	31%
Physical Abuse	52	27%
Unsafe Sleep	42	22%
Other	39	20%
Total	192	100%

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

1. **Review All Child Deaths** – Amend §383.402 (1), F.S. to expand the State Child Abuse Death Review Committee’s authority related to the review of child deaths in Florida to have a better understanding of why children die in Florida.
2. **Fully Fund Healthy Families Florida** – Support the Department of Children and Families 2011 – 2012 Legislative Budget Request to restore Healthy Families Florida funding to the 2009 – 2010 funding level.
3. **Prioritize Assessment of Substance Abuse in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases** – Substance abuse and the illegal or excessive use of alcohol or drugs should be strongly considered when evaluating and investigating all cases of child abuse and neglect. The presence of substance abuse should also be given a higher priority in the risk assessment activities of child protection organizations that come into contact with children and their families.

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

- **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, with a focus on those under 5 years of age.
- **Physical Abuse** – A disturbing number of infant and toddler homicides are attributed to common triggers and risk factors for physical abuse.
Recommendation: Any entity providing federal or state funded services, whether it be child protection investigations or case management, child care, home visiting or other services, should be trained to identify 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.
- **Accessible and Affordable Childcare** – Waiting lists for subsidized child care are growing. Subsidized child care enables low income parents to work, but only 30% of eligible families were served in 2009 – 2010, leaving more than 90,000 children on waiting lists.
Recommendation: Support The Policy Group for Florida’s Families and Children to expand child care subsidies by 20% annually until all eligible children have the opportunity to enroll in a child care program or family child care home, allowing parents to work.

- ***Data Collection and Analysis on Economic Factors*** – Without additional data collection and analysis by the State Committee on economic factors present in death review cases, a determination of whether these factors directly or indirectly contributed to these deaths is unknown.
Recommendation: Economic factors should be considered as a part of the risk assessment and documented in the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) data system so they can be analyzed both locally and on a statewide level to determine the impact they have on child deaths.
- ***Consistency and Communication*** – Communication between agencies and consistent evidence gathering protocol are crucial to the child death investigation and protection of other remaining children that are at risk.
Recommendation: Improved consistency, communication and coordinated response during investigations are needed among the various agencies involved in child abuse/neglect and child death investigations.
- ***Quality Assurance Review*** – Understanding the thinking and decision-making process of the legal decisions made and/or the court action 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.
- ***Judicial Involvement*** – Informing judges, magistrates and court staff on the process and findings from the child death reviews will assist them to recognize key indicators of child endangerment.
Recommendation: Increase judicial awareness of Child Abuse Death Review Committee findings and trends through targeted training initiatives.
- ***Public Awareness Campaigns*** – Research-based public awareness campaigns are effective in educating the public on strategies and actions that work to prevent child abuse and neglect before it ever occurs in the first place.
Recommendation: Enhance targeted public awareness campaigns related to child health, safety, and welfare, and other mechanisms for preventing child deaths.

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).

The Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) tracks state performance on federal child welfare outcome measures using 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 2011. 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, original comparison benchmarks were established in 2007 based on analyses using data from the 2004 Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) which spans the months October through September. Differences in reporting period can alter measured performance. For example, FFY 2011 spans October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. On the other hand, the current state performance information is based on the 12 – month period from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 (SFY 2010 – 2011), using the most recent available data for this report.

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 2010 through June 2011, ***51.05 percent were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home.*** The target was to reach the national 75th percentile for FFY 2004 which is 36.6 percent. ***Florida has exceeded this target for four consecutive years.*** Florida has made steady progress on this measure over the last several years, increasing from 23.9 percent in FFY 2004 to 51.05 percent in SFY 2010 – 2011 (e.g., July 2010 through June 2011). 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 on the next page. As shown in Table 11, all but four of the 20 Florida circuits exceeded the federal target.

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

Circuit	Performance	Circuit	Performance
Circuit 08	71.63%	Statewide	51.05%
Circuit 14	70.69%	Circuit 12	48.32%
Circuit 04	68.11%	Circuit 03	46.67%
Circuit 18	60.98%	Circuit 10	45.71%
Circuit 15	58.39%	Circuit 05	45.15%
Circuit 02	57.35%	Circuit 11	42.65%
Circuit 09	56.35%	Federal Target	36.60%
Circuit 06	54.95%	Circuit 19	35.34%
Circuit 17	52.69%	Circuit 13	35.19%
Circuit 07	52.54%	Circuit 20	32.84%
Circuit 01	51.76%	Circuit 16	25.00%

AFCARS Measure 2 – Median Length of Stay in Foster Care. Of all children adopted from foster care during the period July 2010 through June 2011, the *median length of stay in foster care was 20.00 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, established in FFY 2007, 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 exceeded the federal target.* Florida’s median length of stay has dropped for several years, from 35.1 months in FFY 2004 to 23.00 months in SFY 2010 – 2011. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected below. Last year, 14 (70%) of Florida circuits met the federal target, and this year, 17 (85%) of the 20 Florida circuits met or exceeded the federal target.

