



# *2015 Annual Report*

**Florida  
Children  
and  
Youth  
Cabinet**





# The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

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February 1, 2016

To the People, Governor, and Members of the Legislature:

On behalf of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, I am pleased to present this Annual Report. As directed by Florida Statute 402.56, this report provides an update of the Cabinet's activities including its meetings, workgroups, and initiatives. Throughout 2015, our series of meetings across the state have contributed to a comprehensive update of the Cabinet's progress and contains the results of our work together. As set forth in its mission statement, this Cabinet was established:

*To ensure that the public policy of Florida relating to children and youth promotes interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order for services designed for children and youth to be planned, managed, and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life of all children and youth in Florida.*

A snapshot of information contained within this Annual Report includes:

- A collection of community highlights that were presented at each Cabinet meeting.
- A status of each of the Cabinet's current workgroups.
- A summary of the efforts and next steps for the Florida Youth Commission.
- Proposed Framework and Next Steps for the Children and Youth Cabinet

Cabinet members heard from different entities, including public, state and community-based agencies and organizations, regional and circuit administrators, and various other groups and organizations interested in voicing their thoughts and suggestions. Members and the many stakeholders who participated in workgroup activities are to be commended for their contributions to advance the work of the Cabinet. As you will see, though much work has been accomplished, more work is in process and there is still much to be done.

Our gratitude goes out to Governor Rick Scott, Lieutenant Governor Carlos Lopez-Cantera, Senate President Andy Gardiner, and Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli for their leadership, support and dedication to the vision that all children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential.

We are anticipating another productive year and looking forward to making great strides to benefit Florida's children and youth.

Sincerely,

Wansley Walters  
Chair, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet



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## FLORIDA CHILDREN AND YOUTH CABINET



The Florida Legislature found that all state agencies and programs that touch the lives of children and youth must work in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion, with an emphasis on providing a continuum of services that benefit children from prenatal care through programs supporting successful transition to self-sufficient adulthood. As such, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet) was created and signed into law on July 11, 2007. The Cabinet is codified in Florida Statute 402.56. The statutory charge of the Cabinet is to ensure the public policy of the state relating to children and youth is best aligned for promoting interdepartmental collaboration in program implementation. This collaboration helps to ensure that services designed for children and youth are planned, managed, and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life of children across Florida.

### VISION

All children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential.

### MISSION

To ensure that the public policy of Florida relating to children and youth promotes interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order for services designed for children and youth to be planned, managed and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health and quality of life of all children and youth in Florida.

The Cabinet created a strategic plan that requires creative and collaborative approaches to initiate action towards facilitating achievement of the following goals:

- Promote increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children, youth, and their families.
- Ensure that all children live in permanent, safe and nurturing environments.
- Ensure that all children in Florida have access to high-quality preventative, primary, specialty, and long-term healthcare.
- Assure high quality, seamless, research-based education and learning opportunities for all children.
- Build, allocate and align sufficient resources and functions to meet the goals set forth by the Children and Youth Cabinet.

Nationally, approximately 27 states have a council or committee dedicated to coordinating services among state agencies. Florida is one of eight states that operate a Children's Cabinet supported by the Governor and participates in the Children's Cabinet Network managed by the Forum for Youth Investment ([www.forumfyi.org/readyby21/childrens-cabinets](http://www.forumfyi.org/readyby21/childrens-cabinets)). In addition, children cabinets and coordinating bodies have been established within communities across Florida and model their efforts after the Cabinet to achieve positive outcomes for children and youth.

As set forth in Florida Statute 402.56, the Cabinet consists of the following members as of December 2015.

## Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Membership

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**Wansley Walters**  
Chairman, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet  
Former Secretary, Department of Juvenile Justice  
Partner, Ballard Partners

**Alan Abramowitz**  
Director  
Guardian ad Litem



**Ellen Anderson**  
State Advocacy Vice President  
Florida Hospital Association  
*Governor Appointee*

**John H. Armstrong, MD**  
Surgeon General and Secretary  
Department of Health







**Michael Carroll**  
Secretary  
Department of Children and Families



**Christina K. Daly**  
Secretary  
Department of Juvenile Justice



**Berthy de la Rosa-Aponte**  
Disabilities Advocate  
*Designee of the Attorney  
General*



**Elizabeth Dudek**  
Secretary  
Agency for Health  
Care Administration



**Zackary Gibson**  
Director and Chief Child Advocate  
Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection

**Representative Gayle  
Harrell**  
*Designee of the  
Speaker of the Florida*



**David Lawrence, Jr.**  
Education and Community Leadership Scholar at the  
University of Miami's School of Education and  
Human Development  
President, The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation  
Chair, The Children's Movement of Florida  
*Governor Appointee*

**Rodney MacKinnon**  
Interim Director  
Office of Early Learning





**Barbara Palmer**  
Director  
Agency for Persons with Disabilities



**Justice Barbara J. Pariente**  
Florida Supreme Court  
*Designee of the Chief Justice*



**Judy Schaechter, MD, MBA**  
Interim Chair, Department of Pediatrics  
Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Division of  
Adolescent Medicine  
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine  
Chief of Staff, Holtz Children's Hospital, Jackson  
Health System  
*Governor Appointee*

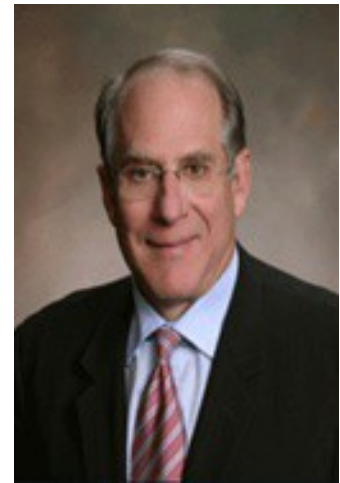


**Senator Eleanor Sobel**  
*Designee of the Florida Senate  
President*



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**Pam Stewart**  
Commissioner  
Department of Education



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**Steven J. Uhlfelder, Esquire**  
Uhlfelder and Associates  
*Governor Appointee*



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**Sandy Karlan, JD**  
Former Family Circuit Court Judge  
*Governor Appointee*



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**Victoria Zepp**  
President and CEO  
Clarity1st Consulting, Inc.



## 2015 Meetings

In 2015, Cabinet meetings were held in different regions throughout the state including: Tallahassee, Tampa, and Port St. Lucie, to provide accessible and open forums for the public. All meetings were published in the Florida Administrative Register, and the public was provided opportunities to address the Cabinet at every meeting. When feasible, Cabinet meetings were also co-located with other related conferences and workshops around the state to encourage public attendance and participation. When available, meetings were documented by the Florida Channel and news organizations including Florida Public Radio. In order to ensure the public has complete access and up-to-date information, materials were uploaded on the Cabinet's website, which contains information about the Cabinet, its members, activities, work products, workgroups, and meeting information.

## Community Highlights

The Cabinet recognizes and values the many organizations that provide programs and services which positively impact the lives of children and youth across the state. To increase awareness of these local programs and services, the Cabinet invited representatives from some of these organizations to present an overview of their program(s) or service(s).

The following organizations presented information to the Cabinet during scheduled meetings in 2015.

### **The Children's Services Council (CSC) of St. Lucie County**

Sean Boyle, Executive Director of The Children's Services Council of St. Lucie County, gave an overview of the organization and provided a snapshot of St. Lucie County which has approximately 60,000 children. Mr. Boyle informed the Cabinet of The St. Lucie Round Table and of their monthly meeting with the CSC and United Way as a way to encourage their community to focus on children. Mr. Boyle also discussed successes of the CSC, which can be found in their 2014 Annual Impact Report. Highlights of that report include:

- The uninsured rate of children dropping from 27.9% in 2008 to 9.2% today and attributed this to the help of the community working together.
- Since 2007, there has been a 48% decrease in child abuse and maltreatment.
- Teen birth rates have decreased 85% since 1990 in St. Lucie County due to collaborative efforts in the community.



