



**Department of Children and Families
Family Safety**

**CHILD and FAMILY SERVICES
ANNUAL PROGRESS and SERVICES REPORT**

June 2011

Service Period
October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010

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Rick Scott, Governor

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**Florida's Child and Family Services
Annual Progress & Services Report
Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010**

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Introduction

The mission of the Department of Children and Families is to protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency. The Department of Children and Families' mission, vision, goals, and performance objectives drive and influence its Strategic and Business Plans and its daily work on behalf of its customers.

The Department of Children and Families' vision is that every child in Florida lives in a safe, stable, permanent home, nurtured by healthy families and strong communities. The current Five Year Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and annual updates reflect this vision and are supported by the Department of Children and Families Strategic Plan 2010 - 2014 and the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to the Child and Families Services Review (CFSR).

The Department of Children and Families' Strategic Plan 2010 - 2014 maps out priorities and direction, while redefining and fine tuning its role. The Department of Children and Families' focus has been to streamline its processes and embrace a sense of urgency for its customers. The Department of Children and Families is responsible for providing services within child welfare, domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health, homelessness, and other areas. Integration of services, policies and practice is critical to truly affect positive change in the lives of Florida's citizens, but this is especially true if the Department of Children and Families is to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Federal funding and state monies will need to be applied even more widely to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts. This requires a high level of collaboration and coordination, both within the agency and when working with other state and federal agencies and Florida's very diverse communities.

The Department of Children and Families is committed to providing the highest quality of service possible, and that quality is no less than what we desire for our own families. The strategic plan goals include:

- Children and adults should be free from abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation.
- Children and adults must have their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and good health met.
- Adults, children and families should be active, self-sufficient participants living in their own homes and communities.
- The Department of Children and Families must be an integrated, efficient, timely, accurate, effective, and transparent organization providing the foundation to fulfill the agency mission.

The Department of Children and Families continues to re-engineer child welfare services to ensure that well-being, safety and permanency are primary goals for every child, while preserving families by providing early support and services. The Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project has made much of the innovative work possible.

The enclosed report follows the federal program instructions to the Child and Family Services Annual Progress and Services Report outlining specific topics and financial information covering October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010. This report also serves as an application for FFY 2012 funds awarded under Title IV-B, (Child and Family Services Court Improvement Act (CFCIP) and Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) programs.

Florida's Annual Progress and Services Report include:

- a description of the program types and achievements, services and support, stakeholder involvement, and performance improvement strategies; and
- plans for program or service changes during the 2010 federal fiscal year including revisions to the program goals, population to be served, or service delivery enhancements.

Chapter 1

Service Description Updates

The services described in this chapter of Florida's Annual Progress and Services Report reflects the primary components of Florida's child welfare system, including the case management information system. In order for the information in the entire report to be read in the context of Florida's current state legal requirements, Chapter 1 begins with an overview of changes in state law and administrative code.

Revisions to Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) and State Statutes (F.S.)

Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)

The Department of Children and Families amended or initiated development of the following rules relating to child protection during the time period October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010:

- **Section 65C-13.030, F.A.C. - Substitute Care of Children.** Standards of Licensed Out-of-Home Caregivers were amended, removing references to weapons and ammunition and adding additional home study requirements, pursuant to s. 790.174, F.S. Additionally, the new rule provides certain safety standards of measurements for health and sanitation inspections.
- **Chapter 65C-31, F.A.C. - Services to Young Adults Formerly in Foster Care.** Notice of Rulemaking was proposed on September 24, 2010. These revisions bring the rules into compliance with current state statutes including changing the Road to Independence scholarship to a stipend which will more accurately reflect the payment type and strengthen the fiscal accountability for community-based partners and young adults.
- **Chapter 65C-33, F.A.C. – Training.** Pursuant to ss. 402.40 and 402.731, F.S., the Department of Children and Families initiated the promulgation of administrative rules to develop minimum standards for a certification process that ensures participants (case managers and child protective investigators) successfully attain the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to competently carry out their work responsibilities, and develops minimum standards for trainer qualifications required of training academies in the offering of the training curricula. These rules were finalized September 24, 2010.
- **Chapter 65C-35, F.A.C. – Psychotropic Medication for Children in Out of Home Care.** This new administrative rule clarified and enhanced requirements relating to the prescription of psychotropic medications to children in out-of-home care. These rules were finalized March 17, 2010.

- **Chapter 65C-36, F.A.C. - Child Death.** A Notice for Rule Development was published August 20, 2010. This rule combines two previous rules dealing with child death to make the chronology of activities and roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in the investigation and review of a child death easier to understand; it clarifies responsibilities for notifying leadership in the event of a child death; and it formalizes the roles and responsibilities of the child fatality prevention specialists. Upon promulgation of this chapter, sections 65C-30.020 and 65C-30.021, F.A.C., will be repealed.

Two Emergency Rules were promulgated during Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 - 2010:

- **Emergency Rule CER 10.05** – provided for measures to be used to inspect the health and sanitation standards in residential child caring agencies with a capacity of up to 12 clients;
- **Emergency Rule CER 10.06** – In order to comply with HB 5305, a conforming bill of the 2010 General Appropriations Act, the Department of Children and Families promulgated this emergency rule as it relates to payments and the availability of funds to youth and young adults in the independent living transition services program.

Future Plans

During FFY 2010-2011, the Department of Children and Families will be reviewing and revising, where applicable, the following Administrative Rules:

- Chapter 65C-10, Child Protective Investigations
- Chapter 65C-13, Substitute Care of Children
- Chapter 65C-16, Adoptions
- Chapter 65C-17, Master Trust
- Chapter 65C-28, Out-Of-Home Care
- Chapter 65C-30, General Provisions
- Chapter 65C-31, Services to young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department of Children and Families
- Chapter 65C-34, Missing Children
- Chapter 65C-36, Child Deaths

Florida 2010 Legislation

In Spring 2010, the Florida Legislature successfully passed and the Governor signed into law the following legislative bills:

- **HB 295** related to Department of Health food service inspections, requires the food inspections of group care homes to be limited to the same requirements as those used for licensed foster homes with five or fewer children.
- **HB 315** prohibits an adoption agency or entity from making suitability determinations based on requiring disclosure relating to, or restricting lawful possession, storage, or use of firearms or ammunition.
- **SB 1012** requires the Department of Juvenile Justice facilities and programs in consultation with Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to adopt rules ensuring the effective delivery of health services to children in the care and custody of Department of Juvenile Justice.
- **HB 1363** clarifies postsecondary exemption from fee requirements for students who are or were at the time they reached 18 years of age in the custody of a relative under the Relative Caregiver Program or were adopted from Department of Children and Families after specified date. Additionally this legislation provides for all foster children an expiration of the exemption when a student reaches 28 years of age.
- **SB 2014** relating to early learning, amends school readiness program to include a foster home dually licensed within ss. 409.175, F.S., and Chapter 402, F.S., to receive school readiness funding as permitted by federal law; expands the priority population served by the Department of Children and Families from ages 3 to 5 to ages 0 to 5; and amends school readiness program eligibility to reflect federal requirement that first priority be given to a child from a family in which there is an adult receiving temporary cash assistance rather than a child who is in foster care.
- **HB 5305** limits administrative monitoring by the Department of Children and Families to once every 3 years if the child welfare provider is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation and Rehabilitation or the Council on Accreditation of Children and Family Services; requires the Department of Children and Families to adopt rules to govern the payments and conditions related to payments for services to youth or young adults; and repeals adoption benefit for qualifying adopting employees of state agencies.
- **HB 7069** amends background screening requirements and requires random drug tests for a licensed foster parent if there is a reasonable suspicion of illegal drug use. Cost is borne by the parent if positive but will be reimbursed by the Department of Children and Families if the test is negative.

Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)

Ongoing implementation of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) strengthened Florida's ability to track critical information about the child welfare system. Florida's SACWIS, named Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), provided opportunities to identify child welfare outcomes and practices and ensure a complete record of each child's current and historical child welfare information.

2010-2011 Update

- The Department of Children and Families entered into a staff augmentation maintenance contract relationship with our SACWIS vendor, CGI, for SFY 2010 - 2011. Since completion of Release 2c in December 2010, the Department of Children and Families has deployed or scheduled 17 new build releases designed to implement necessary change requests and fix incidents related to system performance. These releases have included changes designed to improve the quality and accuracy of AFCARS submissions, implementation of functionality designed to support the NYTD reporting requirements for our first submission, and other system enhancements designed to address issues identified in the draft SACWIS Assessment Review Report (SARR).
- During 2010, the Department of Children and Families also focused on the design, acceptance, and pilot testing of remaining components of FSFN, including automated eligibility determination and financial processing. All community-based care lead agencies are scheduled to have fully switched over to FSFN for financial processing by July 31, 2011.

Accomplishments

- System modifications planned and deployed throughout the year allowed the Department of Children and Families to submit a compliant NYTD file on time with our very first submission.
- The Department of Children and Families also won a prestigious Davis Productivity Award for system enhancements related to implementation of a "first-in-the-nation" mobile solution for case managers allowing them to improve productivity by using remote data capture functionality.

Collaboration

- The Department of Children and Families continued to collaborate with its contracted child welfare service providers to complete the full transition to FSFN with financial processing as the last implementation step, which is scheduled for completion by July 31, 2011.

Program Support

- During SFY 2010 - 2011, the FSFN project focused on the implementation for Release 2c completion of development activities, Release 2c operational support, user acceptance testing, and pilot testing. Through extensive feedback by the Release 2c pilot participants, a number of enhancements to the system were identified as requirements to support our Community-Based Care provider's business processes. With the delivery of these items, the financial system will be deemed ready for statewide usage. Tasks and activities for the year included:
 - Routine operational support
 - Detailed Design Sessions (Release 2c – enhancement requests)
 - Development and Unit Testing
 - System and Performance Testing
 - User Acceptance Testing
 - Pilot Testing (final finance release)
 - Preparation and Final "Go-Live" activities (statewide financial cutover)

Future Plans

- Complete implementation of the financial processing and related functional components of the system are scheduled to be completed by July 2011. The Department of Children and Families is also working on our response to the SARR and is working toward a two year plan for completing related work necessary to achieve SACWIS certification.
- The contract for maintenance and operations will end June 2011. The close out process is underway to ensure all deliverables, transition requirements, documentation and other contractual obligations have been met.

Program Services and Supports

PREVENTION

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Department of Children and Families took its role seriously in ensuring Florida's continuum of prevention services and resources as is reflected in the Department of Children and Families' mission: *"Protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency."*
- Florida is currently concentrating on the prevention of child abuse and neglect in response to several factors. While planning for prevention of child abuse and neglect is required both by state law (Sections 39.001(7) and (8), Florida Statutes) and by federal regulations (45CFR 1357.15), Florida's child abuse and re-abuse rates are rising.
- Through various funding streams, the Department of Children and Families administered statewide prevention and family preservation programs to address child abuse and neglect. A variety of family focused programs and services enhanced the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The allocated funds supported continuation of prevention programs through training, network administration, and educational materials.
- The Department of Children and Families contracted with a set of core programs for services to complement the existing network of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention programs. A home visiting program for mothers and infants, a statewide parent helpline and child abuse prevention awareness campaigns have been proven to be effective or in demand throughout the state.

Accomplishments

- More than 19,738 families and children received preventive services through direct client services. Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants funded child abuse prevention programs that reached more than 3,000 families through an Information and Referral indirect client service. The Parent Helpline, 1-800-FLA-LOVE provided information, referrals and counseling related to safety and well-being of Florida's families and children. On average 251 monthly contacts are maintained.
- Since implementation of the Title IV-E Foster Care Waiver in October 2006, numerous initiatives have been implemented throughout the state affecting permanency, safety, and well-being. The Department of Children and Families and its partners, Sheriffs' Offices and community-based care providers continued to increase the array of services that could be used to address the unique needs of each child and family earlier and more effectively.

- During April 2010, Prevent Child Abuse Florida (PCA Florida) implemented a comprehensive statewide public awareness and education campaign recognizing Child Abuse Prevention Month. The theme of the campaign, *Pinwheels for Prevention*, continued to highlight how parenting has changed over the years as a result of social, cultural, and demographic trends in families. The campaign historically has stressed a shift away from providing a “safety net” for families toward creating a community wide commitment to support all parents and children.
- To draw attention to and encourage involvement in these efforts, communities throughout Florida displayed pinwheels representing newborns in the community and opportunities to support a new family from the very beginning.
- While the 2010 *Pinwheels for Prevention* campaign focused on “Putting Children First”, the campaign materials were designed to appeal to children, families, legislators, funders, and advocates and were easily adaptable for use in a wide variety of mediums. More than 98,000 resource packets were distributed statewide. *Pinwheels for Prevention* was intended to provide the public with opportunities to get involved, take action, and make a difference in the life of a child.
- Outlined in the Department of Children and Families’ *Strategic Plan 2010-2014*, there are various goals and objectives defined to achieve the agency’s mission. In an effort to achieve specific agency objectives to keep children and families free from abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation, Department of Children and Families leadership identified a champion for prevention who has formed a Prevention Council. Council membership includes program directors from the various program disciplines such as homelessness, domestic violence, child care, family safety, and adult services. Mental health and substance abuse programs are to be integrated, as well. Child welfare objectives include:
 - ◆ Objective 1.1 - Reduce the number of child deaths and injuries in Florida related to abuse, neglect and abandonment;
 - ◆ Objective 1.2 - Reduce domestic violence and sexually violent offenses;
 - ◆ Objective 1.4 - Increase safety for children and adults; and
 - ◆ Objective 1.5 - Promote effective resettlement of refugees and decrease human trafficking.