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

Circuit	Median LOS	Circuit	Median LOS
Circuit 08	18.0	Statewide	23.0
Circuit 04	19.0	Circuit 05	25.0
Circuit 14	19.5	Circuit 12	25.0
Circuit 18	20.0	Circuit 10	26.0
Circuit 15	21.0	Circuit 03	26.5
Circuit 02	22.0	Circuit 11	27.0
Circuit 06	22.0	Circuit 19	27.0
Circuit 09	22.0	Federal Target	27.0
Circuit 01	23.0	Circuit 16	28.0
Circuit 07	23.0	Circuit 20	30.0
Circuit 17	23.0	Circuit 13	32.0

AFCARS Measure 3 – Finalized Adoptions. Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of July 2010, and who had been in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, **31.27 percent were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by June 30, 2011.** The target was to reach the national 75th percentile for FFY 2004, established in FFY 2007 of 22.7 percent. **Florida has exceeded this target.** 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, 18 (90%) met or exceeded the federal target during SFY 2010 – 2011. The two circuits that did not meet the federal target are highlighted in orange. **It should be noted that Florida, for the third year in a row, has received an adoption incentive award from the Department of Health and Human Services for the number of finalized adoptions. Only Texas and Arizona exceeded the amount of Florida’s award.**

Table 13. Percent of Finalized Adoptions (by Circuit)

Circuit	Performance	Circuit	Performance
Circuit 19	53.22%	Circuit 14	31.94%
Circuit 05	48.55%	Circuit 13	31.51%
Circuit 12	47.20%	Statewide	31.27%
Circuit 08	41.74%	Circuit 04	27.68%
Circuit 01	40.94%	Circuit 02	24.29%
Circuit 03	39.22%	Circuit 17	23.04%
Circuit 07	37.95%	Circuit 09	23.00%
Circuit 20	36.47%	Circuit 15	22.93%
Circuit 16	35.71%	Federal Target	22.70%
Circuit 10	34.50%	Circuit 11	20.70%
Circuit 06	33.11%	Circuit 18	17.45%

AFCARS Measure 4 – Legally Free for Adoption. Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of July 2010 or January 2011, had been in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, and were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, **12.05 percent became legally free for adoption** by December 31, 2010 or June 30, 2011 respectively. The target was to reach the national 75th percentile for FFY 2004, established in FFY 2007 which is 10.9 percent. **Florida exceeded this target.** 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 on the next page. As shown in Table 14, the circuits highlighted in orange did not meet the federal target. Of the 20 Florida circuits, 14 (70%) met or exceeded the federal target.

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

Circuit	Performance	Circuit	Performance
Circuit 03	55.00%	Circuit 08	12.12%
Circuit 16	34.78%	Statewide	12.05%
Circuit 12	25.71%	Circuit 02	11.54%
Circuit 07	22.76%	Circuit 04	11.11%
Circuit 01	22.61%	Federal Target	10.90%
Circuit 19	18.85%	Circuit 15	10.08%
Circuit 20	18.32%	Circuit 13	9.14%
Circuit 05	17.83%	Circuit 09	9.04%
Circuit 06	16.01%	Circuit 17	7.80%
Circuit 14	12.77%	Circuit 18	6.96%
Circuit 10	12.76%	Circuit 11	3.06%

Reports on this measure were likely impacted due to changes in Families Safe First Network last year 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.

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 may 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 eligible to be featured on the Department of Children and Families website.

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 July 1, 2010 and provides a starting base at the beginning of SFY 2010 – 2011.

Table 15. Adoption-Related Populations as of July 1, 2010

POPULATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
a. Children TPR'd or who have a primary goal of adoption	5,303
b. Children with a primary goal of adoption regardless of TPR status	4,470
c. Children TPR'd, regardless of goal	3,175
d. Children who have been TPR'd and have a primary goal of adoption	2,342
e. Children who have been TPR'd, have a primary goal of adoption, do not have an identified family and are eligible to be featured on the DCF website	823*

*The 823 is from the Monthly Adoption Report all other figures are from the July 1, 2010 AFCARS Extract.

Of the 2342 children who had a primary goal of adoption and were TPR'd as of July 1, 2010, 1093 of them (47%) were adopted during the SFY 2010 – 2011. These adoptions represent 36% of the total 3,009 adoptions finalized during the course of SFY 2010 – 2011.

Table 16 shows the length of time from the last TPR date until the adoption finalization for all children adopted during SFY 2010 – 2011. The date of TPR was recorded in the system for 2,958 out of the 3,009 of the children adopted; a 98 percent non-random sample. Of these 2,958 children, most (66.63%) were adopted in less than twelve months and almost all (87.79%) were adopted within 24 months (highlighted in green) of their TPR dates.

Table 16. Length of Time between TPR and Adoption Finalization for SFY 2010 – 2011 Finalized Adoptions

Number and Percent of Children Adopted by the Number of Months Between TPR and Finalization of Adoption based on 2,958 for whom data are available		
Time Span	Number of Children Adopted	Percent of Children Adopted
< 12 Months	1,971	66.63%
12 – 24 Months	626	21.16%
24 – 36 Months	186	6.29%
36 – 48 Months	69	2.33%
> 48 Months	106	3.58%
Data Not Available*	51	
Total of Adopted Children	3,009	100%

* TPR date was not included in FSFN 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 June 30, 2011 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 1,796 of the 2,152 children who were legally free for adoption by June 30, 2011, an 83.46 percent non-random sample. Of these 1,796 children, less than half (48.66%) have been waiting more than 12 months (highlighted in orange) to be adopted. More than 390 of the children who were available for adoption at the end of the SFY 2010 – 2011 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 June 30, 2011

