



Child Protective Investigator and Child Protective Investigator Supervisor Educational Qualifications, Turnover, and Working Conditions Status Report

ANNUAL REPORT

Department of Children and Families

Office of Child Welfare

October 1, 2018

Rebecca Kapusta

Interim Secretary

Rick Scott

Governor

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Purpose

This report is designed to meet requirements contained within section 402.402(3), Florida Statutes, which requires the Department of Children and Families (department) to provide a status report to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives as to the educational qualifications, turnover, and working conditions of the department's Child Protective Investigators, Child Protective Investigator Supervisors, and other child protective investigative staff.

This report includes recent information related to the department's full-time equivalent (FTE) child protective investigative positions within the areas of:

- Child protective investigative staff minimum qualifications, base pay, and position descriptions;
- The distribution of child protective investigative positions across the six department regions and allocation of child protective investigative positions across the four child protective investigation class titles;
- The percentage of vacant child protective investigative positions;
- The monthly average number of new cases assigned to all Child Protective Investigator and Senior Child Protective Investigator positions;
- The average number of Child Protective Investigators and Senior Child Protective Investigators supervised by a Child Protective Investigator Supervisor – SES staff;
- The turnover rate for all child protective investigative positions;
- General educational information for all child protective investigative positions;
- Employee satisfaction, opinion, and concerns survey results;
- Regional efforts to address retention and employee satisfaction; and
- Innovations in child welfare to support frontline staff.

Background

General Statutory Requirements

Chapter 39, Florida Statutes, establishes three main responsibilities that child protective investigators are charged with when responding to all child-related reports accepted by the Florida Abuse Hotline. First, investigators are directed to determine “whether there is any indication that any child in the family or household has been abused, abandoned, or neglected” and, if so, to identify the individual responsible for the maltreatment. Second, investigators are required to conduct and complete a family functioning assessment in order to identify the source of all danger threats in the home and assess the protective capacity of the caregivers responsible for caring for the child. Third, when a child has been maltreated, child protective investigators are to initially consider the implementation of an in-home safety plan and the initiation of in-home services to protect the child and stabilize the family. In the most severe situations, child protective investigators remove the child from the home and place the child with another parent, relative, non-relative, or in licensed shelter care.

Department of Children and Families and Sheriff Office Investigations

The department currently conducts child protective investigations in 60 of Florida's 67 counties. Sheriffs' Offices perform child protective investigations in the remaining seven counties (Broward, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Seminole, and Walton) under grant agreements with the department. The Walton County Sheriff's Office began conducting child protective investigations in July of 2018. Unless otherwise specified, all information contained within this report addresses department child protective investigative positions only. While the department does not require retention data from the sheriff offices, collaborative information sharing indicates that the sheriffs' offices are similarly challenged by high turnover for their Child Protective Investigator (CPI) positions. In short, the challenging nature of the work transcends the individual entities responsible for child protection across the state.

Child Protective Investigative Positions

Child Protective Investigative Staff – Minimum Qualifications, Base Pay, and Position Descriptions

In March 2017, the department implemented a Child Protection Glide Path incentive program to increase recruitment and retention of critical staff positions. This Glide Path allows CPIs to demonstrate specific skills and core competencies associated with their class title to achieve a Competency-Based Increase in salary.

The Child Protection Glide Path divides child protective investigative positions into five class titles with the CPI class title having three salary levels based on skills and core competencies achieved. The class titles and annual base salaries for each of the classes are:

- Child Protective Investigator:
 1. Original Appointment - \$35,640;
 2. First Competency Based Increase - \$37,620;
 3. Second Competency Based Increase - \$39,600;
- Senior Child Protective Investigator - \$41,500;
- Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor - \$46,900;
- Child Protective Investigator Supervisor – SES - \$49,200; and
- Critical Child Safety Practice Expert - \$55,000.

Table 1 provides a complete listing of the base pay, general job description, and minimum qualifications for all five of the department's Child Protective Investigative classes.

Table 1 – Child Protective Investigative Positions by Class, Title, Base Pay, Job Description and Minimum Qualifications				
Class Title	Pay Grade	Base Pay	Job Description	Minimum Qualifications
Child Protective Investigator	019	\$35,640	This is professional work in the Department of Children and Families protecting children, working with families, and conducting investigations of alleged abused, abandoned, neglected or exploited children.	<p>Original Appointment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current valid driver's license; • A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university (preferred degree in social work, behavioral science, nursing or education field); • Must complete a Child Protection Certification exam with a score of at least 80% and attain provisional certification within 3 months of hire; and • Preference is given to individuals completing the department's Child Protection Internship.
		\$37,620		<p>1st Competency Based Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be able to carry a full caseload without restrictions; demonstrate increased independence in achieving daily work duties within 9 months of hire.
		\$39,600		<p>2nd Competency Based Increase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must obtain full Florida Child Protective Investigator Certification status within 12 months of hire; • Successful completion of Career Service probationary status within 12 months of hire.
Senior Child Protective Investigator	020	\$41,500	Performs advanced (senior-level) child protective services work. Work involves investigating and analyzing child protective problems, taking corrective action for children, and overseeing and evaluating casework activities. May help plan, assign, and supervise the work of others. Works under minimal supervision, with extensive latitude for the use of initiative and independent judgment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current valid driver's license; • A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university (preferred degree in social work, behavioral science, nursing or education field); • Two years of child protection related experience; and • Current Florida Child Protective Investigator certification.
Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	021	\$46,900	Performs field-based supervision, coaching, mentoring of investigative staff, and primarily new, developing supervisory staff. However, they could be used to assist with staff who may need additional coaching or development in specific areas. These positions schedule time with investigators, as well as perform random visits. They provide field support to the supervisor in developing a well-trained and prepared investigative staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current valid driver's license; • A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university (preferred degree in social work, behavioral science, nursing or education field); • Two years of child protection related experience; • Circuit and regional travel required; and • Current Florida Child Protective Investigator certification.
Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	421	\$49,200	This is an advanced-level professional supervisory position. Directs the work of child protective investigators and support staff. The primary duty of the position is to spend the majority of the time communicating with, motivating, training and evaluating employees, planning and directing their work; and having the authority to hire, transfer, suspend, layoff, recall, promote, discharge, assign, reward, or discipline subordinate employees or to effectively recommend such actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current valid driver's license; • A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university (preferred degree in social work, behavioral science, nursing or education field); • Three years of child protection related experience; • One year of coordinating the work of CPIs or supervisory/managerial experience; and • Current Florida Child Protective Investigator certification.
Critical Child Safety Practice Expert	024	\$55,000	Performs advanced professional work assessing and developing Child Protective Investigators to ensure investigative activities align with Child Welfare Practice. Conducts reviews of complex cases such as young children exposed to parental substance abuse or domestic violence to identify safety threats and consult with investigators and supervisors to ensure the sufficiency of safety plans to protect children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of the Level 1 and Level 2 Critical Child Safety Practice Proficiency*; • A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university (preferred degree in social work,** behavioral science, nursing or education field); and • One-year experience as a Florida Child Welfare Professional.** <p>* State of Florida Position Description. ** 2016 CCSPE Proficiency Process Prerequisite</p>