Collaboration

- Florida’s efforts in the prevention of child abuse and neglect continued to be guided by the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection. The Office of Adoption and Child Protection has an established Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council comprised of representatives from each state agency and appropriate local agencies and organizations to serve as the research arm of the office.
- The Advisory Council assisted in the development of an action plan for better coordination and integration of the goals, activities, and funding pertaining to the

prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. The Department of Children and Families has two seats on the Advisory Council. Please refer to the following website for information regarding the five year prevention and permanency statewide plan: http://www.flgov.com/capp_plan_10_15

- Another example of collaboration has been the partnership with the Florida Department of Health (DOH) as the designated lead agency for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) created in Section 2951 of The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (Affordable Care Act or ACA), an amendment to Title V of the Social Security Act. The Department of Children and Families is working in partnership to plan and implement the program.
- The MIEC Home Visiting Program offers federal grants to eligible states to support home visiting services to pregnant women, infants, and young children in identified high risk communities, with the dual goals of improving health and development outcomes and strengthening families.
- Florida's former Governor Charlie Crist officially designated the Florida Department of Health (DOH) as the lead agency to apply for the MIEC Home Visiting (HV) program on July 6, 2010. After the HV legislation was passed, the DOH and Department of Children and Families signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that outlines their individual and collective responsibilities in working together to complete the application process and co-develop an effective HV program in Florida. They also established an HV Steering Committee and created a charter to formalize the process of coordinating the HV needs assessment with those of other agencies serving the same types of clients. Steering Committee members were recruited from a broad spectrum of public and private leaders and stakeholders already providing or collaborating with HV programs throughout the state.
- Florida was approved to receive the initial \$500,000 allocation of grant funds allotted to states reaching this level of eligibility. The needs assessment was developed and submitted during this reporting period.
- Prevent Child Abuse America announced on April 24, 2010 that Jacksonville, Florida had been chosen as the first Pinwheel City USA. This Pinwheel City USA designation is intended to further advance Prevent Child Abuse America's *Pinwheels for Prevention* national campaign which encourages policies and practices that promote healthy child development and child abuse and neglect prevention nationwide.

Program Support

- Florida had a myriad of programs that either directly or indirectly contributed to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, such as the Parenting with Love and Limits, The Nurturing Parenting Program, and those included in Chapter 4. Florida is attempting to define, describe and categorize these programs to identify any duplication of efforts and gaps in services.

- The CBCAP and Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) grant specialist actively provides technical assistance and ongoing support statewide regarding strategies to infuse the five protective factors, evidence-based programming, and funding strategies. The Department of Children and Families is serving as a lead in two workgroups established as a result of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*. The Department of Children and Families provides assistance to circuits seeking to incorporate the five protective factors within local prevention services and systems. Additionally, the Department of Children and Families leads the research and publication efforts regarding information and resources that promote and build evidence-based parenting programs designed to support the five protective factors as enhancement within circuit planning team local prevention services and systems.

Future Plans

- The CBCAP programs will continue to identify and address community and family needs by creating new partnerships, embracing family engagement and parent leadership, assessing parent education programs, developing a Program Self-Assessment and Peer Review Process, increasing parent participation on various advisory councils and surveying participants and partnering agencies for their ideas and suggestions. Programs will also continue to document lessons learned through consumer and parent leadership activities and new strategies employed based on the needs of the target population as part of their quality assurance activities and final reports, which are submitted annually.

Intervention\Investigation

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Family Safety Program Office focused on the release and associated training of a revised allegation matrix entitled the *Child Maltreatment Index* which provides for clearer definitions of maltreatment types, examples of assessment factors and types of evidence and documentation recommended to provide a verified finding of abuse and neglect and, ultimately, more consistent application. An additional change to the use of maltreatment findings contained in the index was the renaming of the 'some indicators' finding to 'not substantiated'. This revision was made to more accurately describe the finding and to remove the stigma associated with use of the former term. The Department of Children and Families also focused on clarifying and developing guidelines for the release of child records for children in foster care; reviewing child-on-child sexual abuse through a workgroup established by the Task Force on Fostering Success; beginning work on updating the 'Child Protective Investigations' section of Florida's Administrative Code; and significant changes to the Parent Needs Assistance/Special Conditions reports and assessment. These are explained in greater detail below.

Accomplishments

- One strategic area of the casework process that was changed during this period concerned development and training related to the updated Child Maltreatment Index- CFOP175-28. The operating procedure guides critical decision making by both the Florida Abuse Hotline counselors and child protective services investigators. Hotline counselors use the child maltreatment index in determining whether the reported information meets the legal criteria for acceptance of a report. Child protective services investigators use the child maltreatment index to assist in determining if the necessary documentation and sufficient evidence are present to support a finding of abuse, abandonment or neglect.
- Included in the revisions to the allegation matrix include an updated maltreatment finding of *Not Substantiated* instead of *Some Indicators* which is detailed further below. Additionally, the index created a separate section for Special Condition Referrals and provided additional guidance for the acceptance and assessment of these referrals. This was also a major change in current practice in Florida and is described in detail below. As noted in the previous year's Progress and Services Report, the updated index incorporated Human Trafficking as an allegation and additional field guidance and training ensued as a result.
- Feedback from all six regions, Community-Based Care staff, law enforcement, the Child Protection Team, Children's Legal Services, the Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Offices and other partners from across the state were incorporated. The Child Maltreatment Index aligns with Florida Statutes, Florida Administrative Code, and recognized best practice in child welfare practice.

- As previously noted, the Department of Children and Families also revised investigative closure disposition types. The issue of investigative findings has been a topic of debate for a number of years and over the course of several administrations in Florida. Experienced and knowledgeable personnel from both the Department of Children and Families and contracted agencies have been divided on the classification of findings of child maltreatment. The feedback obtained from all stakeholders has been fully considered. After thoughtful review of the information and feedback presented, the Department of Children and Families announced that critical elements of the two major positions have been integrated into a solid plan for improving our work with families. A briefing paper submitted by the Office of Family Safety thoroughly explored the value of retaining, modifying or doing away with the *Some Indicator* maltreatment finding. The recommended approach was to modify the descriptor from *Some Indicators* to *Not Substantiated*. The *Not Substantiated* investigation disposition is used and determines that there is not sufficient evidence under State law or policy to conclude that the child has been maltreated or is at risk of being maltreated.
- This approach aligns with the Family Centered Practice Framework by reducing the stigma to families involved with the Department of Children and Families while continuing to recognize concerns about established risk factors. The use of more neutral terminology will help orient both caseworker and family to identify a course of action leading to more positive outcomes.
- This approach is designed to reduce the use of the middle-tier finding through development of more stringent criteria, and guidelines for its application. The reduction in use will significantly increase the importance of the finding as a risk and safety indicator in identification of service needs.
- The *Not Substantiated* finding will have specific criteria and guidelines defining the level of credible evidence required for use of the finding. This will eliminate the former practice of using the *Some Indicator* finding when some degree of credible evidence was present, however minimal. This focused application of the *Not Substantiated* finding will ultimately lead to a reduction in usage that will align Florida with other states using a multi-finding approach.
- For implementation, the Department of Children and Families trained existing staff on the *Not Substantiated* maltreatment type and parameters for use, incorporated the *Not Substantiated* maltreatment type and parameters for use into the pre-service training curriculum for newly hired employees, communicated the modification to stakeholders involved in reviewing and interpreting findings of maltreatment, aligned current policy language to reflect the *Not Substantiated* maltreatment type, and completed our SACWIS change to implement maltreatment finding modification.
- Another strategic area of the casework process that was changed during this period concerned development and training related to clarifying release of child records for children in foster care. Both staff and foster families participating in the Quality Parenting Initiative with Youth Law Center and Eckerd Family Foundation had expressed concerns about the lack of or inconsistent practice of information sharing. Children are the primary beneficiaries when their caregivers are fully informed. As