Remaining Children available for Adoption by the Number of Months Between TPR and June 30, 2011 for the 1,796 children for whom data are available		
Time Span	Number of Waiting Children	Percent of Waiting Children
< 12 Months	922	51.34%
12 – 24 Months	293	16.31%
24 – 36 Months	188	10.47%
36 – 48 Months	130	7.24%
>48 Months	263	14.64%
Data Not Available*	356	
Total Number of Waiting Children	2152	100%

* TPR date was not included in FSFN 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

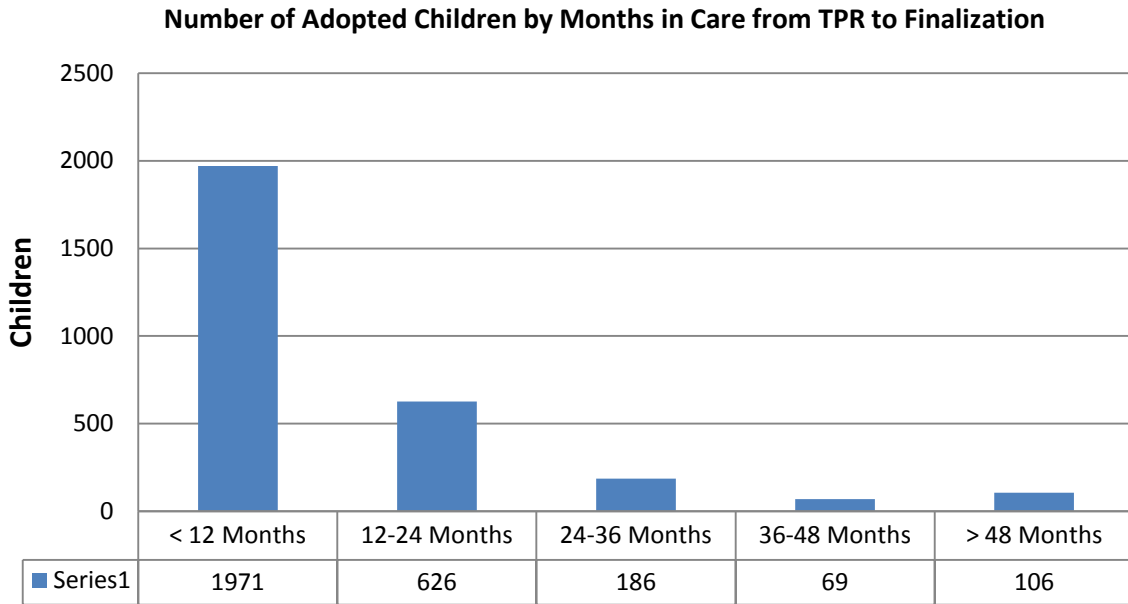
The state’s five-year prevention and permanency plan has two desired population results for the promotion of adoption. Both deal with the timeliness of adoption – increasing the adoptions that occur within 12 months of TPR and decreasing the length of time children have been waiting for adoption since 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 2010 – 2011 3,009 children were adopted. Verified data sets were available and provided for 2,958 of these 3,009 children, representing a 98 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, 1,971 (66.63%) of the adoptions were finalized in less than twelve months from date of TPR. This is above the target of exceeding 66.4 percent in the next four years. Statewide efforts will continue in order to maintain this progress. As shown in this chart, of the children adopted during SFY 2010 – 2011, almost 400 children were adopted after waiting two or more years and of these, 106 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 987 of these children in their care that had waited longer than 12 months for their adoption

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 2010 – 2011, 3,009 adoptions from the child welfare system were finalized in Florida. Of those, 2,945 had the adoptive parent relationship data entered into the system, a 98 percent non-random sample. Three-quarters of the 2,945 children were adopted by the families known to them and where they were already living – by their foster parents or relative caregivers: **30.29 percent** were adopted by foster parents and **46.60 percent** were adopted by relatives. The remaining **23.87 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	27%	50%	32%	Circuit 11	36%	43%	17%
Circuit 02	26%	48%	26%	Circuit 12	36%	42%	41%
Circuit 03	35%	39%	19%	Circuit 13	33%	43%	18%
Circuit 04	27%	49%	10%	Circuit 14	45%	26%	30%
Circuit 05	23%	51%	29%	Circuit 15	33%	45%	21%
Circuit 06	23%	47%	24%	Circuit 16	8%	75%	0%
Circuit 07	23%	54%	22%	Circuit 17	43%	37%	22%
Circuit 08	31%	40%	36%	Circuit 18	13%	68%	26%
Circuit 09	39%	36%	30%	Circuit 19	26%	58%	25%
Circuit 10	21%	42%	30%	Circuit 20	47%	38%	23%

State Plan Desired Result 3 – Promotion of Adoption – By June, 30 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 categories found in Table 15, but for a different snapshot of time. These counts were taken on June 30, 2011 and provide for end of State Fiscal Year 2010 – 2011 counts as well as a starting base for the beginning of the next State Fiscal Year 2011 – 2012.