### **Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project**

Representative Larry Lee, Jr., Florida House of Representatives, discussed the Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project, which he supported during the 2015 Legislative Session. Representative Lee explained that the literacy program focuses on two and three year olds and how to get them interested and excited about reading in an effort to prevent some of the problems they encounter later in life, e.g., dropout rates, crime, and poverty.

Representative Lee said he is determined to find a way to make the pilot program happen in order to break the cycle of poverty and dependence.

**Quality Afterschool and Child Care** - Kelley Parris, Executive Director of the Children's Board of Hillsborough County (CBHC), discussed the Board's investment in local programs and services to ensure children are raised well, healthy, and in safe and stable families, specifically:

- An annual \$5 million investment in quality early care, education and afterschool programs. Funding provides subsidized child care slots to low-income families and aims to build quality in the system by funding only quality slots.
- The Cabinet was urged to explore a tiered system of reimbursement as a mechanism to drive quality in the early learning system and to support increased funding for early learning programs.
- A public/private partnership campaign to prevent child deaths from unsafe sleep, drowning and abusive head trauma in Hillsborough County.
- Mobile developmental screening units across the county to identify early developmental delays as soon as possible.
- Mobile swim lessons at community pools and apartment complexes to address a high number of child fatalities due to drowning.
- Mobile food markets in food deserts and nutrition education to teach the importance of nutrition for physical health and academic development.
- An infant mental health grant to ensure social and emotional growth of children is met.
- A legislative summit focused on child safety, which identified priorities such as the stabilization of leadership in the child welfare arena; a database to capture serious injuries of children ages zero to six, modeled after the prescription drug database; and a statewide campaign to prevent child deaths of children ages zero to three.



**High Quality Early Education for Dependent Youth Collaborative** - Kristin Lang, Attorney Ad Litem for Bay Area Legal Services, gave an overview of a local initiative aimed at ensuring dependent children ages zero to five in Hillsborough County receive a high quality early education. Research on the impact of high quality early education for at-risk children shows that high quality early intervention programs significantly reduce the likelihood of poor academic and life outcomes. Numerous accomplishments aimed at overcoming barriers to providing high quality early education to dependent youth were discussed.



**Eckerd Community Alternatives** - Lorita Shirley, Program Operations Director for Eckerd Community Alternatives, shared about the services and interventions Eckerd provides to children involved in child welfare and juvenile justice systems, including the provision of Early Head Start services for children ages zero to three and targeted interventions in high-risk zip codes. A data sharing partnership with local school districts allows for daily monitoring of the educational progress of children involved in the child welfare system and provide interventions to support a child's educational needs, when necessary.

### **First Quarterly Meeting**

The first meeting of the Cabinet in 2015 was held on February 24, 2015 at the Florida Capitol, Governor's Cabinet Room, in Tallahassee, Florida.

- Chair Walters shared with the Cabinet that the Florida Youth Commission would be hosting a Teens Only Town Hall on Tuesday, April 14th of Children's Week. Cabinet members were invited and encouraged to participate in the Town Hall.

- Chair Walters thanked the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection for putting together the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet’s 2014 Annual Report. Chair Walters then thanked Cabinet members for their review and comments. Director Gibson then asked for suggestions on the report from the Cabinet members to better reflect the work being accomplished.
- At the request of Chair Walters, Mosaica Partners developed a series of interactive activities and facilitated a meeting to explore and address the new Chair’s challenge to the Cabinet members, “How can we do better?” Mr. Bob Brown, Vice President of Professional Services with Mosaica Partners, recommended:
  - the Cabinet take an “Enterprise View” of the process from neo-natal to death
  - there needed to be a Care Coordination Team
  - the Cabinet should consider looking at the optimal state, or the ultimate level of welfare at each point in the process
  - the Cabinet should look at the agencies in the state that work with young adults as they reach adulthood
- In response to Chair Walters’ challenge to the Cabinet, she proposed three goals:
  - Take a more active role in addressing issues in the legislature as well as agencies standing together in support of each other.
  - Craft a budgetary pool that would “follow” multi-system children through the aforementioned process and eliminate coordination issues between agencies over spending on these cases.
  - Advocate and act towards prevention rather than reaction.
- In correlation with the first objective, the Cabinet discussed extensively the need to review bill analyzes. Additionally, the Cabinet passed a motion to support Rep. Harrell’s bill to add a district superintendent to the Cabinet. Lastly, the Cabinet agreed to support the authorization of \$30 million in federal money to reduce the current waitlist by approximately 6,300 children (10% of waitlist).
- In regards to the second objective, the Cabinet discussed potential problems of this proposal, such as consolidation of their own respective budgets. The Cabinet also provided several suggestions to help accomplish this goal, like databases of the agencies involved be consolidated and for process and asset mapping. These suggestions led to a motion to create a Legislative Affairs Committee headed by Ms. Ellen Anderson, and a Technology Committee, headed by Ms. Victoria Zepp.
- The final objective was met with great support by all of the Cabinet members, as was the suggestion that the Cabinet pick up a results-oriented accountability system similar to the one being implemented currently at the Department of Children and Families.
- Following these discussions, Mr. Brown offered suggestions to greatly improve the efficiency of the Cabinet. He proposed a “divide and conquer” mentality by creating four workgroups:
  - Legislative Coordination- The Legislative Coordination Workgroup would be in charge of taking an active role in the Legislature and would be led by Ms. Ellen Anderson.
  - Technology- The Technology Workgroup would work to consolidate the various agency databases and would be led by Ms. Victoria Zepp.
  - Interagency Coordination- The Interagency Coordination Workgroup would work on process and asset mapping between agencies and would be led by Director of APD, Ms. Barbara Palmer.
  - Business, Finance, and Governance Workgroup- The Business, Finance and Governance Workgroup would work with the Governor in procuring funds and would be led by Department of Children and Families Secretary, Mr. Mike Carroll.



- Youth Commissioner Blake Maier showed a video on behalf of the Youth Commission highlighting its events over the past year as well as looking toward new initiatives. Some of these initiatives include creating a website and online poll for youth, creating a pamphlet for the Commission, attending select events, and raising the standards to become a member of the Commission.
- During public comments, Jack Levine, Founder of the 4Generations Institute, spoke on behalf of a time bank in Tampa in which volunteers donate hours to spend with and mentor local children. Dr. Patricia Babcock, Interim Director of the Florida Institute for Child Welfare at Florida State University, expressed her support for the efforts on integrated technology and strategic planning. Lastly, Dr. Mimi Graham, Director of the Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy at Florida State University, spoke about [www.floridatrauma.org](http://www.floridatrauma.org), which looks at trauma across agencies and advocates for trauma-informed services across the state.

### ***Children's Week***

Several Cabinet members attended the Teens Only Town Hall meeting where they were asked a range of questions impacting children throughout the state. The town hall meeting provided a forum and voice for students from across the state to work together with the Cabinet to address important issues relating to children's services.



### ***May Site Visit***

Members visited the Hibiscus Children's Center, a safehouse for children who are abused, abandoned, and neglected by providing prevention, residential, assessment, and recovery programs. The center also prepares children for their future by constructing programs so that children acquire an education, attain emotional and physical well-being, achieve career readiness, and gain independent living skills.

### **Second Quarterly Meeting**

The second meeting of the Cabinet in 2015 was held on May 13, 2015 at Indian River State College, in Port St. Lucie, Florida.

- Chair Walters began the meeting by welcoming the newest member of the Cabinet, former Family Circuit County Judge Sandy Karlan. Chair Walters provided an overview of some of her many accomplishments as well as of her personal experience working with Judge Karlan and her relentless advocacy for children in her court.