such, the Department of Children and Families provided clarification related to release of child records for children in foster care as all of us are responsible for the well-being of children in the custody of the Department of Children and Families and as such, we undertake this responsibility in partnership, aware that none of us can be successful by ourselves.

- Children need normal childhoods as well as loving and skillful parenting which honors their loyalty to their biological family. In order to achieve these goals, partners must share information. Simple and concise guidance was provided statewide with the purpose of recognizing the above and to establish consistency with Florida law and administrative code. The general rule is that foster parents must receive records and information that relate to, or assist in, appropriately parenting their foster child except when expressly prohibited by law. Full disclosure or comprehensive sharing of information with the foster parent is required by Florida law and Florida Administrative Code. The benefits of sharing records with foster parents includes that being fully informed helps foster families provide high quality care for children. Further, sharing information helps to build and sustain meaningful partnerships between caseworkers and foster families, provides the foundation for supporting healthy relationships between foster families and biological families and helps to counter misconceptions and set realistic expectations about children and their biological families.
- In 2009, the Florida Legislature added s. 39.00145, F.S., Records Concerning Children. This new section makes explicit the requirement that case records are to be maintained in a complete and accurate manner, and that case records are to be provided, upon request and at no cost, to the child who is the subject of the case record and to the child's caregiver, guardian ad litem, or attorney.
- Florida's FFY 2009 - 2010 APSR noted in the Department of Children and Families' future plan the development of training for child protective investigators related to work with incarcerated pregnant women and their families. In October of 2009, the Florida Department of Corrections (DOC) transferred their pregnant inmate population from Lowell Correctional Institution in Marion County to Broward Correctional Institution in Broward County. In response to this transfer, the DOC contracted with Kendall Regional Hospital, in Miami-Dade County for the birth of these children. Although the children will be in Miami-Dade County at the time of birth, Miami-Dade County and Broward County have developed a policy between the two counties to handle these cases and regional training commenced accordingly.
- In June of 2010, the Department of Children and Families worked cooperatively with field investigative staff and regional legal representatives on the development of training for child protective investigators and Children's Legal Services' (CLS) attorneys on documenting reasonable efforts through use of the in-home child safety assessment instrument and collaborative consultation. Over the past three years, the number of children in out-of-home care has been reduced by over 36% in Florida. Throughout this time, we have had a parallel focus on family engagement. Our goal has been to provide effective services tailored to each family's needs on a case-by-case basis designed to help the family ameliorate concerning issues and

allow them to safely care for their child. In a family preservation practice, robust legal staffings are recognized as more critical than ever and we can no longer utilize our attorneys to simply make a call that there is or is not some minimum “legal sufficiency.” Our Children’s Legal Services teams asked that the attorneys and everyone engaged in these decisions to “dig deeper” into the circumstances that warranted Department of Children and Families involvement with a family, to apply common sense and careful analysis as well as legal standards, and to make a determination of the safety and well-being of each child. Our attorneys are involved whenever they can contribute to resolving a difficult case, but are also clearly involved when court action seems warranted. Ultimately, the information directed to our teams is that it is not necessary to consult Children’s Legal Services when the child protective investigator and a supervisor have made a decision that legal intervention is not necessary or desirable, but that these services are available as a partner when needed.

Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse

- Child-on-child refers to any sexual behavior between children which occurs without consent, without equality, or as a result of coercion, as defined in Chapter 39, Florida Statutes. These behaviors range from non-contact sexual behavior such as making obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and the showing or taking of lewd photographs to varying degrees of direct sexual contact, such as frottage, fondling, digital penetration, rape, fellatio, sodomy, and various other sexually aggressive acts. However, based on the legal definition of *caregiver*, a child-on-child sexual abuse situation does not meet the criteria for acceptance as an intake for investigation, because we would have no jurisdiction over the alleged perpetrator. However, Chapter 39, F.S., mandates that Hotline counselors assess any call of child-on-child sexual abuse that is received. Based on the alleged offender/aggressor child’s behaviors and age, Hotline counselors will initiate the least intrusive, most appropriate intervention such as a special conditions child-on-child sexual abuse prevention referral or *parent needs assistance* referral.
- Extensive policy development, clarification and training has been conducted with regard to the Department of Children and Families’ prevention efforts for reports to Florida’s Abuse Hotline that do not meet the statutory criteria for abuse, abandonment, or neglect investigation but the Hotline counselor identifies the family may be in need of services, many of which include the special condition of child-on-child sexual abuse. The Department of Children and Families’ special condition referrals do not constitute willful abuse, neglect or abandonment as stated in subsection 65C-30.001(132), F.A.C., and are not investigations nor in any way should be used adversely against children and families.
- A review of child-on-child sexual abuse through a workgroup established by the Task Force on Fostering Success was accomplished successfully. There were 84 recommendations outlined through the Task Force which impacted service provision areas to include family centered practice, trauma informed care, quality parenting initiatives; practice areas to include child protective services, case management,

quality assurance and improvement, Department of Children and Families policy; and other partner state agency practices to include the Department of Law Enforcement, Department of Education, Department of Health and Agency for Health Care Administration. A number of strategic planning workgroups have been formed and are actively working on a number of objectives and measureable outcomes related to these recommendations and this important issue.

- A Child-on-Child Strategic Plan has been designated to an interagency workgroup within the Task Force on Fostering Success that will begin to review child serving systems in order to make additional recommendations for addressing Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse and Children with Sexual Behavior Problems.
- In the Fall of 2010 the Department of Children and Families also led a series of web-based trainings on effective safety planning and related practice concepts of assessing risk and imminent safety threats. Over 1,000 staff participated in these web-based events statewide.
- The Department of Children and Families, through the support of Casey Family Programs continues to participate in a Casey “Breakthrough Series” initiative focusing on the evidence base and practice considerations of Signs of Safety (SOS) and Structured Decision Making (SDM). Florida’s CFSR-PIP Innovation Sites are participating in the SDM/SOS series discussion, as well as, a number of other state child welfare systems from around the country.