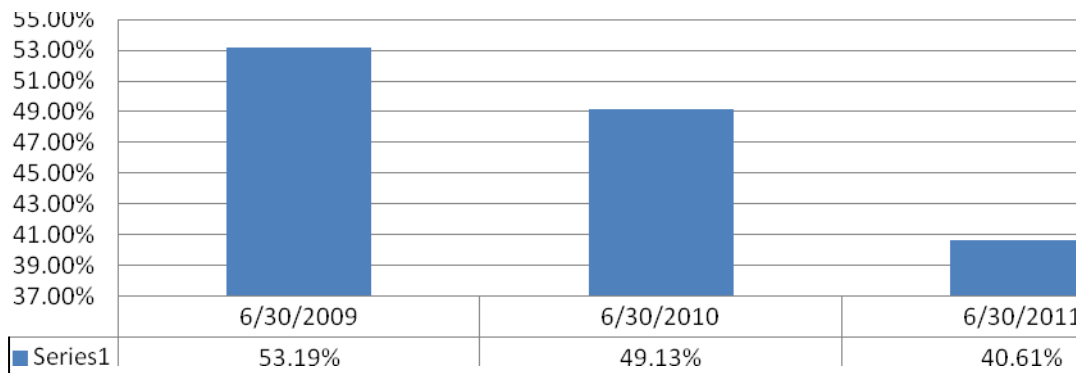
Table 19. Adoption-Related Populations as of June 30, 2011

POPULATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
a. Children TPR'ed or who have a primary goal of adoption	5,138
b. Children with a primary goal of adoption regardless of TPR status	4,294
c. Children TPR'ed, regardless of goal	3,371
d. Children who have been TPR'ed and have a primary goal of adoption	2,527
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 website	746*

* Source July 1, 2011 AFCARS Extract, except the 746 which comes from the Monthly Adoption Report.

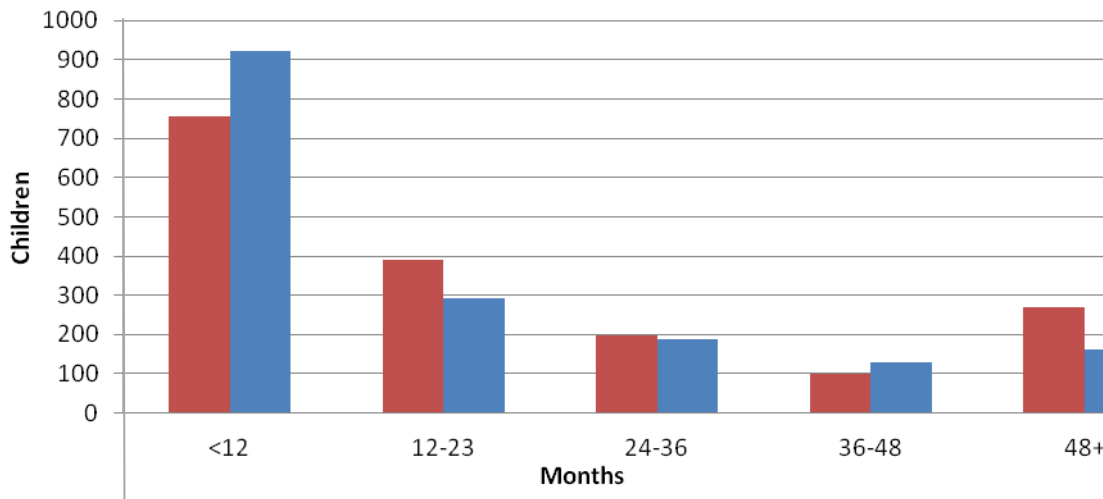
As shown in Table 19 above, 2,527 children were waiting to be adopted as of June 30, 2011. Of these, 1,796 have TPR dates entered in the system providing a 71 percent non-random sample for analysis. Of those, 874 (35%) have been waiting longer than 12 months from the date of their TPR. As shown in Chart 3 below, the percent has decreased from the prior year percent of 49 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). Chart 4 displays the proportion of children who have been TPR'd, have a primary goal of adoption, and are therefore said to be “available for adoption” for the last two state fiscal years. Taken together, Charts 3 and 4 indicate that more children becoming newly available for adoption are being found permanent adoptive homes within 12 months and that an increasing number of children who have been in foster care and awaiting adoption for a longer period of time are being found permanent homes. In fact, the majority of the total number children available for adoption at the end of the fiscal year have been waiting less than 12 months.

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



	6/30/2010	6/30/2011
Total Number of Children	1,954	2,152
Number with Complete Data	1,717	1,796
Percent in Non-Random Sample	87%	83%

As previously shown in Table 19, there were 2,527 children legally available for adoption with a primary goal of adoption as of June 30, 2010. Of these, 746 (30%) do not have identified adoptive families as of June 30, 2011 and are listed on the website as available for adoption. Only the 746 children available without identified adoptive families are described below. On the next page, Chart 5 describes these 746 children by age groupings. Youth who are 13 – 14 years old represent 199 (27%) of the waiting children. Over half (58%) are youth age thirteen or older. Ten percent of the available children are eight years of age or younger while 90 percent are between the ages of nine and seventeen.