Source: Florida Department of Children and Families, Office of Human Resources as of 9/8/2018

Child Protective Investigative Position Classification and Vacancies

People First, Florida's automated web-based Human Resource Information System, provides classification and vacancy data for all Child Protective Investigative positions. Table 2 shows there were 1,534 positions statewide within the child protective investigation job class as of June 30, 2018, with 117 FTEs (8%) being vacant. While this one-day snapshot (June 30, 2018) reflects similar vacancy rates between most classes, the annualized turnover rates discussed later in this report highlight much wider variances between positions over time.

Table 2 – Classification and Vacancies of the Department Child Protective Investigative Positions as of 6/30/2018				
Region	Class Title	Positions Allocation as of 6/30/2018	Total Vacant Positions as of 6/30/2018	Percentage of Positions Vacant as of 6/30/2018
Northwest	Child Protective Investigator	136	20	15%
	Senior Child Protective Investigator	31	2	6%
	Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	4	0	0%
	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	32	1	3%
Total		203	23	11%
Northeast	Child Protective Investigator	247	22	9%
	Senior Child Protective Investigator	49	2	4%
	Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	6	0	0%
	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	51	0	0%
Total		353	24	7%
Central	Child Protective Investigator	347	19	5%
	Senior Child Protective Investigator	69	5	7%
	Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	9	1	11%
	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	73	4	5%
Total		498	29	6%
SunCoast	Child Protective Investigator	110	8	7%
	Senior Child Protective Investigator	21	3	14%
	Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	2	1	50%
	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	22	2	9%
Total		155	14	9%
Southeast	Child Protective Investigator	115	1	1%
	Senior Child Protective Investigator	25	2	8%
	Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	3	0	0%
	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	28	1	4%
Total		171	4	2%
Southern	Child Protective Investigator	100	15	15%
	Senior Child Protective Investigator	25	6	24%
	Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	4	0	0%
	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	25	2	8%
Total		154	23	15%
Statewide	Child Protective Investigator	1055	85	8%
	Senior Child Protective Investigator	220	20	9%

Region	Class Title	Positions Allocation as of 6/30/2018	Total Vacant Positions as of 6/30/2018	Percentage of Positions Vacant as of 6/30/2018
	Child Protective Investigator – Field Support Supervisor	28	2	7%
	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	231	10	4%
Total		1534	117	8%

Source: People First Data Warehouse as of June 30, 2018.

Average Child Protective Investigator Caseloads and the Average Supervisor to Child Protective Investigator Ratio

Child Protective Investigator Caseload

The issue of manageable caseloads is fundamental to the retention and overall job satisfaction of child protective investigative staff. Data from the 2018 Department of Children and Families Annual Child Protective Investigation Survey (Table 8, page 15) indicates that child protection staff identified “workload manageability” questions with ratings of “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” at a higher consistency than other questions. The workload questions explored the ability of child protective investigators to maintain a proper work/life balance. These aspects of the job – volume of work, work/life balance, and scheduling – underscore the importance of maintaining a manageable caseload to address both job satisfaction and retention rates for child protection staff.

The first element in determining the average caseload is a count of the total number of Florida Abuse Hotline Intakes assigned each month as an “Initial” or “Additional” investigation to CPIS and Senior Child Protective Investigators (Sr. CPI). If no current investigation is underway, the Abuse Hotline creates an “Initial” investigation and forwards the information and allegations taken from the reporter to the appropriate local unit for assignment. The hotline sends new information or allegations received on existing, open investigations to the local unit as “Additional” investigations. Additional Investigations contain either a new alleged child victim, perpetrator, or maltreatment not reported in the “Initial” intake and are linked to the “Initial” investigation opened on the family. “Additional” investigations count in the investigative caseload because a new on-site visit to the home and additional child and subject interviews must be commenced either immediately or no later than 24 hours.

Table 3 below, shows in SFY 17-18 the department conducted 141,770 child protective investigations (Sheriff Offices investigations excluded).¹ The trend in investigations conducted (excluding Special Condition Referrals) for the past 12 months reflect that the numbers for SFY 2017-18 show a slight decrease in intakes accepted by the hotline compared to the prior two years. The Suncoast and Southeast Regions reported numbers appear disproportionately low (based on child population) because five of the seven sheriff offices also conduct child protective investigations in these two regions.