- Chair Walters then recognized Ms. Sandy Neidert from the Supreme Court as the designee for Cabinet member Justice Barbara Pariente.
- Secretary Daly provided an update on the Youth Commission and discussed highlights of a survey completed by the Commissioners. In the survey, 76% of respondents indicated they did not get as much interaction with Cabinet members as they would like. Secretary Daly proposed that Cabinet members should engage Youth Commissioners more and suggested the possibility of Cabinet members selecting one Commissioner to mentor throughout the year as this may be beneficial to expose them to the workings of state government. Secretary Daly expressed her desire to speak about this more at a future Cabinet meeting and indicated that she does not envision the Youth Commission to be a DJJ Youth Commission, but instead under the auspice of the Cabinet as a whole.



- Chair Walters acknowledged Youth Commissioner Chairman Blake Maier who spoke briefly on behalf of the Commission. The Youth Commission recently launched an interactive website and also took part in Children’s Week. Chairman Maier discussed the Teens Only Town Hall Meeting and said it was one of the most worthwhile experiences while serving on the Youth Commission. He also informed the Cabinet that he will be graduating from high school this year and attending Northwestern University. Chair Walters personally thanked the Chairman for all of his time and devotion.
- Chair Walters allowed agency heads to provide a legislative session update on policy and resources that came out of the 2015 Legislative Session. Some highlights included:
  - Secretary Dudek informed the Cabinet of an enhanced assisted living bill that would allow people to “age in place”, by making medical assistance devices that were once only available in nursing homes to be used in assisted living facilities. She also spoke of a transitional living facility bill that was designed to assist individuals with brain and spinal cord injuries. Lastly, she discussed legislation that would provide more flexibility to home health agencies to cover services in rural or hard to serve areas.
  - Director Palmer spoke on the need for funding for a central client database that would provide her agency with information to know how effective their services are. Additionally, she spoke on the importance of their iBudget that has moved the agency away from tiered funding and towards funding calculated through an assessment algorithm. This structure provides clients greater flexibility by providing an individual with their customized budget allowing them to make determinations regarding services that are most needed.
  - Alan Abramowitz discussed the Regis Little Act that passed during the legislative session and would create a framework for identifying and appointing guardian advocates, limited guardians, and plenary guardians for children who have a developmental disability or are incapacitated who may require decision-making assistance beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It also authorizes jurisdiction over these children to allow the appointment of appropriate guardians.
  - Commission Stewart provided an overview of House bill 7069 that would among other things would allow school districts to start school as early as August 10 each year, eliminate the 11<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts assessment and require that DOE not release school grades or teacher evaluations until a third party entity can review these tests.
  - Representative Gayle Harrell discussed House Bill 1055 that passed both chambers and seeks to further enhance Child Protection Teams. A local bill dealing with Baker Acts now requires all school districts (and charter schools) to have a policy that requires parents to be notified immediately if their child is to be removed under Baker Act, unless there is a child abuse report into the Florida Abuse Hotline. There were two significant committee bills. One deals with the cleanup of Senate Bill 1666; defining the CIRRT teams, having more options to use CIRRT teams, as well empowering and distinguishing death review teams. The other major committee bill dealt with substance abuse and mental health. Rep. Harrell said the House was able to move a comprehensive bill forward; however, she stated, the Senate did not concur.
  - Senator Eleanor Sobel briefly discussed three amendments to Senate Bill 7078, which was supposed to be a glitch cleanup bill. The legislation would exempt Children’s Services Councils from future referenda, require posting the Florida Abuse Hotline number in all the schools and Level II background checks in particular for Boys and Girls



Clubs. The bill is on the way to The Governor and she asked for the Cabinet’s support of this bill.

- Chair Walters then discussed the Cabinet’s new Multi-System Collaboration Technical Assistance Grant. She noted that one of the issues the Cabinet is making progress on is addressing challenges associated with children and families who are “cross system” families engaged with



multiple agencies. Chair Walters discussed how oftentimes other agencies are not aware that the children and families are “cross system” and the subsequent need to work to craft different protocols that would call for a different approach. In the last few months, Director Zackary Gibson has spearheaded an effort for the Cabinet to apply for a grant that provides technical assistance on multi-system collaboration. Florida is one of five sites in the country to receive this assistance. Active so far are DCF, DJJ, and the Courts. The Cabinet is looking to expand that group and add other agency representation. Director Gibson discussed Florida’s unique system of care and other key pieces associated with multi-system collaboration and how it relates to crossover youth. One of the goals of this project is to bring all efforts together and align with existing workgroups so as not to duplicate efforts and the need to be more strategically focused.

- Representative Harrell began the discussion of background checks and stated there was a lot of controversy over this issue but that nothing is more important than ensuring the safety of our children. Secretary Dudek then provided an explanation of the Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse helps to eliminate duplication of background screenings among agencies. The Clearinghouse has been in place since January 2013 and currently includes DOH, DOE Voc Rehab Programs, Managed Care Programs, and DCF Summer Camps, followed by APD, DEA, DCF and DJJ.
- The dates that the agencies are scheduled to join the Clearinghouse are as follow:

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Date</b>
Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)	January 1, 2013
Department of Health (DOH)	January 1, 2013
Managed Care Health Plans	November 1, 2013
Vocational Rehabilitation (DOE-VR)	May 2014
Medicaid Providers	March 2, 2015
Department of Children and Families (DCF)	Fully implemented by July 1, 2015 (summer camp and mental health providers are now)
Agency for Persons with Disabilities	Fully implemented by July 1, 2015
Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)	Fall 2015
Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA)	Fall 2015

- The Clearinghouse has saved the providers and licensees \$6 million by sharing the information among the agencies. Almost 70,000 screenings have been shared. Of all the screenings done since January 2013, 79% are within The Clearinghouse and can be shared among the different agencies. There is a budget request of \$400,000 to help with system maintenance. There are Letters of Agreement with each agency that joins The Clearinghouse.
- During the public comment period of the meeting, Melody Hern, parent and Governor Appointee of Family Care Council, spoke on behalf of the Family Care Council.

### ***August Site Visit***

Members of the Cabinet visited Mary Lee’s House, a center for child protection and advocacy, located in Tampa that is committed to protecting, respecting and healing the children of abuse and neglect who pass through their doors. The center provides a child friendly environment for representatives from many disciplines, including law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, mental health, medical and social services, to work together and ensure that child victims of abuse receive the services they need under one roof. Since opening their doors in November 2008, more than 8,200 children have been served and more than 15,000 services have been provided at Mary Lee’s House.



### ***Senate Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee Meeting***

In September, Chair Walters appeared before the Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee to discuss the Cabinet’s support of making early childhood a top priority for the 2016 Legislative Session. Chair Walters emphasized how difficult it is for children who experience deficits in childhood development to ever recover as those gaps will travel with them throughout their life. Additionally, she pointed out that she does not see a problem in the state involving human crises that could not have been improved through better childhood development.

Steve Uhlfelder also spoke before the committee on his days as a public defender in Miami-Dade County. In his experiences there, he did not represent a single juvenile that he felt the root of their problems did not stem from a lack of general childhood development. Mr. Uhlfelder stressed the importance of reading to young children as a way to improve their vocabulary and the need for sufficient health care.

Representative Harrell cited the need for effective brain development, stating that 85% of an individual’s brain development occurs within the first 1000 days. One way to achieve this is to ensure that proper prenatal care is available for parents as well as identifying early disabilities that can give these young individuals the best opportunities in life. In closing, Representative Harrell stressed that every piece of legislation filed in 2016 dealing with children should be viewed through the lens of how it can positively impact a child’s first 1000 days.

Lastly, Alan Abramowitz informed the committee that the legislation and legislative budget requests that have been proposed by the Guardian Ad Litem this year were chosen by how they would improve the first 1000 days of a child. He highlighted their request to implement professional training and certification for child advocate managers, which would provide specialized training focusing on the first 1000 days.

### ***Third Quarterly Meeting***

The third meeting of the Cabinet in 2015 was held on August 27, 2015 at the Children’s Board of Hillsborough, in Tampa, Florida.