Collaboration

- One of the most important collaborative efforts the Family Safety Program Office directs each year are the ‘Circuit Breakouts’ taking place at the annual statewide Dependency Summit which is comprised of key stakeholders from all segments of the child welfare continuum, including the judges, attorneys, Guardians Ad Litem, child protective investigators, community-based care case managers, Department of Health child protection teams, law enforcement personnel, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health advocates and program offices, and even foster care parents in attendance. During each year’s breakout sessions, personnel from all disciplines meet (two hours/day X 2 days) to develop action plans on how to improve services to families within their geographical jurisdictions. Each year a singular thematic topic is chosen for discussion. This year’s work focused on ensuring that trauma informed care principles informed our child welfare practice from the very first knock on the family’s door through case closure. Social workers, judges, attorneys, and foster parents served as “sounding boards” to the other disciplines as each group proposed changes in how their particular segment of the child welfare continuum related to families.
- The Family Safety Program Office also continues to work closely with the Substance Abuse Program Office, Governor’s Office of Drug Control, and the Department of Health’s, Child Protection Team Prevention and Interventions Division to develop and present in-service training on ‘Drug Endangered Children’ for child protection staff throughout Florida. Over the past year four separate training initiatives in this

area were designed and presented: *'Medical and Psychological Aspects of Drug Endangered Children'*, *'Designing Appropriate Interventions for Substance Abusers'*, *'Safety and Family Assessment Factors'*, and *'Drug Endangered Children-Strategic and Motivational Interviewing'*.

Program Support

- The Family Safety and Refugee Services Program Offices continue to work closely to support ongoing efforts to intervene in Human Trafficking throughout Florida. These mutual efforts include:
 - ◆ Co-hosting a statewide 'Summit on Human Trafficking in Florida' in Orlando October 2009;
 - ◆ Developing a Human Trafficking pre-service Child Welfare Training curriculum highlighting assessment and intervention efforts in child protection,
 - ◆ Designing a dedicated website on Human Trafficking accessible for both child welfare workers and the general public via Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice website,
 - ◆ Development of three (3) online course modules on Human Trafficking accessible on the dedicated Human Trafficking website along with state policies, procedures, and 'job aids' for child welfare staff working with trafficked victims, and
 - ◆ Providing direct access to electronic investigative case files for the Office of Refugee Services human trafficking coordinator to enhance provision and coordination of services.
- In January 2010 the Family Safety Program Office coordinated with the University of South Florida Child Welfare Training Academy to produce a series of statewide trainings on *'Teaming With Families'*. This practice initiative was separated into two components. The initial trainings were 'train-the-trainer' sessions with the goal of expanding the number of certified trainers in the state with the capacity to train field staff on Family Group Decision Making, Family Group Conferencing, Family Team Conferencing, Team Decision Making and Permanency Teaming Process. Subsequent trainings were directed at child protective investigators and case managers and reinforced that "teaming" activities can and should occur throughout the life of the case and are not solely precipitated by major crisis events. Teaming should be a regular, integral component of various aspects of casework practice.

Future Plans

- File a Notice of Rule Development to create a new rule section under Chapter 65C, Florida Administrative Code. The new administrative rule will combine, clarify and enhance requirements relating to the home studies and criminal and background screening procedures from currently implemented code under investigations, out-of-home care, adoptions, licensing, and ICPC,
- File a Notice of Rule Development to revise Chapter 65C-29, Florida Administrative Code relating to Child Protective Investigations. The purpose of the rule revision will be to align the rule with recent statutory and policy changes,
- Updating operating procedure and provide training related to outlining criminal background screening, storage, dissemination, and security of information for investigations, placement and releases,
- Develop training for child protective investigators related to safety planning,
- Remote data capture development and implementation, and
- Structured decision making piloted instruments in innovation sites
- Child-on-child sexual abuse strategic planning committee and workgroups to implement training, policy, and practice recommendations where appropriate,
- Evaluate the child protective services investigations units workloads with the goal of improving child welfare practice, and
- Develop tribal-state interagency agreement in areas of child protection investigations, transfer of cases to the Tribe, abuse report, acceptance and routing, and database access.

Foster and Adoption Parent Recruitment

2009 - 2010 Update

- Foster parent recruitment activities continue to be driven by the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI). This work, led by the Youth Law Center and Eckerd Family Foundation, has expanded across the state and involves 14 of the 20 community-based care lead agencies. The goal was to develop and implement strategies built on the community-based system of care. Rather than focus on a uniform statewide initiative, the approach was individualized so that technical assistance was provided at the lead agency level and throughout the system of care at the local level.
- QPI employed branding and re-branding concepts in the recruitment of foster parents. Lead agency groups (comprised of foster parents, case managers, investigators, licensing staff, attorneys, guardians ad litem, etc.) were led through a series of training and facilitated sessions to create the brand of foster parenting for each lead agency system of care. Each of the lead agency brands contained the following major tenets: respected partners, nurturing children, supporting families, and strengthening communities.
- After the QPI brand was created, the agencies used the brand to develop and/or revise their recruitment materials and presentations. Foster family support and/or retention were also a major part of the QPI project. In order for the brand to have meaning and credibility with the community and with foster parents, agencies must have an array of services to support quality parenting and the local brand. Agencies determined priority strategies to ensure their practice supported their brands. Routine inclusion of foster parents in all aspects of decision making was a common theme. Work with birth parents was also a recurring theme. This work crosses all socio-economic, racial and ethnic boundaries.
- A new contract was procured by the Office of Adoption and Child Protection to renew the adoption recruitment campaign implemented last reporting period. The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection used the 18 month plan to develop and implement a five year plan with objectives to promote adoption of foster children. Recruitment efforts with the national adoption exchange, *Children Awaiting Parents*, are continuing for the fourth year in a row.

Accomplishments

- Agencies were in varying stages of maturity in terms of their implementation of the Quality Parenting Initiative. In late 2007 early 2008, QPI started out as a project to recruit foster families to meet the needs of children in care and to improve placement stability for children in foster care. It evolved into a broader project integrating practice across various systems to ensure foster families are provided the support they need to provide high quality care to children. People often expressed this as "treating children in foster care as if they were your own children".