¹ Source: Child Protective Investigation Trend Reports as of 9/11/2018

Table 3 – Eight Year Trend in Child Protective Investigations by Region (SYF) (Initial and Additional Investigations)								
Region	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18*
Northwest Region	16,638	16,842	16,644	16,745	17,998	19,178	19,413	19,068
Northeast Region	31,099	31,622	30,084	30,852	31,481	32,957	33,924	32,135
Central Region*	43,239	43,702	43,015	43,991	45,116	46,507	47,658	46,981
SunCoast Region*	13,387	13,345	13,055	13,589	13,650	14,286	15,367	14,311
Southeast Region*	15,807	15,606	15,373	15,835	15,786	15,908	16,719	15,797
Southern Region	14,163	13,931	13,499	13,983	13,841	13,844	14,474	13,478
Investigative Totals*	134,333	135,048	131,670	134,995	137,872	142,680	147,555	141,770
Source: Child Protective Investigation Trend Reports as of September 11, 2018.								

A second significant source of workload, not factored into the above chart, involves the departmental response to Special Conditions Referrals accepted by the hotline. Special Conditions Referrals do not contain allegations of maltreatment (by an adult caregiver) but involve circumstances and situations that still require a response by the department. Examples include parent(s) being unavailable because of hospitalization or incarceration (not involving child maltreatment), parent(s) requesting assistance to help manage “difficult” children, and Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse referrals in which the child and family’s therapeutic needs are assessed regarding behavior and trauma services.

Graph 1 on the next page from the Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report from July 2018, illustrates the increase in Special Condition Referrals by Type over a four-year time period. Most of this increase is attributable to the statutory age requirements for Child-on-Child referrals being eliminated July 1, 2014. Previously, referrals were only accepted on children 12 and under. At present, no age restriction is in place and referrals may involve older teens up to their 18th birthday.

*Sheriff’s Offices Excluded

[Graph 1](#)

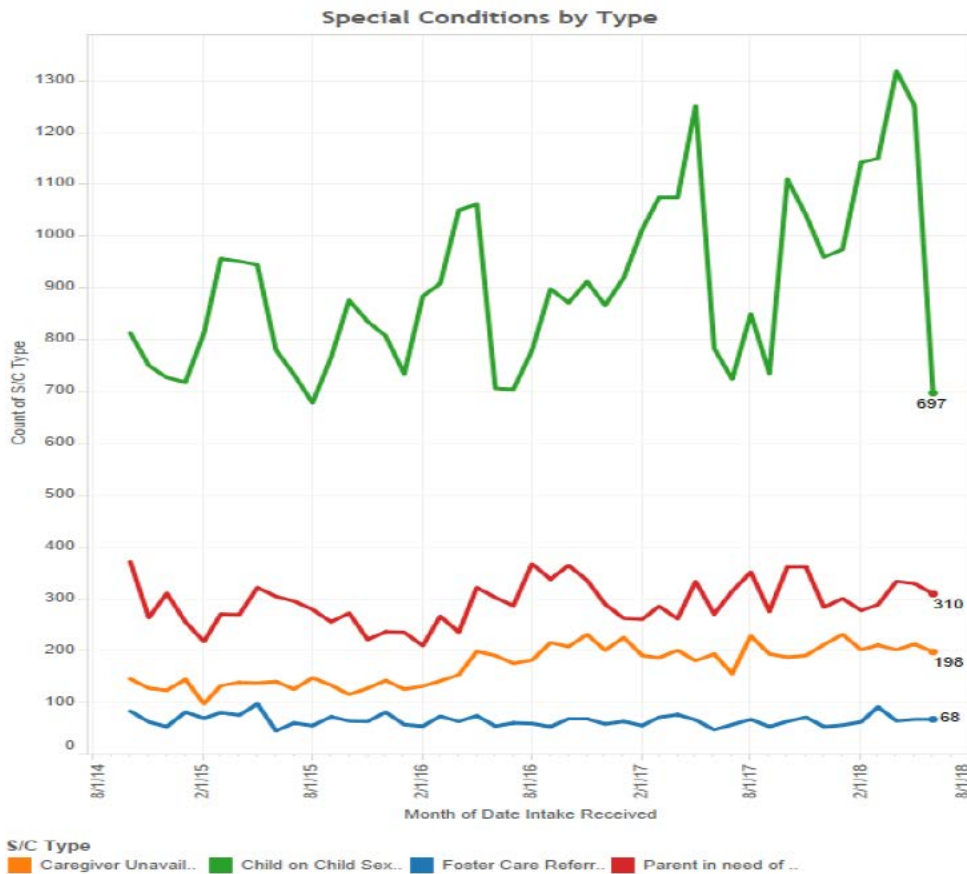


Table 4 provides the average monthly number of new investigations assigned to CPI and Senior CPI by region for department child abuse investigations based upon allocated and filled positions for SFY 2017-18. While several child protection professionals (e.g., Field Support Supervisors, Quality Assurance and/or Critical Child Safety Practice Experts and, most directly, the respective Child Protective Investigator Supervisor) may consult on an investigation, CPIs and Sr. CPIs conduct the actual investigation. Consequently, only the CPI and Sr. CPI position allocations are used to establish caseload numbers based on the number of new investigations assigned.

Current Child Protective Investigator Workload

Table 4 – Average Monthly Number of New Investigations Assigned to CPI and Sr. CPI Investigators SFY 2017-18.