- Ryan Salzer, Eckerd’s Project Bridge Program Director, shared information about the Project Bridge transition program which works with youth committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice who are returning to their home communities after placement in a residential commitment facility. Specialized services such as job training, education and mentoring help build successful life skills.
- Dr. Mimi Graham, Director of the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy gave a presentation on The First 1000 Days Florida Campaign, a research-driven, collaborative public awareness and



advocacy campaign. The First 1000 Days was designed to draw attention to the importance of the first 1,000 days in a child's life as the pivotal time in child development. Using research to illustrate opportunities for child development during this critical first timeframe of life, Dr. Graham presented The First 1000 Days Campaign policy recommendations and opportunities to address each.

- The First 1000 Days Campaign Policy Recommendations:
  - Expand affordable and accessible high quality infant and toddler care
  - Expand eligibility and maximize the impact of early intervention during the pivotal time of rapid infant and toddler development
  - Ensure families have a medical home and promote utilization of mental health services, especially for infant mental health and depression
  - Improve outcomes for infants and toddlers in child welfare through Baby Court and linkages with early childhood systems
  - Support economic policies such as job training, education, and tax credits that promote stable, nurturing, and self-sufficient parents
- Following the presentation, members discussed setting a priority focus on early childhood while leveraging the committee structure to develop recommended actions on specific policies impacting early childhood ages zero to three. Members suggested the need to speak as a unified voice behind early childhood this legislative session. After much discussion, the Cabinet agreed unanimously that early childhood is an essential priority. The Cabinet passed a two-part motion to send a letter to the Governor, Senate President and Speaker of the House emphasizing the importance of early childhood development for the first 1,000 days in a child's life and to utilize the Policy Impact Committee to develop further recommended actions for full Cabinet consideration.
- Brittaney Birken, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of the Florida Children's Council spoke to Cabinet members about early childhood investments. Dr. Birken explained that, as part of the entire education continuum, early education is often not given the same level of credence but is critically important to building skills crucial for learning and development. The presentation offered opportunities to define quality for early learning and provide resources needed for implementation that result in positive child outcomes around three core components:
  - Affordability: increase School Readiness payment rates tied to performance benchmarks. A tiered payment structure will allow an increase in payments in alignment with quality benchmarks.
  - Accessibility: no consistent access to quality programs due to a lack of clear definitions and standards of quality.
  - Quality:
    - Address structural quality elements of physical environment, health and safety standards and ratio/group size through accreditation
    - Measure quality of adult-child interactions through a research-based instrument.
    - Use curriculum-based assessment to measure developmental milestones.
    - Enhance professional development.
- Rodney MacKinnon, Director, Florida Office of Early Learning discussed the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 reauthorizing the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Director MacKinnon noted that the Department of Children and Families will need statutory authority and the workforce to conduct on-side inspections for compliance with health and safety standards. Additional changes relate to preservice and ongoing training requirements, expanding background checks to encompass child abuse and sexual offender registries and group



florida children's council



size limits. The Office of Early Learning receives \$580 million to administer School Readiness – about 2/3 federal funds. The School Readiness program serves approximately 215,000 children with another 50,000 children on wait list. He cautioned that implementation of the new eligibility changes has doubled wait lists in other states. A significant change will require states to submit market rates for approval. A potential opportunity is tiered reimbursement. A statewide professional development registry will educate and guide parents to higher quality centers.

- Ms. Penny Jones, a foster and adoptive parent, told the story of Taraji Gordon’s tragically short life and presented the tragic lessons of his death:
  - Florida needs stricter laws and prosecution of co-sleeping deaths that occur while adults are under the influence.
  - TPR proceedings need to be expedited. Two and a half years is too long for permanency.
  - Related to mental health evaluations and parental self-reporting, the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment should be reviewed before evaluations made.
  - Assignment of case management needs to match complexities of case.
  - Reunification planning should remain consistent with plans and include foster parents.
- Samantha Wass de Czege, DCF’s Child Care Program Director, updated the Cabinet on the developments related to afterschool standards. She explained that the Department has been conducting extensive research and is working with partners toward opening its rule regarding afterschool standards while exploring the possibility of tiered licensure, certification or other monitoring structure. Florida Statutes grant DCF authority to write rules related to afterschool standards. Valuable feedback from afterschool stakeholders will inform the proposed rule changes. Senator Sobel reiterated support of minimum safety standards and Level 2 background screening requirements for all employees of after school programs. The legislature has pointed to the need for minimum standards for providers caring for school age children. There was general support of the Secretary’s goal to build consensus with stakeholders on the afterschool standards, eliminating confusion over licensing requirements and exemptions in statute by addressing the issue under DCF rule authority.
  - Diana Ragbeer, Director of Public Policy and Communications for The Children’s Trust, spoke to an existing proposal to remove the five- year waiting period for children of legal immigrants to enroll in Florida KidCare. Federal legislation enacted the waiting period in 1996; reauthorization of the act in 2009 allowed states to remove the provision. Florida legislation to remove the provision has garnered support in both chambers in previous legislative sessions but has not passed.



#### **Fourth Quarterly Meeting**

The final meeting of 2015 for the Cabinet was held on October 5, 2015 at the Florida Capitol, Governor’s Cabinet Room, in Tallahassee, Florida.

#### **Multi-System Collaboration Workgroup Update**

Chair Walters explained that Florida, through the Children and Youth Cabinet, is one of five communities selected to participate in a federal initiative to promote multi-system collaboration. The program is being run by the Center for Coordinated Assistance to States out of Georgetown University. It has tremendous potential to help the Cabinet achieve its mission to provide services in an integrated and holistic manner. Youth awaiting competency to proceed evaluations is the focus of the Florida Team. The Team includes DCF, DJJ, APD, DOE, AHCA, GAL, Office of State Courts Administrator, Governor’s Office and the Cabinet. Members and staff recognized: Zack Gibson, Sandy Neidert, Lisa Robertson. The team has been process mapping and gathering extensive data to develop recommendations that will better serve these youth. The group is developing protocols and procedures to adequately address high utilizing groups. The final meeting with Georgetown and the other states is October 6, 2015 but the projects will continue into next year. The work plan should be completed in April 2016.

Sandy Neidert with the Office of State Courts Administrator gave an update on a comprehensive statewide process and resource mapping project. Judge Sandy Karlan pointed to a document listing all agencies and headline indicators which inventories multi-systems groups throughout the state. Cabinet members would like a review of this work product to identify service and resource availability building from locally to the state level.

Members discussed the following recommendations:

- Establish unique identifiers to track utilizers of services through each state agency
- Inventory who is getting what services, what services are available in each community and gaps; how to best spend mental health funding
- Explore how agencies can automate and share info for cross-collaboration and data analytics
- Develop strategic use of resources for outlier high-utilizing groups
- Local government, volunteer organizations, state agencies should work together to develop communication to educate average person about available services for children
- Create children's budget as required in Cabinet statute

### **Florida Youth Commission: Opportunities and Options**

Jack Levine, founder of the 4Generations Institute, shared information on opportunities and options for the Florida Youth Commission. Mr. Levine shared many different ideas which build upon the strengths of each individual youth and collective impact with a focus on advocacy and civic engagement.

Warm to the concepts, Cabinet members pointed to the need to establish strong parameters and management of the commission. There was a suggestion that the Policy Impact Committee have a civic engagement role with the youth and that the Cabinet consider statutory changes to establish the Florida Youth Commission under the Chief Child Advocate. Mr. Levine stated that he is committed to working on a proposal to submit to the Cabinet. Cabinet members agreed to develop the implementation strategy.



### **Children's Week**

Jason Zaborske from Children's Week invited all Cabinet members to participate in the upcoming Children's Week, specifically the Teens Only Town Hall on January 26, 2016 from 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

### **Proposed Framework and Next Steps for Florida Children and Youth Cabinet**

Chair Walters opened the second part of the meeting with introductory comments about the shared will of the Cabinet, as evidenced during the previous Cabinet meeting. The body wishes to be actionable but has questions about which important issues should be selected to achieve these goals need to be developed.