- The first agencies to participate in QPI (Hillsborough Kids, Big Bend Community-Based Care, and Community-Based Care of Seminole) have made their recruitment materials and presentations consistent with their brands. Each of these agencies has made changes to their foster parent preparation and training process. This included change of curricula, development of agency specific training, and hiring of foster parent trainers. These agencies have served as mentors to their sister agencies and have been generous in sharing lessons learned and resources.
- The next group of agencies included Child and Family Connections of Palm Beach, Eckerd Community Alternatives, Heartland for Children, and Family Services of Metro Orlando. These agencies have focused on engaging foster parents in routine decision making and establishing means for connecting foster families and birth families. Partnerships with Children's Legal Services have resulted in focus on more effective and sensitive transitioning of children to relatives in several circuits. Heartland for Children attorneys and staff partnered to develop a court order template to include a thoughtful transition plan. This template was shared with all other circuits as a model.
- The third group of agencies included Kids Central, Community Partnerships, Safe Children Coalition, Children's Network of Southwest Florida, Brevard Family Partnership, and United for Families. These agencies were at the beginning phases of action plan development at the conclusion of this reporting period. Finally, Our Kids of Miami-Dade was planning to begin the process in October 2010.
- Partnership with the Florida State Foster Adoptive Parent Association (FSFAPA) was strengthened during the period. Several officers of the state Association were active in their local QPI initiatives. This led to increased teaming with foster parents as trainers and providers of technical assistance. During the FSFAPA state conference in June, approximately ten foster parents were videotaped sharing their stories. At the close of the reporting period, the videos were being edited to use for recruitment and training purposes.
- Several agencies joined together in August 2009 and presented a workshop on successful foster parent mentoring programs at the annual Dependency Summit. Foster parents and staff presented ideas for replicating programs already established at their agencies. There has been and continues to be significant interest in mentoring across the state. Foster parents help to teach, model, inspire, and grow through these programs.
- Additional recruitment tools created under contract with Ron Sachs Communications last reporting period were purchased and disseminated this reporting period during the Dependency Summit in August 2010. A statewide Association of Heart Galleries was created to coordinate the efforts of the fifteen Heart Galleries across the state. A direct support organization, The Trust for Florida's Children, Inc., was established to raise money from private foundations and individuals and to submit requests for grants from the federal government, state or political subdivisions to assist with funding recruitment activities. The statewide website, beginning August 2010, is now updated weekly based on data entered by adoption case managers into the statewide database, Florida Safe Families Network.

Collaboration

- A key component of the Quality Parenting Initiative was the inclusive process for building and implementing the local brand of foster parenting. This resulted in collaboration in multiple ways. Each of the QPI teams included representatives from local systems of care including foster parents, youth, adoptive parents, recruiters, licensing, case management, mental health, Guardians ad Litem, investigations, sheriff's office, child care, etc. This broad participation helped the teams to develop individualized approaches to address problem solving issues in their specific support and retention needs.
- At the state level, partners included the Florida State Foster Adoptive Parent Association, Children's Legal Services, Substance Abuse/Mental Health Program Offices, Family Safety Quality Assurance, and the Center for Advancement of Child Welfare Practice. These efforts resulted in clarification of policy and integration of practice. Some examples included dissemination of practice guidance on moving young children, sharing of records with foster families, and normalcy implementation.
- The Department of Children and Families has collaborated with the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection and local planning teams to establish objectives within the Governor's Five Year Plan that focus on promotion of adoption using child specific and targeted recruitment activities.

Future Plans

- The Department of Children and Families is pleased that the Eckerd Family Foundation is continuing to sponsor the Quality Parenting Initiative. Several projects are underway and expected to continue throughout FFY 2010-2011. These include:
 - ◆ Passport to Quality Parenting: an experiential training for foster parent preparation. Modules are being developed that are consistent with the QPI brand and rely heavily on shadowing/observation activities for the prospective foster parents.
 - ◆ Just in Time web-based training: a means for delivering in-service training to foster families via the web. The intent is to supplement the pre-service described above with training when it's most needed by the foster family. This might be right after placement or when a particular challenge arises. A website has been established at: www.qpiflorida.com
 - ◆ Social Marketing for Foster Parent Recruitment: an experiment with Facebook, Twitter, etc to explore other means for recruiting and networking among foster families. A branding consultant is assisting in developing approaches for lead agencies to try.
 - ◆ Development of tools for peer to peer quality assessment of foster families: a set of questionnaires developed with Youth Law Center and child development researchers to determine quality of care provided to children on a daily basis. The questionnaires are expected to be ready for testing in 2011.

Foster Care and Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA)

Foster Care

2009 - 2010 Update

- Sibling separation continues to be a performance improvement goal in Florida. There was/is recognition that multiple strategies must be employed to address the concern. One strategy in Florida was - Camp Sib, which is a weekend camping experience for youth in foster care who are separated from their siblings to spend time together in an environment to promote bonding and attachment. In May 2010, approximately 100 children of various sized sibling groups were able to spend time together in a wilderness camp setting. With continued funding allowing for the camp to continue, youth look forward to this event all year long and are presented with beautiful pictures of their brothers and/or sisters as keepsakes.
- Florida successfully completed the third year of the Florida Youth Leadership Academy (FYLA). This program was designed as a leadership program for older children in foster care who had the opportunity to work one-on-one with a mentor during and after the program. The youth participated as a group in a statewide community project and skill-building sessions that focused on maintaining healthy relationships, employment, and education. Participants took these skills back to their community taking on a mentoring role through advocating for foster youth in their communities.

Accomplishments

- As part of Florida's SACWIS system, the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), a fully electronic, uniform format has been developed for completing multiple types of home studies, including licensed foster home studies. Called the Unified Home Study, this functionality provides staff the ability to create and save a progressive home study that can be amended and updated in the FSFN system, as needed. The format provides the capacity to create relative, non-relative, foster care, adoption, Interstate Compact on Placement of Children and non-custodial parent home studies. The Unified Home Study is designed to create an electronic home study that can be amended over time to streamline the placement process, improve the effectiveness and quality of home studies, avoid duplication of work, and that has the ability to be stored in the FSFN system for use and access by multiple staff statewide. The Unified Home Study functionality was released as part of the second phase of SACWIS development in 2008 with full implementation occurring during 2009 and 2010.
- During this period, the Remote Capture Device was also developed and launched to facilitate onsite documentation of visits with families.
- Foster parent recruitment activities have also been previously identified and included in discussion found in the Quality Parenting Initiative in Chapter 6.

Collaboration

- The reduction of children ages 5 and under in shift care placements derived from the efforts of Dr. Charles Zeanah to help staff understand the adverse effects of young children being placed in group home settings which utilize rotating shift assignments for employees that serve as primary caretakers for children in care. In collaboration with our Community-Based Care providers, the number of children in shift care placements decreased from 81 children in February 2009 to 35 children in September 2010.
- Data on this collaborative effort can be viewed on the Department of Children and Families' website at:
http://dashboard.dcf.state.fl.us/index.cfm?page=preview&purpose_id=sit&mcode=m0760&fiscal=2009

Program Support

- The Department of Children and Families conducted a series of statewide webinars in February 2010 for staff utilizing the Unified Home Study. The presentation was recorded and is available for staff to view on the *Florida Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice*. The Center website provides multiple guidance documents on the Unified Home Study, including electronic, visual demonstrations. Onsite technical assistance visits were also made to assist staff in utilizing this new functionality.
- Technical Assistance efforts through monthly statewide calls remain an ongoing forum to update case managers, supervisors, and other child welfare professionals about policy changes, new initiatives, share best practices, and provide guidance as needed.