	Region	Total Investigations (Initial and Additional)	Allocated CPI / Sr. CPI Investigators as of 6/30/18	Average Monthly New Cases Per Allocated Position	Filled CPI / Sr. CPI Positions as of 6/30/18	Average Monthly New Cases Per Actual Filled Positions
SFY 2017-18	Northwest	19,068	167	10	145	11
	Northeast	32,135	296	9	272	10
	Central	46,981	416	9	392	10
	SunCoast	14,311	131	9	120	10
	Southeast	15,797	140	9	137	10
	Southern	13,478	125	9	104	11
	Statewide	19,068	167	10	145	11

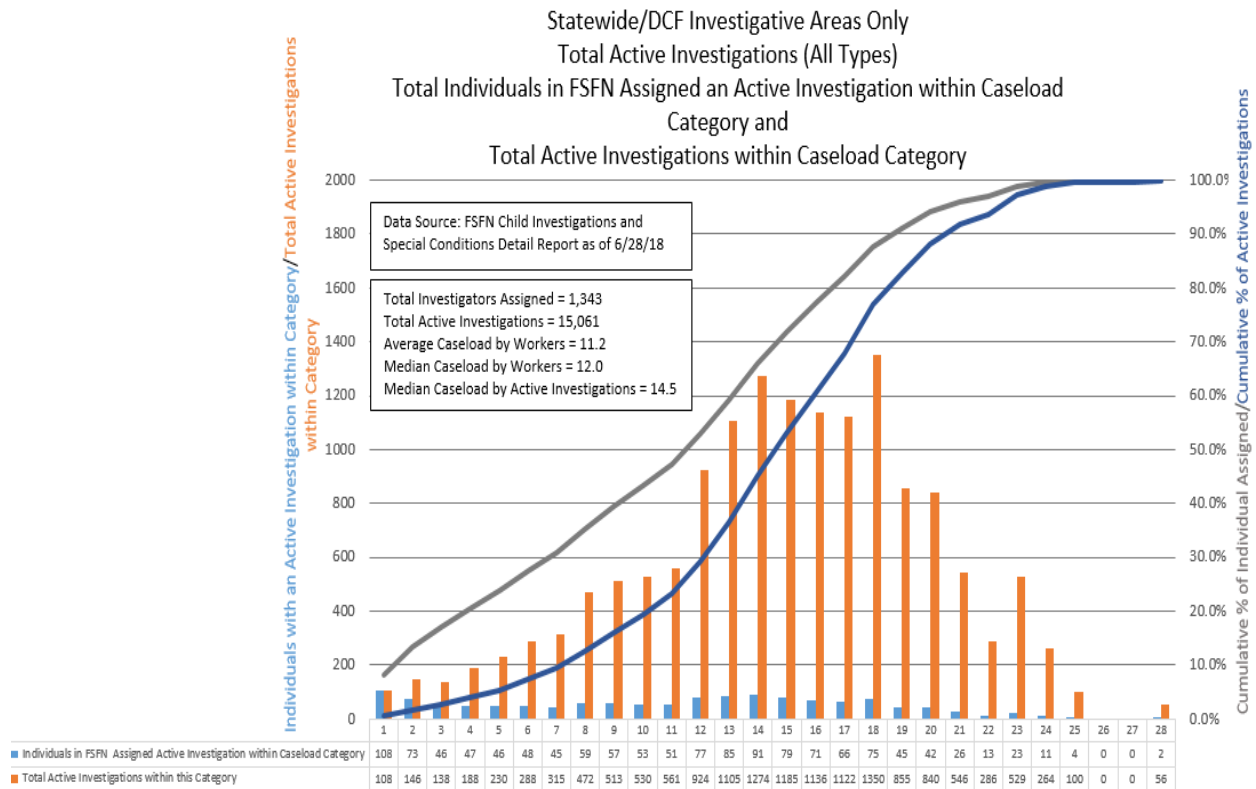
Source: Child Protective Investigation Trend Reports as of September 11, 2018, and People First Data Warehouse as of June 30, 2018.

The monthly average of new investigations per allocated Child Protective Investigator and Senior Child Protective Investigator positions statewide was 10 for SYF 2017-18. It is important to note that Florida's statewide average of 10 is based on allocated, not filled positions. For example, a field unit comprised of six allocated positions (but staffed at only five investigators) working 60 cases per month has an average new monthly workload of 10 (60/6). The actual caseload, however, is 12 per filled position during that month (60/5). Consequently, the last column in Table 4 shows the adjusted rates of work (11) based on filled, not allocated positions as of June 30, 2018. These filled positions do not account for the number of staff not receiving cases due to Workers' Compensation, Family and Medical Leave Act, or Sick and Annual Leave.

Second, with average turnover rates ranging from 42% to 75% per region for Child Protective Investigators (Table 6) from 7/1/2017 through 6/30/2018, overlooked meaningful aspect of caseload size is the number of filled positions in training status. These include new employees who are in training (no assigned cases) or provisionally certified investigators working protected (capped at a reduced number) training caseloads. To expound on the previous example, a field unit of six allocated and filled investigator positions working 60 new cases per month with four experienced investigators, one provisionally certified investigator just out of training, and one investigator just starting Pre-Service training would appear to have a new average monthly caseload of 10 reports per filled position (60/6). More likely, however, the four experienced investigators would be assigned 14 reports, the provisionally certified investigator would be assigned four reports, and the new hire (but allocated position) would have no assigned reports for the month.