Judge Sandy Karlan presented the draft outline of a strategic plan and framework. She explained the Cabinet's role in bringing people together. It does not develop programs but can recommend programs. She described its role is to reach out to groups and evaluate data and trends. Judge Karlan suggested and Cabinet members generally agreed that the Cabinet members shall designate a liaison/advisory member that can be a consistent, knowledgeable point of contact for all Cabinet work within that agency. The designated person can serve as back up if the Cabinet member is unable to attend the Standing Committee meetings. The Cabinet also needs to increase two-way communication with the public.

Director Palmer moved to adopt the Standing Committee's plan with wordsmithing and amendments reflected below. It was passed unanimously.

- Budget and Resource Committee to replace Finance Committee in draft document
- Consolidate Best Practices Committee and Delivery of Services Committee into one Standing Committee

## **Workgroups of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet**

### **Policy Impact Committee**

At the second Cabinet meeting of the year, Policy Impact Chair Ellen Anderson gave an overview of the legislative mandate for the Cabinet, which is primarily to promote interagency collaboration to better serve children. The workgroup sent a letter to the appropriation chairs supporting the \$30 million in federal funding for the Office of Early Learning. She proposed the Cabinet should not necessarily support bills. Instead, the Cabinet should support initiatives that align with its headline indicators. She urged Cabinet members to focus on developing impact statements related to specific portions of a bill that affect children. Ms. Anderson referenced the handout of a Kid Care study from Georgetown University and encouraged members of the Cabinet to read the study.

Chair Walters agreed that it is important to increase credibility and visibility of this Cabinet and that people view the agencies on the Cabinet as united and supportive of each other. Ms. Anderson clarified the idea is to hold another workgroup meeting and get the agency legislative directors together to discuss priorities. During that meeting, there would be a public comment time for non-agency groups who want to contribute to the discussion. Then, review and strategize the support during the meeting and The Legislative Workgroup then would bring this information back to the Cabinet as a recommendation. Ms. Anderson proposed going back and drafting impact statements for some of the key legislation affecting children and bring those statements back to the Cabinet for adoption.

During the August meeting, the Policy Impact Committee was tasked with a number of items to bring back for full Cabinet consideration. Ms. Anderson reviewed the committee's work process and described collaboration with external stakeholders, including meetings with Dr. Mimi Graham, Brittany Birken and the committee regarding the position of the Cabinet that the first 1,000 days of a child's life should be the state's priority. She noted that the Child Care Development Block Grant needs standardizing and that degreed teachers and early learning on-the-job training is also important.

Also during the August meeting, the Cabinet heard a presentation about a proposal to remove the five-year waiting period for children of legal immigrants to enroll in Florida KidCare. Background information related to this topic was previously distributed to Cabinet members. At the October meeting, a draft letter in support of removing the waiting period for lawfully residing immigrant children to enroll in KidCare was discussed at length and was agreed upon that the letter would be sent to the Governor, Senate President and House Speaker. The proposal would cover nearly 25,000 children and would cost roughly \$1.4 million.

In December, the Policy Impact Committee held a conference call to discuss the Early Steps legislation that had been filed in the Senate with the intent of drafting and providing an impact statement to the full Cabinet. Diana Ragbeer, from the Children's Trust, was on the call to discuss how the proposed legislation would further the Cabinet's support of prioritizing early childhood development. The Early Steps program is responsible for providing screening and early intervention services to parents with infants and toddlers who have or may have a developmental delay. After discussing the need to expand eligibility in order to serve more children, the committee agreed to draft an impact statement to bring before the full Cabinet for a vote.

### **Communications Committee**

Chairman Zachary Gibson informed the Cabinet that the purpose of the Communications Committee was to coordinate efforts of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet agencies, offices and governmental entities to increase public awareness of shared initiatives and activities that positively impact the lives of children and youth in our state. These efforts are designed to enable the Cabinet to speak with one voice and highlight programs and resources they can offer to children and families.

Director Gibson further explained the committee’s approach was to reach out to identify a state agency, office or government entity as the lead organization for a particular initiative and/or activity with other agencies, offices or government entities serving as partner organizations. The lead organization will communicate with other Cabinet communication directors to coordinate press releases and/or activities, quotes from the leadership and/or Cabinet Chair, and dissemination of information through all social media outlets and platforms.

Partner organizations can then issue their own press releases that can include quotes from the lead organization and/or Cabinet Chair and highlight what their organization can offer children and families.

**Examples of Awareness Months/Days:**

Human Trafficking Awareness Month – Jan	Teacher Appreciation Week – May
Celebrate Literacy Week - Jan	National Physical Fitness & Sports Month- May
National Mentoring Month – Jan	Mother’s Day – May
Black History Month – Feb	Father’s Day – June
Read Across America Day – Mar. 2	National Safety Month – June
National Nutrition Awareness Month - Mar	Suicide Prevention/Awareness Month – Sept
National Parenting Awareness Month - Mar	Domestic Violence Prevention Month – Oct
National Public Health Week – Mar/Apr	Crime Prevention Awareness Month – Oct
National Child Abuse Prevention Month – Apr	National Bullying Prevention Month – Oct
Take Your Daughter & Son to Work Day– Apr	Disability Awareness Month – Oct
National Autism Awareness Month – Apr	National Adoption Month – Nov
National Volunteer Month – Apr	Trauma Informed Care Day – Nov. 1
National Foster Care Month – May	
Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day & Mental Health Awareness Month – May	
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month - May	

Later in the year, Chairman Gibson gave an update on the Communications Committee and how they had been successful in leveraging the robust state agency communications office framework to promote the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Anti-Bullying Campaign. The Communications Committee worked in collaboration with state agencies to disseminate pertinent information among networks, including conducting a survey, establishing a press release and speaking points in order to speak with one voice, and sharing Cabinet-branded social media graphics to push out awareness messages.



## Define:

# BULLY

bul • ly  
/'bʊli/  
verb  
gerund: bullying  
1 : to treat abusively.  
2 : one habitually  
    gruel to other.  
3 : a person who  
    teases, hurts, or  
    threatens smaller  
    or weaker persons.  
Synonyms:  
mistreat, abusive,  
harass, harm, hurt.

If you can't recognize it, you can't stop it.

#LetsFaceBullyingFL 

The committee will develop a survey regarding various awareness opportunities for the Cabinet to promote and will be completed by each Cabinet member.

### Technology Committee

Chair Victoria Vangalis Zepp provided an update for the Technology Committee. The committee is establishing a systems asset map by exploring existing technologies used by state agencies. Topics include human resources training programs, auto tasks, case management systems, online portal, data dictionary, etc. The committee recommends full-time staff dedicated to assisting with tasks and communication between Cabinet members. Framework will be submitted at subsequent meetings.

### Budget and Resources Committee

During the Cabinet meeting in May, Chairman of the Budget and Resources Committee, Secretary Mike Carroll advised the Cabinet that the group has asked the budget staff from each agency:

- what types of services they provide
- what are requirements/criteria to access
- what is usage.

Chairman Carroll informed the Cabinet that the committee is trying to work with the bigger agencies and focus on direct service money and what services we provide under each agency and hopes to inform the cross-over group.