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

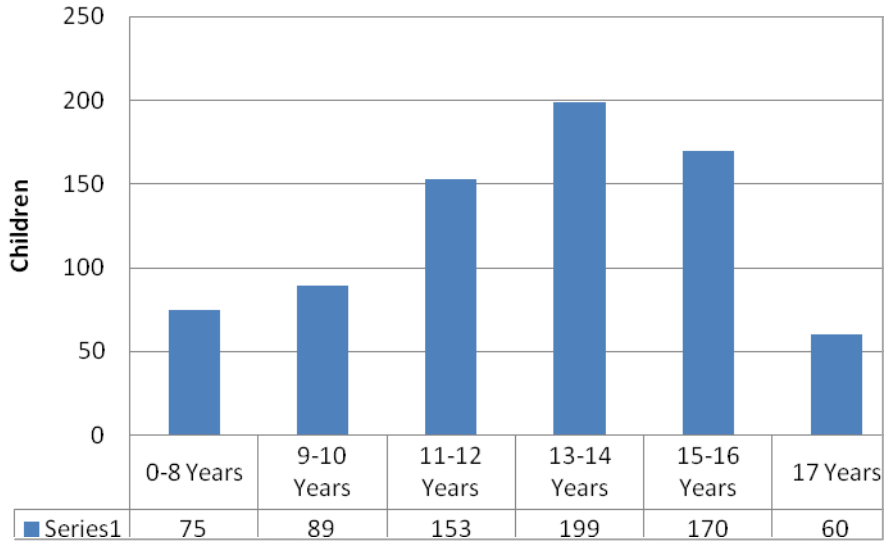
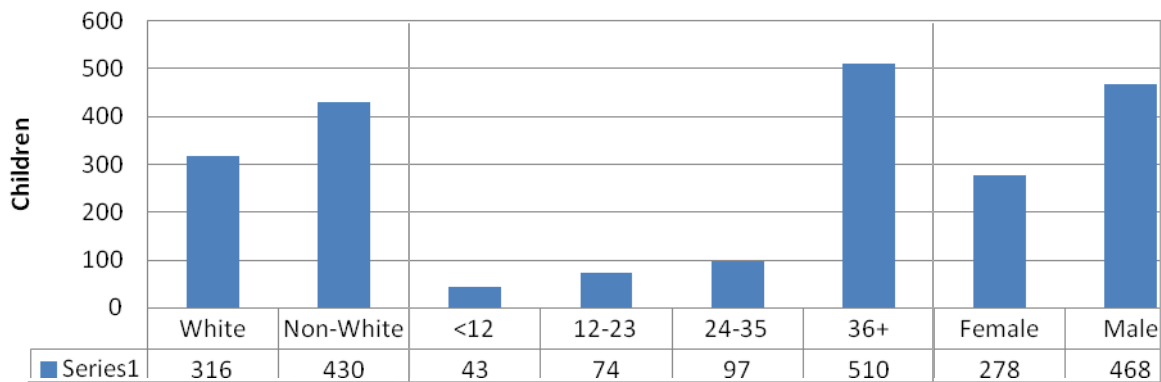


Chart 6 describes the races, lengths of time waiting to be adopted and the genders of non-random samples of the 746 children without identified homes awaiting adoption. Of these children 468 (63%) are male and 37 percent are female. Over half (58%) of the available children with race data are non-white. Over two-thirds (70%) have been legally available and waiting for three or more years without an identified family. This is significantly different than Chart 4, where the majority of the total number of children awaiting adoption is less than 12 months.

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	746	746	746
Number with Complete Data	746	724	746
% in Non-Random Sample	100%	97%	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 Child Welfare submitted data provided by the Circuits on the number of children who were returned to foster care after finalized adoptions and the parental rights of the adoptive parents were terminated. The reasons for the dissolutions were also documented by the Circuits for each child. Six circuits (Circuits 5, 6, 12, 14, 16 and 17) reported no dissolutions, while last fiscal year, five circuits reported no dissolutions. Behavioral issues were reported as the most cited reason. A comprehensive analysis of each dissolution will assist the local circuits in assessing the effectiveness of their post adoption services programs. The two most prominent reasons for dissolutions of adoption were the adopted child’s violent behaviors 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. The dissolutions below include 48 children, seven sibling groups and 39 families.

An analysis of the reasons and circumstances for each dissolution needs to be conducted to assist the local post adoption services programs in determining if existing post adoption services are effective and if additional post adoption services are needed. Many adoptive parents do not request post adoption services for many months or even years rather than as soon as problems 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.

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	5	5	2			1	
Circuit 02	1	1	1			1	
Circuit 03	1	1				1	
Circuit 04	10	6	6		5	5	
Circuit 05	0						
Circuit 06	0						
Circuit 07	3	3	3		2	2	
Circuit 08	2	1	2		1	2	
Circuit 09	2	2	1				
Circuit 10	3	2	1		1	1	
Circuit 11	3					3	
Circuit 12	0						
Circuit 13	8	8	6		3	3	
Circuit 14	0						
Circuit 15	6	4	2		1	1	
Circuit 16	0						
Circuit 17	0						
Circuit 18	2	2	2				
Circuit 19	1	1	1		1	1	
Circuit 20	1	1	1				
Statewide	48	37	28		14	21	

Circuits also cited that there were dissolutions due to the inability of the adoptive parents to either care for or provide a safe home for the adopted child(ren), specifically the adoptive parents were afraid for their own safety and/or the safety of other children in the home. Of the dissolutions reported, fourteen were due to a family being unable to continue care for the child in their home and eight (17%) were due to abuse or neglect in the home by the adoptive parent. Last fiscal year there were eleven dissolutions or 26% due to abuse or neglect by the adoptive parent. These dissolutions must be analyzed closely to determine what post adoption services such as adoption competent family therapy and supportive in-home services may have been needed to assist these adoptive families.