Finally, the Child Welfare League of America, which recommends 12 new investigations per investigator per month, adds that the targeted recommendation of 12 active cases should also be based upon workdays available during a designated 30-day period. Mandatory in-service training, use of sick and annual leave, and compensatory time off to adjust or control for overtime can reduce available work-days over any 30-day period. When all three workload aspects are taken into consideration, the statewide average of 10 new cases per month for allocated Child Protective Investigator and Senior Child Protective Investigator positions does not accurately reflect the actual caseload conditions for these positions. This graph depicts active caseloads as of 6/28/2018:

[Graph 2](#)



Child Protective Investigator and Supervisor Staffing Ratios

Child Protective Investigator Supervisor positions are responsible for reviewing and approving all work conducted by CPI and Sr. CPI positions. Field Support Supervisors augment the unit supervisor role by providing direct, hands-on support to provisionally certified CPIs until they are fully credentialed (typically a 12-month process). Field Support Supervisors also offer coaching and mentoring to established investigators working complex cases (e.g., child fatalities, domestic violence, human trafficking). The average number of CPI and Sr. CPI positions per Child Protective Investigator Supervisor is calculated by dividing the total number of allocated Child Protective Investigator Supervisor positions by the total number of allocated CPI and Sr. CPI positions. Table 5 provides a comparison of the average number of CPI and Sr. CPI positions assigned to each Child Protective Investigator Supervisor by region. The current statewide staffing pattern is one supervisor per 5.5 investigators.

Table 5 – Distribution of Department Child Protective Investigation Positions per Supervisor by Region by State Fiscal Year

Region	Position Allocation SFY 2014-15			Position Allocation SFY 2015-16			Position Allocation SFY 2016-17			Position Allocation SFY 2017-18		
	Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	Average Staffing Ratio	Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	Average Staffing Ratio	Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	Average Staffing Ratio	Child Protective and Senior Child Protective Investigators	Child Protective Investigator Supervisor - SES	Average Staffing Ratio
Northwest	153	30	5.1	156	31	5.0	169	31	5.5	167	32	5.2
Northeast	294	50	5.9	292	51	5.7	296	51	5.8	296	51	5.8
Central	415	73	5.7	425	73	5.8	417	73	5.7	416	73	5.7
SunCoast	131	22	6.0	130	22	5.9	131	22	6.0	131	22	6.0
Southeast	152	28	5.4	148	28	5.3	140	28	5.0	140	28	5.0
Southern	138	25	5.5	129	25	5.2	116	25	4.6	125	25	5.0
Statewide	1,283	228	5.6	1,280	230	5.6	1,269	230	5.5	1,275	231	5.5

Source: Florida Department of Children and Families, HR-Public Reports, Position Funding Statewide 2015-06-01 as of 8/24/2015. State of Florida People First Data Warehouse as of July 26, 2016, July 21, 2017, and June 30, 2018.

Turnover

Despite being an entry-level position, the Child Protective Investigator role is an incredibly complex, challenging position which requires critical thinking and real-time problem-solving skills. In March 2017, the department implemented a Glide Path – a competency-based curriculum to develop CPIs professionally. Acknowledging the CPI position as an entry level role, despite its complexities, the department elected to focus efforts on incentivizing competency based development to increase retention.

While the department acknowledges that most CPIs will not remain employed as an investigator indefinitely, through its Glide Path initiative and other efforts, the department’s goal is to increase the percentage of CPIs who remain at least two years to 80%.

The department lost 555 Child Protective Investigative staff during SFY 2017-18. Some were voluntary separations and some were involuntary. In the involuntary situations, turnover is a positive outcome. When focusing solely on the voluntary separations, many factors noted in the 2018 Annual Child Protective Investigations Survey portion of this report contribute to the end result.

The turnover rates (Table 6) for all child protective investigation positions over the past three years have averaged 37%, 34%, and 36%, respectively. Turnover rates for only the Child Protective Investigator positions over the past three years have averaged 45%, 41%, and 47%. The statewide turnover rate for supervisors over this same time-period averaged 17%, 16% and 12%, respectively.

The problem of high turnover rates represents both a cause and effect. High rates are both indicative of the day-to-day challenges and stress confronting child protection professionals and result in additional burden for staff remaining on the job.

Overall, turnover has a direct effect on manageable caseloads for experienced investigative staff. When CPIs leave their position, cases are often redistributed to veteran CPIs increasing their average caseloads to as much as 16 to 24 active cases. (See Graph 2 on page 10 of this report.)

Table 6 – Turnover Rate of Department Child Protective Investigation Positions by Region and Class Title										
Region	Class Title	SYF 2015-16			SYF 2016-17			SYF 2017-18		
		FTE	Separated	Rate	FTE	Separated	Rate	FTE	Separated	Rate
Northwest	Investigator	129	64	50%	143	63	44%	136	70	51%
	Senior Investigator	27	10	37%	26	9	35%	31	3	10%
	Field Support Supervisor	4	0	0%	4	0	0%	4	0	0%
	Supervisor	31	3	10%	31	5	16%	32	2	6%
	Total	191	77	40%	204	77	38%	203	75	37%
Northeast	Investigator	243	103	42%	247	66	27%	247	104	42%
	Senior Investigator	49	17	35%	49	7	14%	49	6	12%
	Field Support Supervisor	6	0	0%	6	0	0%	6	0	0%
	Supervisor	51	9	18%	51	5	10%	51	4	8%
	Total	349	129	37%	353	78	22%	353	114	32%
Central	Investigator	356	154	43%	344	159	46%	347	143	41%
	Senior Investigator	69	13	19%	73	12	16%	69	12	17%
	Field Support Supervisor	8	0	0%	8	1	13%	9	0	0%
	Supervisor	73	7	10%	73	13	18%	73	11	15%
	Total	506	174	34%	498	185	37%	498	166	33%
SunCoast	Investigator	109	62	57%	113	70	62%	110	83	75%
	Senior Investigator	21	0	0%	18	7	39%	21	2	10%
	Field Support Supervisor	2	0	0%	2	0	0%	2	1	50%
	Supervisor	22	7	32%	22	4	18%	22	3	14%
	Total	154	69	45%	155	81	52%	155	89	57%
Southeast	Investigator	122	51	42%	114	44	39%	115	49	43%
	Senior Investigator	26	13	50%	26	7	27%	25	8	32%
	Field Support Supervisor	3	0	0%	3	0	0%	3	0	0%
	Supervisor	28	2	7%	28	1	4%	28	2	7%
	Total	179	66	37%	171	52	30%	171	59	35%
Southern	Investigator	103	44	43%	103	37	36%	100	42	42%
	Senior Investigator	26	6	23%	23	6	26%	25	5	20%
	Field Support Supervisor	3	0	0%	3	0	0%	4	0	0%
	Supervisor	25	10	40%	25	8	32%	25	5	20%
	Total	157	60	38%	154	51	33%	154	52	34%
Statewide	Investigator	1062	478	45%	1,064	439	41%	1055	491	47%