Sum of AOB TOTAL				Children Services (CS) / Non Children Services (NCS)		
BUDGET	PROGRAM					
ENTITY	COMPONENT	PROGRAM	COMPONENT TITLE	Children Services	Non-Children Services	Grand Total
60900101	1602600100		EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP		9,177,935	9,177,935
	1602600200		ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION		54,448,472	54,448,472
	1602600300		DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION		19,009,322	19,009,322
<b>60900101 Total</b>					<b>82,635,729</b>	<b>82,635,729</b>
60900202	1603000000		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY		36,333,511	36,333,511
<b>60900202 Total</b>					<b>36,333,511</b>	<b>36,333,511</b>
60910310	1204030000		CHILD CARE REGULATION	16,889,275		16,889,275
	1304060000		ADULT PROTECTION		79,085,574	79,085,574
	1304070000		CHILD PROTECTION	1,084,765,618		1,084,765,618
	1304080000		FLORIDA ABUSE HOTLINE	18,176,920		18,176,920
	1602000000		EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP & SUPPORT SERVICES		21,907,597	21,907,597
<b>60910310 Total</b>				<b>1,119,831,813</b>	<b>100,993,171</b>	<b>1,220,824,984</b>
60910506	1301020000		CIVIL COMMITMENT PROGRAM		169,522,876	169,522,876
	1301030000		FORENSIC COMMITMENT PROGRAM		136,239,195	136,239,195
	1301070000		SEXUAL PREDATOR PROGRAM		30,201,722	30,201,722
	1301080000		ADULT COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH		305,153,123	305,153,123
	1301090000		CHILDREN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH	104,966,316		104,966,316
	1602000000		EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP & SUPPORT SERVICES		9,657,905	9,657,905
<b>60910506 Total</b>				<b>104,966,316</b>	<b>650,774,821</b>	<b>755,741,137</b>
60910604	1201020000		CHILDREN SUBSTANCE ABUSE	72,093,596		72,093,596
	1201030000		ADULT SUBSTANCE ABUSE		135,205,178	135,205,178
	1602000000		EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP & SUPPORT SERVICES		7,505,881	7,505,881
<b>60910604 Total</b>				<b>72,093,596</b>	<b>142,711,059</b>	<b>214,804,655</b>
60910708	1304000000		SERVICES TO MOST VULNERABLE	100,000	286,244,892	286,344,892
	1304010000		COMPREHENSIVE ELIGIBILITY SERVICES		273,301,967	273,301,967
	1602000000		EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP & SUPPORT SERVICES		13,959,000	13,959,000
<b>60910708 Total</b>				<b>100,000</b>	<b>573,505,859</b>	<b>573,605,859</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>1,296,991,725</b>	<b>1,586,954,150</b>	<b>2,883,945,875</b>

## Youth Commission

In January 2015, the Florida Youth Commission met and announced that Matthew Nadel will serve as the interim Vice Chair. Commissioners were also reminded to check that they would be able to attend PeaceJam and Children's Week.

Also, it was announced that Blake will speak to the Children and Youth Cabinet at their meeting in Tallahassee and that other commissioners could view the proceedings online.

## Committee Updates

- Communications Committee:
  - Pictures and interviews are being compiled until there are enough for a steady stream of posts to be made. They can be accessed on their Flickr page.
  - A draft of the FYC Promotional Video has been made and approved and will be completed by the date of the Children and Youth Cabinet meeting.

- The layout and design of the website are finished and the Government Affairs Committee has content ready to be put onto the site.
- February is Ethnic Equality Month, so commissioners are encouraged to share Matthew's religious tolerance video and Salma's Fabula Rasa videos.
- Outreach Committee:
  - Members are currently working on efforts to spread the word about the FYC by talking to friends and classmates about the FYC initiative and preparing flyers to use to reach out to student governments.
  - Each Outreach Committee member will also attend school board meetings by a certain date that is to be decided.
- Government Affairs Committee:
  - The GA Committee has created speeches for commissioners to use at school board meetings each month.
  - Every GA member must communicate with at least two representatives and verify that they've promoted the FYC.
  - The GA Committee will be posting a legislative newsletter on the official FYC website.
  - Each GA member will be responsible for reporting on at least two bills.
  - The GA Committee is also working on a bill on education reform that the FYC can submit to legislators.

The Commission met again in February to encourage students to apply to the FYC for the 2015-2016 term. It was announced at this meeting that the Commission will consist of 12 members next term, and only rising sophomores and juniors may apply. The minimum GPA requirement was raised to 2.5.

FYC Manager Caitlin Camechis informed the Commission that the FYC will not hold a workshop at Peace Jam. Additionally, during Children's Week, nine to ten commissioners will participate in the Town Hall meeting. Lastly, the commission will attend Florida Youth Shine after the Town Hall meeting.

#### Committee Updates

- Communications Committee:
  - The FYC video will be finished in time for the Children and Youth Cabinet meeting.
  - Commissioner Nick LaFalce is currently working on the official FYC website.
  - Morgan is working on the "Senior Video."
- Government Affairs committee:
  - Each GA committee member will meet with two government representatives each month.
  - Each member is also responsible for following a House bill relating to the youth in Florida.
  - A student poll has been created and submitted to the Communications Committee to be uploaded to the FYC website.

The Florida Youth Commission will hold a Town Hall Meeting April 14 from 10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. at the Tallahassee City Hall. The meeting will feature a forum of Florida students addressing and discussing important issues with several state and community leaders, including Dr. John Armstrong.

**2015 Florida Youth Commission Membership**



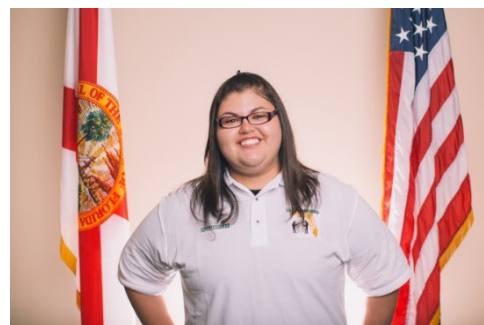
**Blake Maier, Chair**  
Communications Committee



**Morgan Denhart**  
Communications Committee, Vice Chair



**Christal Hector, Secretary**  
Communications Committee



**Marilu Duque**  
Communications Committee



**Matthew Nadel, Vice Chair**  
Communications Committee



**Kai Prindle**  
Communications Committee



**Elias Rosenfeld**  
Government Affairs Committee, Chair



**Nicholas LaFalce**  
Communications Committee



**Ella Biggins**  
Government Affairs Committee, Vice Chair



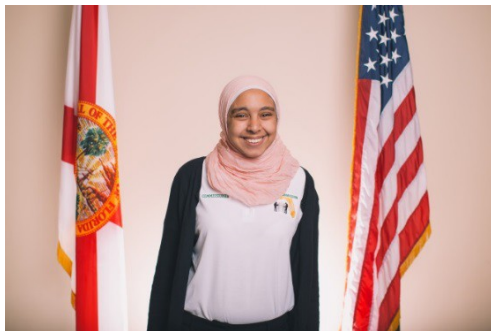
**Samuel Vilchez**  
Government Affairs Committee



**Adrianna Williams**  
Government Affairs Committee



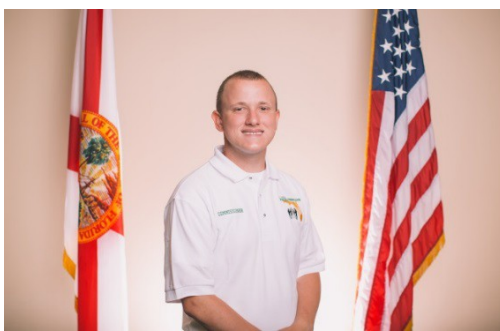
**Savion Winston**  
Outreach Committee, Vice Chair



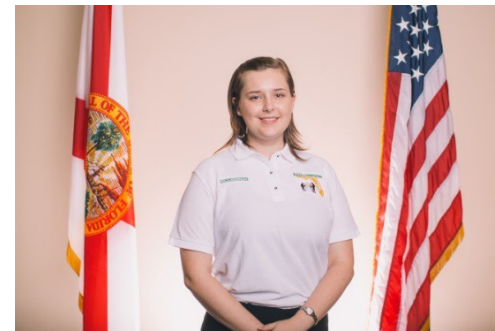
**Salma Abdelrahman**  
Outreach Committee, Chair