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 parents	Other
Circuit 01	5			Adoptive parents had heart issues.
Circuit 02	1	1		
Circuit 03	1		1	
Circuit 04	10	4		Adoptive mom was Baker Acted.
Circuit 05	0			
Circuit 06	0			
Circuit 07	3	2		
Circuit 08	2			
Circuit 09	2		1	
Circuit 10	3	2	1	
Circuit 11	3		3	
Circuit 12	0			
Circuit 13	8	4		
Circuit 14	0			
Circuit 15	6		2	
Circuit 16	0			
Circuit 17	0			
Circuit 18	2			
Circuit 19	1	1		
Circuit 20	1			
Statewide	48	14	8	2

Status of Support of Adoptive Families

To assess the status of support of adoptive families, the Department of Children and Families Office of Child Welfare 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. 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 44 adoptive parent support groups. Circuit 7 is the only Circuit without a support group at this time. However, a plan has already been established to begin a new support group in January 2012. Support groups are easy to start but difficult to maintain over time and Circuit 7 has already requested assistance from a national adoptive parent association to assist them with establishing the new support group. Several of the support groups include foster and adoptive parents in the support group, however, it is important to remember that because over 30 percent of the adoptions each year are by foster parents, a support group inclusive of both parent types is appropriate.

Table 22. Quantity of Adoptive Parent Support Groups by Circuit

Circuit	Number of Adoptive Parent Support Groups	Comments
Circuit 01	2	
Circuit 02	1	Quarterly newsletters are sent to all adoptive parents and a teen support group has been established.
Circuit 03	2	Both support groups are foster and adoptive parent support groups because these are all rural counties. Newsletters are sent out quarterly about post adoption services.
Circuit 04	3	Newsletters are sent with subsidy checks monthly or quarterly by the two Community Based Care Lead Agencies, Family Support Services and Kids First of Florida.
Circuit 05	4	Four of the five counties have adoptive parent support groups.
Circuit 06	2	Newsletters are sent quarterly about post adoption services.
Circuit 07	0	Adoptive Parent Support Group dissolved, will start a new parent and teen support group in January 2012.
Circuit 08	1	Newsletters are sent quarterly to adoptive parents.
Circuit 09	5	Flyers and email newsletters are sent quarterly to adoptive parents.
Circuit 10	2	
Circuit 11	4	Monthly newsletters are sent to adoptive parents and a Warmline is available with a response by an experienced adoptive parent.
Circuit 12	2	Both are foster and adoptive support groups.
Circuit 13	1	In addition, a teen support group is facilitated by a licensed mental health practitioner.
Circuit 14	1	In addition, quarterly newsletter is sent to all adoptive parents and a support group is being planned for the outlying rural counties.
Circuit 15	2	One group welcomes all members of the triad and is primarily focused on private adoptions.
Circuit 16	1	Newsletters are sent quarterly to adoptive parents.
Circuit 17	3	One group includes foster, adoptive and relative caregivers
Circuit 18	2	Newsletters are sent quarterly to adoptive parents.
Circuit 19	2	Newsletters are sent quarterly to adoptive parents.
Circuit 20	4	Newsletters are sent quarterly to adoptive parents.
Statewide	44	

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 44 support groups across the State of Florida as of June 2011, which is three more support groups than reported last fiscal year. Another important improvement is that most of the Circuits, 11 out of 20 or 55%, are sending quarterly or monthly newsletters to all adoptive parents in order to engage and inform them about local post adoption events and new local post adoption services. All of the Post Adoption Services Counselors are connected to one of the support groups in their area and provide community resource persons 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. During the fiscal year, four of the fifteen trainers certified by Rutgers University were transferred to new positions. Therefore, another train the trainer class is scheduled in January 2012 to establish at least ten more trainers of this curriculum across the state. As soon as the train the trainer class is completed in late January, one or more classes will be planned for the spring and summer.

One hundred and forty-seven mental health professionals have completed the adoption competency training. All of the circuits have at least three adoption competent mental health professionals. The www.adoptflorida.org website now documents under "Support" the name and contact information by county for all of the licensed mental health professionals who have completed the adoption competency training. As stated above, more adoption competency trainers will be established this upcoming year with more classes planned to continue to increase the number of mental health professionals who are adoption competent.

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

Circuit	Quantity of Adoption Competent Mental Health Professionals	Comments
Circuit 01	4	A new class was completed in the fall, after the fiscal year ended and 12 more mental health professionals completed the training and will be counted for next year's report.
Circuit 02	11	
Circuit 03	3	
Circuit 04	5	
Circuit 05	3	
Circuit 06	9	
Circuit 07	6	
Circuit 08	3	
Circuit 09	11	
Circuit 10	13	
Circuit 11	10	
Circuit 12	10	
Circuit 13	15	
Circuit 14	7	
Circuit 15	5	
Circuit 16	3	
Circuit 17	6	
Circuit 18	8	
Circuit 19	9	
Circuit 20	3	
Statewide	147	

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. Again, almost 17,000 children have been adopted from the child welfare system in the last five years alone. Having a total of 147 adoption competent mental health professionals across the State of Florida as of June 2011 is still not sufficient to meet the needs of Florida’s adoptive families.

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, assistance to investigators when an investigation involves an adoptive parent, temporary case management, assistance with subsidy and Medicaid issues and assistance in establishing and maintaining one or more adoptive parent support groups. This past fiscal year, all of the post adoption service programs focused on having a Post Adoption Services Counselor provide assistance to child protective investigators when an investigation involved an adoptive family. The assistance to investigators includes an assessment of the needs of the adopted child and adoptive family, local adoption competent services needed for the adoptive family and an opportunity to engage the adoptive parents in local adoptive parent support group activities. Across the state 29 counselors were identified by the circuits as providing these post adoption services. This is an increase of two positions from last year. The greatest improvement is the fact that seventeen of the 29 positions (highlighted green) or 59% are designated as full time Post Adoption Services Counselors, an increase of from 12 of the 27 or 44% last fiscal year.