	Senior Investigator	218	59	27%	215	48	22%	220	36	16%
	Field Support Supervisor	26	0	0%	26	1	4%	28	1	4%
	Supervisor	230	38	17%	230	36	16%	231	27	12%
	Total	1536	575	37%	1,535	524	34%	1534	555	36%

Source: Florida Department of Children and Families, HR-Public Reports, Position Funding Statewide SFY 2013-14, SFY 2014-15, SYF 2016-17, SFY 2017-18 and State of Florida People First Data Warehouse as of June 30, 2018.

From a practical standpoint, the most important retention factor for new and provisionally-certified investigators is to ensure that their job experience is commensurate with their workload as it increases. Improving workforce stability by reducing staff turnover rates continues to be imperative for the department.

The department uses a standardized pre-employment behavioral assessment, Child Protective Investigator Hiring Questions and emphasis on new hires having both social work degrees and successfully having completed a department’s Child Protective Investigations Internship, to identify potential candidates who have the highest probability of achieving success as a CPI.

Educational Levels and Background of Child Protective Investigative Staff

Statutory Requirements

Section 402.402(1), Florida Statutes, directs the department to recruit and hire persons qualified by their education and experience to perform social work functions. Preference is given to individuals having a social work degree with a second level preference given to individuals with a human service related degree, with the goal of having 50 percent of its workforce having a social work degree by 2019.²

Educational Attainment of Employed Child Protective Investigative Staff

As of August 13, 2018, a People First data extract indicated there were 1,603 child protective investigative positions, including Other Personnel Services (OPS), of which 1,388 were identified as having a baccalaureate degree; 196 were identified as having a master’s degree; four were identified as having a doctorate; and 16 were identified as educational data unavailable.

Of the 1,603 child protective investigative staff listed in the People First data set, 240 held a degree in social work (199 baccalaureates and 41 masters degrees). The total active child protective investigative staff currently holding a degree in social work is 15 percent. The 240 total staff represent a net increase of one position over the previous year’s mark of 239.

An additional 30 percent of child protective investigative staff (483) hold a secondarily preferred baccalaureate (435) or masters degree (48) in psychology, sociology, counseling, special education, education, human development, child development, family development, marriage and family therapy, or nursing. The combined preferred (15%) and secondary degreed (30%) educational backgrounds equates to about half (45%) of child protective investigative staff having the educational backgrounds identified as necessary to support higher retention in the field of child protection.

² Section 402.402(1)(a)(b)&(c), Florida Statutes

Child protection staff having a baccalaureate degree in social work has remained relatively steady, up 0.4% over the past year (199, up from 196). There has been a 15% decrease (41, down from 48) in child protection staff having a master's degree in social work. Table 7 provides a complete distribution of current educational backgrounds.

Degree Type	Northwest	Northeast	Central	SunCoast	Southeast	Southern	Statewide
Baccalaureate Degree Social Work	54 (25%)	28 (8%)	57 (10%)	9 (6%)	32 (18%)	19 (13%)	199 (12%)
Master's Degree in Social Work	6 (3%)	10 (3%)	15 (3%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)	4 (3%)	41 (3%)
Baccalaureate Degree in Psychology, Sociology, Counseling, Special Education, Education, Human Development, Child Development, Family Development, Marriage and Family Therapy or Nursing	40 (19%)	110 (33%)	163 (29%)	50 (31%)	33 (18%)	39 (27%)	435 (27%)
Master's Degree in Psychology, Sociology, Counseling, Special Education, Education, Human Development, Child Development, Family Development, Marriage and Family Therapy or Nursing	8 (4%)	15 (4%)	16 (3%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	48 (3%)
Baccalaureate Degree Other	84 (39%)	146 (43%)	275 (49%)	86 (53%)	101 (55%)	61 (42%)	753 (47%)
Master's Degree Other	17 (8%)	27 (8%)	30 (5%)	7 (4%)	8 (4%)	18 (12%)	107 (7%)
Degree Data Unavailable	4 (2%)	1 (.3%)	6 (1%)	2 (1%)	2 (1%)	1 (.7%)	16 (1%)
Baccalaureate Degree Total	178 (84%)	284 (84%)	495 (88%)	145 (90%)	166 (91%)	119 (82%)	1387 (87%)
Master's Degree Total	31 (15%)	52 (15%)	61 (11%)	14 (9%)	13 (7%)	25 (17%)	196 (12%)
Doctorate Degree Total	0 (0.0%)	1 (.3%)	1 (.2%)	1 (.6%)	1 (.5%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (.2%)
Total Employed as of 8/13/2018*	213 (13%)	338 (21%)	563 (35%)	162 (10%)	182 (11%)	145 (9%)	1603 **

Source: State of Florida People First Data Warehouse as of August 13, 2018. * This number does not include vacant positions
 **Due to rounding of numbers, the total of the percentages may not equal 100%

2018 Annual Child Protective Investigation Survey Results

The department emailed a link to its Annual Child Protective Investigation Survey to all department Child Protective Investigators, Senior Child Protective Investigators, Child Protective Investigator Field Support Supervisors, Critical Child Safety Experts, and Child Protective Investigator Supervisors to request input about current working conditions. The survey included both numerical scaling and the opportunity for investigators to provide written feedback on which factors most directly impact morale and the overall work environment.