Future Plans

- Train and clarify practice of the release of child records for children in foster care;
- Use the current outcome measures in local provider contracts related to young adult and youth receiving independent living services to establish baseline data.; and,
- Continue the Camp Sib and Florida Youth Leadership Academy Programs.

Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA)

2009 - 2010 Update

- A new 12 month project, Permanent Connections, was initiated by the Office of Family Safety with a goal of reducing the number of youth aging out of foster care with no permanent connections to an adult. Ten Community-Based Care Lead Agencies volunteered to join the project and training and technical assistance was provided at each of these sites during the reporting period. Each Community-Based Care Lead Agency identified 10 - 20 youth with a goal of APPLA for the project and participating agencies received both onsite training and case specific technical assistance as a result of this project.
- The Department of Children and Families has also continued its partnership with Casey Family Programs who are implementing Permanency Roundtables (PRT) in three sites across the state (Jacksonville, Gainesville and Ft. Lauderdale). The PRT project includes staff training / technical assistance and direct case consultation through a highly structured case staffing model, to explore and expand permanency options and opportunities for youth with case plan goals of APPLA. The PRT project will continue through SFY 2010 - 2011 and plans to expand to three additional sites (TBD) during SFY 2011 - 2012.
- The Department of Children and Families has also continued its partnership with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to provide youth involved in the child welfare system Home and Community-Based Waiver (for Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities) services. Current Florida law allows the prioritization of youth who are dependent in child welfare to receive priority consideration for enrollment into APD programs.

Accomplishments

- Nine of the ten Community-Based Care Lead Agencies who joined the Permanency Roundtable project has had specific training completed. The focus of the training and technical assistance was to teach counselors to expect a teen to say "I don't want to be adopted" and learn how to respond appropriately, use casework tools to "dig" into the case files for potential adults with current or prior connections, and conduct a comprehensive assessment of needed services for the youth and caregiver. Two of the children have had their goals changed to adoption with potential adoptive parents identified.
- The Department of Children and Families, working in partnership with its Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities completed individual case staffings for all youth who were on the waitlist for APD – waiver services. Over 300 multidisciplinary staffings were completed statewide during the reporting period with the intent of identifying services needs, potential referrals and options for the delivery of such services. APD continues to enroll youth who qualify for MR/DD services who are aging out of the dependency system under the monthly "crisis" enrollment process.

- In June 2010, the Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) entered into an agreement to enroll ten children per month into the APD waiver program whose permanency could be achieved through adoption, reunification or permanent guardianship. In October 2010, this agreement was formalized through a signed interagency agreement, and to date, over 60 children have been enrolled into the APD waiver program as a result of this partnership.

Collaboration

- The Guardian ad Litem programs across the state as well as the Director of Children's Legal Services have collaborated with the Family Safety Program Office in engaging local Guardians ad Litem and attorneys to attend the Permanent Connections training with case managers. Attendance by these two groups has assisted in having youth hear the same message—having a permanent connection to an adult before existing foster care will reduce the risks of poor outcomes for foster youth, especially homelessness. Casey Family Services has collaborated with the Department of Children and Families in conducting a similar project with three Community-Based Care Lead Agencies during this reporting period. It is called the Florida Permanency Roundtable Project. The focus is on the same population of youth—youth with a permanency goal of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement.

Program Support

- A teen Lifebook has been purchased by the Office of Family Safety for each of the teens in the Permanent Connections project. The Lifebook provides an outline and guidance for staff in their discussions with youth about their birth families and foster care experience. In addition, a monthly conference call is held with the case managers assigned to the identified youth in the project. The Director of Family Safety has also required a monthly update for the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families.

Future Plans

- The two projects regarding youth with a permanency goal of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement, the Florida Permanency Roundtable Project and the Permanent Connections Project will be continued. Additionally, through the ongoing support of Casey Family Programs, the Permanency Roundtable Project will be continued through SFY 2010 - 2011 and expanded to three additional sites during SFY 2011 - 2012.

Monthly Caseworker Visit Data and State Plan Requirements

In May 2006, the Department of Children and Families promulgated administrative rules that established requirements and standards for conducting quality and timely home visits. The Department of Children and Families revised the minimum requirements for caseworker contacts with children so that a face-to-face contact with the child occurred no less than once every 30 days. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 19)

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Department of Children and Families received additional funds under Title IV-B, subpart 2 to support caseworker visits with children who were in foster care. The state used these additional funds to further enhance the quality and frequency of the visits with children. The funds provided the opportunity to contact a child more often in a setting that was most favorable for the child, allowed the caseworker to focus on pertinent decisions, and allowed the child to become involved in decisions. It also afforded the flexibility for multiple staff and service providers involved with the child and family to make visits with the child and family, as appropriate or delegated in the case plan.
- Community-Based Care Lead Agencies submitted their local training plans for existing staff and new hire training. An analysis of these training plans indicated that interviewing, quality visiting and other engagement strategies are a frequent area targeted for staff development. The new hire training curriculum is in every staff development plan and the topic of visitation and engagement is a large part of this curriculum.
- The federal 90 percent target for monthly visitation must be achieved by October 1, 2011. To meet the federal target and deadline, Florida established the following target timeframes:
 - ◆ 2008 - 80% each month until September 30, 2008;
 - ◆ 2009 - 82% each month until September 30, 2009;
 - ◆ 2010 - 85% each month until September 30, 2010; and
 - ◆ 2011 - 90% as of September 30, 2011.

Accomplishments

- As reported in October 2010, the percentage of children seen each month in FFY 2009 - 2010 was 92% (up from 90% in 2008/09), with 98% of those being seen in their home. The data on caseworker visits was obtained using the federal methodology.

Collaboration

- The Department of Children and Families negotiated strict contract performance requirements with the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and challenged each one to develop local improvement plans. To assist Lead Agencies in meeting their goals, the Department of Children and Families created management reports for caseworkers, supervisors, and leadership that were posted on the Department of Children and Families' internet site and helped the Lead Agencies to gauge their performance.
- In addition, the Department of Children and Families in conjunction with community partners and stakeholders:
 - ◆ monitored and shared federal measure performance data and made it available on the Department of Children and Families' website at <http://dcfdashboard.dcf.state.fl.us/>;
 - ◆ emphasized through the pre-service curriculum the importance of the worker's relationship with the family, and of frequent and quality contact for positive outcomes; <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/trcurriculum/Forms/AllItems.aspx>
 - ◆ offered web-based and classroom in-service training session regarding quality visits with children using materials available through the national resource centers; provided in-service regional training events on family centered practice also continued to address quality visits; (CFSP QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 2) <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/resource/trainer.aspx>
 - ◆ continued implementation and revision of the redesigned quality assurance (QA) system; redesign of the QA system ensured uniform performance standards that measured the quality of service delivery in the local systems of care; QA standards on visitation focused on frequency and quality of visits; quarterly QA reviews provided timely and meaningful information for business management and local areas to develop improvement actions based upon the findings. <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/qa/default.aspx>
 - ◆ reviewed QA case review data on a periodic basis to determine ongoing quality performance and provided information to Regional staff for practice improvements; posted QA reports and data on the QA web site within the Center's web portal; <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/qa/default.aspx>

Program Support

- The Department of Children and Families shared best practices and technical assistance through conference calls, training bulletins, monitoring reports, and meetings and made onsite technical assistance available, as requested (CFSP, Goal # 2: Objective 5: QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 19).