**Jaci Caine**  
Outreach Committee



**Cody Jenkins**  
Government Affairs Committee



**Lindsey Brown**  
Outreach Committee



**Victoria Hernandez**  
Outreach Committee



# Appendix







**Florida Children and Youth Cabinet**  
**Florida Statute 402.56**

- (1) **SHORT TITLE.**—This act may be cited as the “Children and Youth Cabinet Act.”
- (2) **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.**—
- (a) The Legislature finds that all state agencies and programs that touch the lives of children and youth must work in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion, with an emphasis on providing a continuum of services that benefit children from prenatal care through programs supporting successful transition to self-sufficient adulthood. The Legislature further finds that creating a Children and Youth Cabinet is the best method by which the state might achieve the visions and plans necessary to ensure that this state is the first place families think of when asked, “Where do you want to raise a child?”
  - (b) The Legislature, in collaboration with the Governor, intends to develop and implement a shared vision among the branches of government in order to improve child and family outcomes in this state. By working collaboratively, the Legislature intends to invest in the education and skills of our children and youth, develop a cohesive vision and plan that ensures a long-term commitment to children and youth issues, align public resources serving children and youth to support their healthy growth and development, and promote increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children, youth, and their families.
- (3) **ORGANIZATION.**—There is created the Children and Youth Cabinet, which is a coordinating council as defined in s. 20.03.
- (a) The cabinet shall ensure that the public policy of this state relating to children and youth is developed to promote interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order that services designed for children and youth are planned, managed, and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the children’s self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life.
  - (b) The cabinet is created in the Executive Office of the Governor, which shall provide administrative support and service to the cabinet.
  - (c) The cabinet shall meet at least four times each year, but no more than six times each year, in different regions of the state in order to solicit input from the public and any other individual offering testimony relevant to the issues considered. Each meeting must include a public comment session.
- (4) **MEMBERS.**—The cabinet shall consist of 14 members including the Governor and the following persons:
- (a)
    - 1. The Secretary of Children and Family Services;
    - 2. The Secretary of Juvenile Justice;
    - 3. The director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities;
    - 4. The director of the Office of Early Learning;
    - 5. The State Surgeon General;
    - 6. The Secretary of Health Care Administration;
    - 7. The Commissioner of Education;

8. The director of the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office;
9. The director of the Office of Child Abuse Prevention; and
10. Five members representing children and youth advocacy organizations, who are not service providers and who are appointed by the Governor.

- (b) The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, and the Chief Financial Officer, or their appointed designees, shall serve as ex officio members of the cabinet.
- (c) The Governor or the Governor's designee shall serve as the chair of the cabinet.
- (d) Nongovernmental members of the cabinet shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to receive per diem and travel expenses in accordance with s. 112.061 while in performance of their duties.

(5) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Children and Youth Cabinet shall:

- (a) Develop and implement a shared and cohesive vision using integrated services to improve child, youth, and family outcomes in this state.
- (b) Develop, no later than December 31, 2007, a strategic plan to achieve the goals of the shared and cohesive vision. The plan shall be centered upon a long-term commitment to children and youth issues and align all public resources to serve children and youth and their families in a manner that supports the healthy growth and development of children. The plan shall prepare the children and youth to be responsible citizens and productive members of the workforce. The plan shall include a continuum of services that will benefit children from prenatal care through services for youth in transition to adulthood.
- (c) Develop and implement measurable outcomes for each state department, agency, and program that are consistent with the strategic plan. The cabinet shall establish a baseline measurement for each outcome and regularly report on the progress made toward achieving the desired outcome.
- (d) Design and implement actions that will promote collaboration, creativity, increased efficiency, information sharing, and improved service delivery between and within state governmental organizations that provide services for children and youth and their families. In particular, the efforts shall include the long-range planning process mandated by s. 216.013.
- (e) Foster public awareness of children and youth issues and develop new partners in the effort to serve children and youth.
- (f) Create a children and youth impact statement for evaluating proposed legislation, requested appropriations, and programs. The impact statement shall be shared with the Legislature in their deliberative process.
- (g) Identify existing and potential funding streams and resources for children's services, including, but not limited to, public funding, foundation and organization grants, and other forms of private funding opportunities, including public-private partnerships.

- (h) Develop a children-and-youth-based budget structure and nomenclature that includes all relevant departments, funding streams, and programs. The budget shall facilitate improved coordination and efficiency, explore options for and allow maximization of federal financial participation, and implement the state’s vision and strategic plan.
  - (i) Engage in other activities that will implement improved collaboration of agencies in order to create, manage, and promote coordinated policies, programs, and service delivery systems that support children and youth.
- (6) **ADVISORY BOARD.**—The Governor may appoint an advisory board to assist the cabinet in its tasks. The board shall include persons who can provide to the cabinet the best available technical and professional research and assistance. If an advisory board is created, it shall include representatives of children and youth advocacy organizations and youth, wherever practicable, who have been recipients of services and programs operated or funded by state agencies.
- (7) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—The Children and Youth Cabinet shall, by February 1 of each year, provide an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the public concerning its activities and progress towards making this state the first place families think of when asked, “Where do they want to raise their children?” The annual report may include recommendations for needed legislation or rulemaking authority.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-151; s. 53, ch. 2008-6; s. 284, ch. 2011-142; s. 61, ch. 2012-96; s. 16, ch. 2012-178.







# Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

Meeting Date: November 18, 2014

## Consultant's Summary & Recommendations

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# The November 2014 Meeting of the Cabinet was Focused on Recalibration

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- At the request of Chair Walters, Mosaica Partners developed a series of interactive activities and facilitated a meeting to explore and address the new Chair's challenge to the Cabinet members.
- That challenge, posed as a question by Chair Walters to the members of the Cabinet, was "How can we do better?"
- The priority of, and progress towards, the Cabinet's Goals and Objectives – as described in the 2007 Strategic Plan – were openly discussed and rated by Cabinet members.
- After additional discussion, Cabinet members expressed dissatisfaction with that approach, instead requesting a "more relevant" approach to recalibrating their objectives and responsibilities.





# Cabinet Members Requested to Return to the Enabling Statute for Guidance

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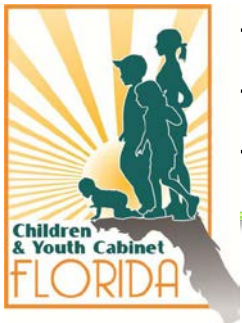
- The Cabinet members generally agreed that the Goals and Objectives, as documented in the 2007 Strategic Plan, were no longer relevant nor an appropriate base on which to develop future plans and actions.
- The members of the Cabinet decided they wanted to revisit and discuss the enabling statute (FL 402.56) to ensure their future plans and actions were consistent with the intent of the statute.
- Mosaica Partners consultants responded to Cabinet Member concerns and during a working lunch, developed an approach to facilitate a discussion of the statute.
- After lunch, the consultants facilitated a discussion of both the overall intent of the statute and of its individual sections; as well as how the statute could serve as the baseline for the Cabinet's future plans and actions.



# By the end of the Meeting, the Members were both Recalibrated and Reenergized

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- Cabinet members appreciated the open nature of the meeting and freely and enthusiastically shared their concerns and suggestions when discussing how the Cabinet could do better.
- There was extensive discussion of past Cabinet issues and activities and of the desire of Cabinet members to be more proactive in supporting Florida's children.
- Past barriers and gaps were also openly discussed.
- By the end of the meeting, it appeared that Cabinet members were not only recalibrated, but were reenergized by their decision to focus on the Statute to clarify the Cabinet's objectives and responsibilities.
- Mosaica Partners believes the Cabinet members are looking forward to developing a new approach to defining and achieving the Cabinet's objectives and on fulfilling their responsibilities to the children of Florida.