Participation was highly encouraged and considerable effort went into assuring respondents of their anonymity. The survey was open from June 25, 2018 – August 1, 2018. Survey questions included education and experience levels (time on the job by class position) as well as two scaling inventories related to job satisfaction.

The survey had a 23% participation or return rate (361 respondents) with a very even distribution related to time spent on the job. Of the 361 respondents, 26% had less than one year on the job, 20% had one to two years' experience, 14% had two to three years' experience, 11% had three to five years' experience, and 18% had five years' experience or more. Table 8 shows participant responses to questions related to employee perceptions of the current workplace.

Table 8 – Child Protective Investigation Survey Results, Employee Perception of the Work Environment						
Child Protective Investigation Survey Results: "For the following statements, please indicate how much you agree/disagree."						
Question #	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
One	I feel like Senior Management (Program Administrator and above) understands the role of a Child Protective Investigator	21.2%	53.2%	17.3%	8.4%	359
Two*	The training I received prepared me for the Child Protective Investigator role	0%	0%	0%	0%	0
Three*	The training I received prepared me for the Child Protective Investigator Supervisor role	0%	0%	0%	0%	0
Four	The ongoing training, I receive is adequate	14.2%	65.1%	16.5%	4.2%	358
Five	My immediate supervisor communicates job expectations and responsibilities clearly	47.1%	39.0%	10.3%	3.6%	359
Six	I feel like Senior Management (Program Administrator and above) "has my back."	13.8%	52.0%	24.7%	9.6%	356
Seven	My immediate supervisor provides me with timely feedback	43.3%	39.0%	14.0%	3.7%	356
Eight	My immediate supervisor provides me with fair and honest feedback	45.3%	42.2%	9.3%	3.1%	353
Nine	I have sufficient discretion to perform my job and make informed decisions	28.5%	55.9%	11.2%	4.5%	358
Ten	My supervisor appreciates my work	43.4%	42.6%	9.8%	4.2%	357
Eleven	My workload is manageable	8.4%	49.4%	24.3%	17.9%	358
Twelve	Senior Management appreciates my work	14.6%	54.4%	22.3%	8.7%	355
Thirteen	If I struggle with my workload, I can ask for assistance	17.4%	47.6%	24.1%	10.9%	357
Fourteen	I have enough time for my personal life	5.3%	35.8%	31.3%	27.7%	358
Fifteen	During my weekends I have at least one day without work responsibilities	10.1%	43.7%	28.6%	17.6%	357
Sixteen	The department offers career paths for Child Protective Investigators	16.2%	56.5%	20.1%	7.2%	359

Source: The Department of Children and Families 2018 Annual Child Protective Investigation Survey Results. Run Date 6/25/2018 - 8/1/2018. All numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth. Due to rounding of numbers, the total of the percentages may not equal 100%.
*Note: Questions two and three had a logic error in the survey tool. No data was collected from respondents for those two items.

Consistent with last year's results, Table 8 indicates that Child Protective Investigator Supervisors are doing a good job directing and supporting their staff. The four highest combined "Strongly Agree/Agree" scores were for supervisors clearly communicating job expectations and responsibilities; providing timely, fair, and honest feedback; and conveying the message that the investigator's work is appreciated (Questions 5, 7, 8 and 10). These same sentiments are highlighted in Table 9 as an important characteristic of the job as being "Extremely Important" to receive "Fair Treatment from Supervisors and Managers."

It was consistently reported that the job can be overwhelming despite the positive efforts of supervisors to motivate staff, as indicated by the highest combined "Disagree/Strongly Disagree" scoring in the areas of "I have enough time for my personal life," and "During my weekends I have at least one day without work responsibilities" (Questions 14 and 15).

Several new factors identified as the most important to personal satisfaction which scored higher this year than in past surveys include “Fair Treatment from Supervisor and Manager,” “Pay Incentives (Base Pay and Overtime),” and “Temporary Relief from Caseload Rotation.” Consistent with last year’s survey results, the “Ability to Manage Work and Personal Life” and “Time Off with No Work Responsibilities,” also received some of the highest ratings for on-the-job “Characteristics of Importance.”

A significant number of CPIs, Sr. CPIs, and CPI Supervisors took advantage of the opportunity to voice their concerns as well as share information on what motivates them. At the end of the survey, many participants provided written comments expounding on what they felt the department needed to know to improve the work environment to recruit and retain staff in this critical and essential job class.

Those comments and the overall survey results reinforce the fact that controlling caseload numbers is essential to maintaining a healthy balance between work and one’s personal life.

Table 9 – Child Protective Investigations Survey – Characteristics of Importance													
Child Protective Investigations Survey Results: "On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 meaning 'not important at all' and ten meaning 'extremely important'), please indicate how important the following things are to you for your personal satisfaction."													
Question #	Question	1 Not Important at All	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Extremely Important	Total Responses	Average Response
One	Immediate Supervisor Feedback	0	2	5	9	31	26	37	61	49	138	358	8
Two	Fair Treatment from Supervisor and Managers	0	1	0	0	3	3	15	38	41	258	359	9
Three	Base Pay	1	2	1	2	18	8	24	43	50	210	359	9
Four	Overtime Pay	2	4	6	2	25	11	20	42	41	207	360	9
Five	Discretionary Performance Bonus	7	4	3	8	24	17	31	42	49	174	359	8
Six	Job-Related Training	0	0	1	3	13	16	25	55	60	186	359	9
Seven	Immediate Supervisor Recognition for Work	11	5	7	16	34	36	61	59	40	89	358	7
Eight	Senior Management Recognition for Work	12	9	9	12	40	40	47	61	45	82	357	7
Nine	Time Off with No Work Responsibilities	1	0	1	2	3	8	14	25	43	263	360	9
Ten	Temporary Relief from Caseload Rotation	2	1	1	3	16	13	31	44	52	196	359	9
Eleven	Availability of Support	0	0	0	1	8	11	25	48	60	206	359	9
Twelve	Ability to Manage Work and Personal Life	1	0	0	1	2	3	10	25	49	269	360	10
Thirteen	Career Advancement Opportunities	5	1	2	3	14	16	23	40	62	194	360	9