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	A full time post adoption services counselor was hired this year.
Circuit 03	1	A full time post adoption services counselor was created this year and responds to all requests from families and another post adoption services counselor assists an investigator when an investigation involves adoptive parents. Both handle Circuits 3 and 8.
Circuit 04	2	Community Based Care Lead Agency has a contract with two staff to provide post adoption services.
Circuit 05	1	A full time post adoption counselor left and a new full time post adoption services counselor was hired.
Circuit 06	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption specialist.
Circuit 07	2	A full time post adoption services counselor for Community Partnership and part of the job duties for adoption specialist for Family Integrity Program.
Circuit 08	1	A full time post adoption services counselor was created this year and responds to all requests from families and another post adoption services counselor assists an investigator when an investigation involves adoptive parents. Both handle Circuits 3 and 8.
Circuit 09	1	Full time post adoption services counselor.
Circuit 10	1	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	Currently is part of the job duties of adoption specialist.
Circuit 13	3	Sylvia Thomas Center has three full time staff.
Circuit 14	1	A full time post adoption services counselor was hired this year.
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	Full time post adoption services counselor.
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.
Circuit 20	1	Currently is part of the job duties of the adoption specialist.
Statewide	29	17 of the 29 positions are designated as full time positions providing post adoption services.

With nearly 17,000 children adopted from foster care during the last five years, one or more full time designated Post Adoption Services Counselors in each circuit are critical for responding to the service needs of adoptive families post finalizations. The State of Florida and its partners are committed to providing a sufficient and accessible array of post adoption services in each circuit including information and referral services, temporary case management, assistance with assessments during investigations, assistance with subsidy and Medicaid issues and assistance in maintaining one or more adoptive parent support groups for the many adoptive families who face significant challenges as they their adoptive children age and experience the various developmental milestones.

PART 3 – AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS

The following is a summary of the policy and budget recommendations as submitted to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within 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, or the Office of Adoption and Child Protection. 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.

Nine (9) state agencies provided policy and budget recommendations related to the prevention of abuse, abandonment and neglect, the promotion of adoption, and the support of adoptive families. The Office of Adoption and Child Protection appreciates the time, resources, and support that each of the agencies invested into creating their recommendations and submissions. These recommendations are summarized below by state agency.

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities authorized waiver crisis enrollment pursuant to FS. 393.065 (5)(a)&(b), Florida Statutes, to approximately 598 individuals in Fiscal Year 2010 – 2011. This includes individuals who were: (1) homeless, (2) a danger to themselves or others, (3) had a caregiver no longer able to provide care, (4) were aging out of the foster care system and are unable to live on their own without the supports, (5) children who were removed from their family homes due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment, and (6) children who were in need of waiver services to finalize adoption, reunification with family or in a permanent placement. The Agency has authorized \$17,195,081 of waiver services for these 598 individuals for Fiscal Year 2011 – 2012.

Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families 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 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 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 Based 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 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.

Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections understands that many inmates and persons on probation are parents or part of 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 specific budget requests at this time but would support funding for these services.

Department of Education

The Department of Education continues its service on the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency (CAPP) Advisory Council. Department staff provided considerable input to the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. Major CAPP Plan activities have included the development and distribution on the Child Abuse Prevention Sourcebook for Florida public school personnel and related we-based training tools, as well as targeted online training for health educators. Child abuse prevention resources have been made available via the Department of Education’s website, and articles on protective factors have been shared with non-public schools via the Department of Education’s Choice newsletter. Our Communications Office has included information promoting adoption within publications such as the Core, the Just for Teachers newsletter, as well as the Department of Education’s homepage.

The Department of Education has no further recommendations related to CAPP activities and is not submitting a budget request at this time.

Department of Health

The Department of Health (DOH) fully supports the five-year plan for prevention and permanency. DOH has a leadership role in a number of the objectives and will cooperate, assist and provide information to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities as defined by Chapter 39, Florida Statutes.

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

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Department of Juvenile Justice submitted a policy proposal and a budget request related to the development and improvement of services and programs promoting adoption, adoptive families, child abuse and neglect prevention, or adoption promotion and support needs.

The Department's legislative budget request included \$4.4 million to establish respite beds statewide for youth with domestic violence related charges. The target population is youth who do not meet the requirements for secure detention but are court ordered to be securely detained in order to protect the victim. These respite beds will allow the youth to receive case management, health services, mental health counseling, and educational services. This funding will serve an estimated 4,000 youth who would otherwise be securely detained.

In addition, the Department's bill, HB 173/SB 504, authorizes the court to commit a youth to the Department of Juvenile Justice for placement in a mother-infant program, thereby allowing juvenile mothers to stay with their babies while fulfilling juvenile justice residential commitment requirements. The department has an existing program, WINGS, that serves this population. This bill requires such programs to be licensed as a childcare facility and provide services and support necessary to enable the committed mother to provide for the needs of their infant, who at the agreement of the mother reside at the program.

Department of Law Enforcement

The Department of Law Enforcement supports recommendations that would aide in strengthening the protection of children. Inspector Terry Thomas provides training throughout the state on child abuse investigations. We will continue providing this training to Florida law enforcement and child protection workers at the current level but due to budget constraints, any additional training would require an adequate budget allotment to offset the costs.