# Mosaica Partners' Consultants have Developed Preliminary Conclusions

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- Collectively, State agencies and departments form a significant part of the “care coordination team” which exists to support Florida’s children as they progress from birth to their age of majority and beyond.
- The Cabinet provides the State an opportunity to have a “horizontal view” of how the State interacts with children through the activities of its various agencies and departments.
- Cabinet Members seem ready and anxious to return to the basics (Statute) and more proactively address the needs of children in Florida.
- Developing – and engaging in – a structured process to define relevant objectives and action steps will position the Cabinet and its members to be more effective in serving Florida’s children.



# Mosaica Partners Recommends a Structured Approach to Position the Cabinet for Success

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- Working in concert with Florida residents and other State agencies and departments, develop a clear set of objectives that the Cabinet can achieve (and can assist others to achieve).
- Develop a clear description of the responsibilities of the Cabinet and of individual Cabinet members.
- Communicate the Cabinet's objectives and more proactively engage and interact with the public and with other State agencies and departments.
- Develop a strategy to assess, monitor, and improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the many support system components available to Florida's children.
- Begin now to gather information necessary to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the process and programs that exist to support Florida's children from birth to adults.



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# Discussion & Next Steps





## **PROPOSED FRAMEWORK AND NEXT STEPS FOR FLORIDA CHILDREN AND YOUTH CABINET**

**VISION:** All children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential.

**MISSION:** To ensure that the public policy of Florida relating to children and youth promotes interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order for services designed for children and youth to be planned, managed and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health and quality of life of all children and youth in Florida.

### **PRIMARY ROLES**

Definition of these roles serves to guide the action the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet) will take in its official capacity.

#### **Advisory**

- Cabinet will serve as a forum for gathering data and information around identified gaps in services, inefficiencies and/or barriers that exist across multiple agencies/systems, which negatively impact the state's ability to deliver services to children and youth
- Cabinet will serve as a collective voice in making recommendations that help to improve overall service delivery
- Cabinet may seek advice and guidance from representatives of children and youth advocacy organizations, as well as state and local experts

#### **Collaborator/Coordinator/Integrator**

- Serve as the collaborative agent between state agencies
- Serve as the collaborative agent between state agencies and community providers
- Serve as the collaborative agent among members of the executive branch, elected officials, community providers and the public regarding services and best practices for children
- Identify opportunities to improve service delivery through better coordination or integration

#### **Communicator/Promoter**

- Create greater awareness of the services and successes of state agencies and organizations that serve children and youth
- Facilitate improved information sharing among agencies in order to avoid duplication of services and maximize resources
- Publicize and cross market awareness and education campaigns of Cabinet agencies and organizations
- Establish greater presence at local, state and national events focused on priority Children and Youth Cabinet issues

It is not the Cabinet's role to develop new programs or to review existing programs and measure outcomes. Each agency already does that. Rather, it is the role of the Cabinet to:

- Share information between agencies
- Encourage open/shared communication
- Provide an open forum for the public to present issues and ideas for resolving problems
- Consider new initiatives to recommend to the Executive Branch as policy directions
- Serve as a clearinghouse for new ideas and share them with the broadest audience
- Encourage and support new programs if they are within the three primary goals of the Cabinet

**Primary Goals of the Cabinet in 2015 as proposed by Chair Walters:** The following goals are intended to direct the focus of the Cabinet on particular issues or programs. The Cabinet has limited staff resources and Cabinet members have time constraints.

**1. The Cabinet will provide a venue for presenting a united voice on how to address issues affecting the health and well-being of Florida's children and youth.**

The Cabinet is the place for state agencies and the child advocacy community to speak with one voice in realizing the vision of the statute, which is to develop a long-term commitment to children and youth issues and align all public resources to serve those children and families. As part of this united voice, the members of the Cabinet and community partners should be able to communicate with each other regularly and easily to eliminate duplicative efforts and to collaborate on the long-term goals of the Cabinet.

**2. The Cabinet will work to galvanize the State of Florida, all agencies and service providers to shift the context of the provision of services from reactive to preventive.**

Cabinet members have a great interest in moving toward a comprehensive prevention approach to service delivery and reducing the practice of reactive service delivery. Our community partners are essential in developing a support system for children and their families that reduces the need for (or reliance on) state services. Florida's state agencies are key partners in the prevention movement by helping (at local, state and federal levels) to eliminate barriers, close service gaps and identify opportunities for improved service delivery.

**3. The Cabinet should explore new and different funding mechanisms that could provide greater coordination among agencies and better delivery of appropriate services to the children and youth being served. This should be done without dipping into current sources of funding and thereby depleting one at the expense of another.**

With the expertise that is currently on the Cabinet, together with community partners that can be reached by Cabinet members, it is possible that new collaborations can be forged to find sufficient resources to service the children and families of our state.



### **Duties of Cabinet Members**

- Attend all Cabinet meetings. Join and actively participate in a committee.
- If unable to participate on a committee, appoint someone with decision-making authority to participate in committee work
- In fact, it would be helpful for each agency head that is on the cabinet to also name another person who will partner with them in the work.

### **Standing Committees of the Cabinet**

Committees should directly support the mission and goals set forth by the Cabinet. Committees should be broad enough to allow for specific projects to be developed or reviewed throughout the year(s). Chair Walters would appoint a Chair or sponsor for each committee. Composition of the committees could include Cabinet members or their designee, as well as agency staff, field experts and stakeholders (depending on the subject).

**Policy Impact:** Supports Cabinet goal to present a united voice on issues affecting the health and well-being of Florida's children and youth.

Once an issue is identified by the Cabinet as something to weigh in on, this committee would work with the appropriate people and organizations to develop a framework or policy impact statement for how to address it. The proposed framework or policy impact statement would be presented to the full Cabinet through the committee for review and decision to endorse as a policy recommendation.

**Best Practices:** Covers programs provided by all state agencies and community care organizations, both for profit and non-profit. This would include services that cover a continuum for all ages from the youngest to those aging out of the system.

It would also include services to families that are not in custody of the state, but have children with special needs.

**Communication:** This is one of the primary areas of the Cabinet's work.

Sharing information about projects regarding interdepartmental communications, such as updates on new programs, public awareness initiatives, barriers experienced, new areas of concern and how to address those issues (e.g., trafficking of youth – and how each agency is handling this and is there a better way)

Share information received from stakeholders and the public on new programs or ideas. Whether the Cabinet would take any action to promote these new programs or support them would be measured against the three main goals of 2015 for the Cabinet.

Leverage the resources of state agency communications offices to cross-promote major Cabinet and agency initiatives. Includes communication directly to stakeholders and the public about the Cabinet, its members and the work they do.

Explore technology options for creating a more interactive website, including links to the agencies on the Cabinet. The committee could also explore social media options, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc. Each agency has staff with the experience and skills to develop a plan for development and ongoing maintenance.

**Finance:** Identify existing and potential funding streams and resources for children's services, including, but not limited to, public funding, foundation and organization grants, and other forms of private funding opportunities, including public-private partnerships.

Is there duplication of funds spent on programs or services?

Are there additional sources of funds that would help to shift this state's work for children and families to one of prevention?

**Delivery of Services:** Are the programs that exist accomplishing their stated purpose?

The current Multisystem Collaboration Technical Assistance grant with Georgetown is a good example of work that could be done under this committee.

This could include the policy impact committee – measured again against our three main goals.

**Technology:**

The committee could serve as a venue for finding better ways to share information across agencies (e.g., identifying and eliminating barriers to data sharing, executing multi-agency data sharing agreements, etc.)

**Liaisons to the Cabinet:** The Cabinet should identify key groups that could have liaisons to the Cabinet or advisory roles with the Cabinet. Examples include:

- Office of the Governor and Legislature
- Office of Policy and Budget, OPPAGA
- Children's Services Councils
- Local Children's Cabinets (e.g., Orange County)
- Associations (e.g., Florida General Justice Assn, Florida Bar, Pediatric Society, etc.)
- Family/Juvenile court judges
- University educators – Children's law clinics, study groups on youth trauma, early development of children