Source: The Department of Children and Families 2018 Annual Child Protective Investigation Survey Results. Run Date 6/25/2018 - 8/1/2018

Regional Efforts

Although the Office of Child Welfare works to reduce statewide turnover rates, some issues require regional efforts specific to the needs of the region. Recruitment and retention efforts have been put in place in various regions to not only bring in the most appropriate child welfare professionals, but also to retain and keep them motivated while employed in one of the most strenuous careers in the field of child welfare.

The Northwest Region's first step at reducing CPI turnover was to redesign their hiring process, centralize the on-boarding process for hiring, and initiate a proactive hiring method. The second step was to conduct an Employee Retention Project that identified three areas of improvement for the region:

1. Pre-Service Communication and Training Enhancements
2. Supporting Investigator Work/Life Balance
3. Ensuring Manageable Caseloads

The third phase of the region's efforts are underway and consist of the establishment of circuit champions for each area of improvement, assembly of workgroups, and development of action plans to increase employee retention within the region.

The Central Region's approach involves the designation and use of CPI Recruiters and Retention and Development Specialists. The CPI recruiters are responsible for the complete hiring process for the onboarding of CPIs. The process starts with posting job positions, scoring applications, and conducting interviews in conjunction with their leadership team to ensure they are hiring the right people with a true passion and commitment to child protection.

Additional efforts for recruitment include building and maintaining relationships with local colleges and universities across the 12 counties in the Central Region. Recruitment fairs are held in order to obtain enthusiastic college graduates into an exciting career in child welfare. An internship program has been implemented to provide a six to 12-week hands-on approach to the profession with the intention of hiring these more experienced individuals upon graduation.

Retention and Development Specialist (R&Ds) positions (Government Analyst I) are based in each service center (one per circuit) to promote working relationships within the environment through support and solution-focused consultations. The R&Ds serve as liaisons and advocates in support of the operation teams to include CPIs, CPI Supervisors, Program Administrators, and Operations Managers. They assist in creating learning opportunities for professional development by supporting the needs and career aspirations of the staff in their respective areas. In addition, R&Ds facilitate activities within their designated service center to help boost morale, team building, and bonding.

Retention and Development Specialist duties include, but are not limited to:

- Stay/Exit Interviews
- Quarterly roundtable discussions
- CPI onboarding
- CPI graduation
- Post-graduation training
- Ongoing development training
- Morale boosting activities
- Individual Training Plan Support Team (Pre-Service training)

- Conflict resolution liaison
- Relationship building for CPIs, Supervisors, and Program Administrators (PAs) to best support needs of the service center
- Any other duties needed to provide emotional support to CPIs, Supervisors, and P's

On the Horizon

Managing 15 or more investigations in various stages of completion can be extremely difficult for even the most seasoned department veteran. To address that ongoing challenge, the department has closely followed the initial success of Children's Home Society of Florida's (CHS) case management pilot, Case AIM, developed to support case managers' work with families. The department has implemented a CPI Support Pilot that uses elements of the CHS model tailored to support investigative practices and better manage CPI workload. The pilot, which is expanding within the Central Region, consists of highly qualified program support staff dedicated at the unit level to help coordinate and structure investigative activities including, but not limited to:

- Timely documentation of essential casework activities;
- Comprehensive synthesis and understanding of assessment information;
- Facilitation (scheduling and structuring) of necessary follow-up activities (e.g., Child Protection Team consults, taking parents to a psychological evaluation, supervising parent-child visits, etc.); and
- Facilitation of timely closures (i.e., prioritizing completion of missing activities – submission of referral, completion of risk assessment, entering chronological notes in FSFN, etc.).

A second ongoing effort to support CPIs is the use of predictive analytics to focus on repeat reporting and repeat maltreatments to identify Florida's most vulnerable children. The Chronicity Model pilot will attempt to improve CPI efficiencies by integrating information from multiple sources into a single view so that investigators can redirect their use of time toward effective decision making rather than information gathering.

The goal of the project is to present investigators with a comprehensive view of the child's surrounding environment before, or as close to, commencement of the investigation as possible. This up-front synthesis of information will allow for the early identification of caregivers with the most serious history of child maltreatment and the agency's past intervention efforts (e.g., prior child removals, case management services, etc.). The Office of Child Welfare has executed the project management contract for the pilot and is currently in the final review stage of the data analytics contract for the pilot.

The Office of Child Welfare will continue to collaborate with the Florida Institute for Child Welfare on finalizing the implementation schedule and evaluation design, and collaborating with Action for Child Protection, Inc. on the training curriculum and materials on application of the predictive model. The Office of Child Welfare currently projects the pilot to roll-out in the Spring of 2019.

Conclusion

The department's charge of meeting the desired outcomes and statutory requirements associated with the recruitment and retention of child protective investigation staff remains a challenge. The implementation of pilot projects to support child protective investigative staff in their work and the review of regional efforts to identify and retain qualified staff will continue to be closely monitored.

Developing and retaining a qualified and highly proficient workforce will remain one of the department's top priorities. Competent, experienced, and highly dedicated child protection staff will always be the department's most valuable asset and best hope for keeping vulnerable children safe and achieving the best possible outcomes for Florida's families.