This year, we have two recommendations for consideration that have been made previously but not yet implemented:

- Expand the scope of the State Child Death Review Team to ensure ALL child deaths are reviewed, not just those cases verified by DCF.
- Consider establishing a requirement in state statute for background check screening for private adoptions and for persons who house foreign exchange students.

The first is a recommendation that we strongly support and that has been recommended by various members of the group. The second, if implemented, could potentially have a fiscal impact as a government agency would be required to do the checks to authorize the adoption or placement of the student. We believe that all children placed in homes should be afforded the same level of protection regardless of whether the adoption goes through DCF, through a private organization or an attorney.

Guardian ad Litem

The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program is a Public-Private Partnership established in Florida in 1980 to represent the best interests of abused, abandoned, or neglected children involved in dependency court proceedings. At the first court hearing the Judge appoints the Program. The GAL Program assigns a volunteer and their job is to be a voice for the child and to advocate for the child's best interest. The

GAL volunteer also becomes the person who is there for the child in all matters, to help them, and to fight for them.

The Program's vision is to provide effective advocacy for all of Florida's abused, abandoned, or neglected children. In an effort to fulfill our vision, the Program is leveraging state, county, and private funds to meet the needs of the children it represents. State and Federal Law requires all children have a Guardian ad Litem pursuant to Chapter 39.402(8)(c), 39.807(2), 39.822.

The GAL Program currently represents about 70% of Florida's abused, abandoned, and neglected children, leaving thousands without a voice.

National studies on GAL effectiveness have shown when there is a GAL volunteer there is less time spent in foster care, higher permanency rates including adoptions, increased services, and enhanced educational outcomes. A volunteer gives a child one constant person who will be there for them during a traumatic time of their life. These studies also show that children with a GAL volunteer are more likely to be adopted.

In many Circuit based offices, the Program is unable to grow additional volunteers because the Program does not have the staff to support them. Additional funding is necessary so there can be additional volunteer growth and the state can come into compliance with 100% representation of all abused, abandoned, and neglected children. The GAL Program has a plan to come into compliance within 5 years.

Since the 2007 – 2008 fiscal year, the Program's budget has been reduced over 14%. This resulted in the termination of a large number of staff and therefore a reduction in the number of children the Program is able to represent. The Program has introduced a strategic five-year plan to ensure that every abused and neglected child has a voice they both need and deserve. In the meantime, there are far too many children who do not have the GAL voice; so the Program is forced to make difficult choices. The Program's long range plan is to achieve full representation within the next 5 years.

As part of the Statewide Guardian ad Litem's legislative budget request (for FY 2012 – 2013), the Program requested \$ 3,900,000 to expand the Program's representation to 25,000 children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected. This will increase representation to over 80% of the children in foster care.

Office of Early Learning

Florida's Office of Early Learning continues to be supportive of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. We currently serve nearly 240,000 children in the School Readiness program and more than 155,000 4 year olds in the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program. With nearly 12,000 child care providers participating in the School Readiness program and nearly 6,000 participating in the VPK program, Florida is poised for statewide implementation of strategies that embed the *Five Protective Factors* within the state's early learning system.

Prevention Strategy 1: Action Step 1.1.1.1

The five year plan calls for the designation of a Project Facilitator. Florida's Office of Early Learning plans to announce a project facilitator to guide our family strengthening efforts within the upcoming year.

Prevention Strategy 1: Action Steps 1.1.1.2 – 1.1.1.8

The five-year plan initially requires the Office to identify and develop training modules and materials, explore delivery options, and identify and develop supplemental materials for front-line staff (e.g., Child Care Resource & Referral specialists). To fully address these requirements the Office has developed a proposal for a two day Train-the-Trainer workshop that will provide the 31 local early learning coalition trainers with the knowledge, skills and resources to conduct child care provider trainings on family support and family engagement. The mandatory areas of training will consist of: the *Five Protective Factors*, the seven strategies that build the *Five Protective Factors*, examples of small but intentional changes that embed the *Five Protective Factors* into child care programs, instruction on utilizing already established systems and community partnerships to help parents build support systems, instruction and examples on building family engagement practices with child care providers, teaching child care providers how to utilize the “World Café” approach to involve parents and families in decision making processes, Innovative training techniques and practices, instruction on developing outcomes based trainings to measure effectiveness. The Office plans to identify trainers for this two-day Train-the-Trainer workshop with full implementation before April 2012. We are planning to support this initiative with internal funds and we are not requesting any budget at this time.

Florida’s Office of Early Learning has undergone some major administrative changes in 2011 and will be revamping the website. A family support section is planned with information and links for providers as well as the families we serve. The Office is supporting this initiative with internal funds and we do not request any budget at this time.

Prevention Strategy 1: Action Step 1.1.4

Requires assessment tools for monitoring the effectiveness of the *Five Protective Factors* training program. Conducted a statewide survey among the 31 early learning coalitions assessing current family support and family engagement practices and strategies. This data will help gauge what early learning coalitions are doing and provide valuable baseline data for future evaluation.

Prevention Strategy 1: Action Step 1.1.5

Consists of aligning the *Five Protective Factors* to the Core Competencies. The crosswalk was completed and is in draft.

For fulfilling immediate action steps we are planning on utilizing internal dollars and are not requesting budget at this time. For fulfillment of future action steps we are pursuing outside funding and are not requesting budget at this time.



*Office of Adoption and Child Protection
Executive Office of the Governor
The Capitol, Suite 2002
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001
Phone: (850) 717-9261
Fax: (850) 921-0173
OACP@eog.myflorida.com*