- The Department of Children and Families redesigned its child welfare quality assurance (QA) system. The redesigned case management standards included frequency of visits and the quality of the visits between the caseworker and children in care.

Future Plans

- Conduct in-service training that emphasizes the importance of the worker's relationship and the frequency and quality of contacts with the family to create positive outcomes;
- Monitor periodically and share performance data on federal measures, identify gaps and develop improvement strategies as appropriate;
- Purchase hand held devices to assist investigations/casework staff to more effectively meet the documentation requirements; and
- Conduct statewide technical assistance conference calls with field staff.

Timely Home Studies and Reporting Data

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) was developed by the Council of State Governments (CSG) to enable member states to uniformly address the interstate placement of children. The current Compact has been in effect since the early 1960's. A new ICPC to modernize the process and address uniformity, compliance, and other issues has been created and adopted by eleven states, including Florida. The new ICPC will take effect when it is adopted by 35 states. The new ICPC creates an interstate commission that can set uniform rules to process ICPC requests the same way in every state, provide a forum for review of decisions by states, and a mechanism for enforcement of ICPC provisions.
- The Department of Children and Families conducted home studies requested by other states for the placement of children in Florida. The totals below represent this reporting period:
- Incentive met: Of the 2210 home studies requested by another state, Florida completed 525 or 23.76% of the home studies within thirty days or less from receipt.
- Completed Successfully: Of the 2210 home studies requested by another state, Florida completed 541 (24.48%) of the home studies in more than thirty days but less than sixty days of receipt.
- Sanctions: Of the 2210 home studies requested by another state, Florida took longer than 60 days to complete 936 (43.35%) of them.
- There is no record of any requests received during the first 45 days for an extension from 60 to 75 days as permitted under the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of

Children between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009. The ability to request an extension under the Act expired on September 30, 2008.

- Withdrawn/Returned Requests: Of the 2210 home studies requested by another state, 206 (9.41%) were withdrawn or returned.

Accomplishments

- Interstate Compact modernization represented a significant proportion of Florida's permanency efforts, by streamlining processes through automation. The ICPC processing system within the State of Florida completed its conversion to electronic transmittal and web-based data transmission during this reporting period. The goal of the modernization project was to eliminate transmittal of paper ICPC files through the mail, reduce the number of persons who handle a file, and shorten the time spent in the approval process.

Collaboration

- The chief of the Department of Children and Families' ICPC Unit is the national president of the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (AAICPC). During his two year term (2009-2011), the work plan of the Association includes re-writing several of the Regulations adopted by the Compact Administrators that govern day to day ICPC processing, creation of a web-based state page information system, passage of the new ICPC, and development and implementation of a uniform national ICPC database. Toward that end, during the 2010 annual business meeting of the AAICPC, two regulations were passed as well as a resolution to seek a national electronic ICPC database. The Deputy Compact Administrator for Florida is an at large member of the national executive board and has served on several of the standing committees of the association.
- Florida has given presentations to the Inter-jurisdictional Adoptions Workgroup of the Children's Bureau, the Emory University College of Law, and the annual conference of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys on ICPC reform in addition to numerous presentations and webinars within the state.

Program Support

- The Department of Children and Families shared best practices and technical assistance through conference calls, webinar training, monitoring reports and meetings and made onsite technical assistance available as requested.

Future Plans

- During the 2010-2011 year, Florida will continue to share its efforts with other states by 1) providing technical assistance regarding modernizing and automating the ICPC process, 2) leading the national ICPC association through monthly executive

committee calls and chairing the annual business meeting, 3) chairing and participating in committee work to re-draft ICPC Regulations 3 and 7 (regular and priority ICPC requests) and creating a regulation governing private adoption ICPC requests, 4) finalizing the national state pages website for public access to ICPC information for every state, 5) updating the national ICPC training materials, 6) seeking national support for an electronic ICPC data base, 7) working with representatives of the Interstate Compact on Juveniles to enter into a memorandum of understanding between the two compacts, and 8) entering into border agreements with the states of Alabama and Georgia for more timely processing of ICPC requests between the states.

Licensing

Licensing continues to evolve by fostering an atmosphere of partnership between the Department of Children and Families, Community-Based Care lead agency providers and foster parents. Efforts are being made to include the foster parents and Community-Based Care Lead Agency providers in decision making processes when appropriate. Understanding the delicate balance between child safety and rule provisions, when at all possible, attempts are being made to offer community-based care lead agency's flexibility in rule implementation. Avenues have been created to allow foster parents and other community stakeholders to present questions of concern around the issue of normalcy and children placed in licensed care.

2009 - 2010 Update

- Florida has created an online data warehouse, the Document Repository Vault (Doc Vault) for the storage of documents related to licensing and other monitoring activities. The Doc Vault permits regional licensing staff to review materials for relicensing without an onsite visit to the agency.
- Florida has issued its first Master License to an accredited Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with multiple locations within the state. The Master License alleviates multiple licensing visits to satellite offices that operate under the same agency. With a Master licensed, accredited CPAs with multiple locations are relicensed once annually, regardless of the number of satellite locations.
- The Department of Health no longer provides pool safety inspections for family foster homes, as a result, Florida has developed web-based pool safety training for Community-Based Care Lead Agency foster home licensing staff; plans are to offer a modified version of this training to foster parents.
- Florida is in the process of developing online health and sanitation training for foster parents; this is an effort to promote normalcy in family foster homes.

Accomplishments

- In August 2010, the Department of Children and Families in association with the Center for Advancement of Child Welfare Practice, created a website, “Ask the Czar,” this website is a venue that allows questions concerning normalcy to be directed to the State Director of Family Safety. The creation of this website provides access to leadership and has received positive reviews from the state foster and adoptive parent association.
- In July 2010, the Department of Children and Families hosted a pool safety webinar for licensing staff around the state. This webinar provided valuable information to those responsible for the licensure of family foster homes. Staff was given training on the specific elements needed to ensure the safety of children in homes with swimming pools, real life photos of homes with pools were used to train staff on how to immediately recognize and eliminate safety hazards.
- The Youth Law Center, Department of Children and Families staff and community stakeholders partnered to revise the bilateral service agreement. The new agreement is called “Partnership Document” and was presented to executive leadership on December 13, 2010 by Carol Shauffer of the Youth Law Center and Mary “Dee” Richter, Deputy Director of the Family Safety Program Office.

Collaboration

The Department of Children and Families has created a policy council that consists of Department of Children and Families staff, Community-Based Care Lead Agency providers and foster parents to work on the revision of Chapters 65C-13, 14 and 15, F.A.C.,. The process is currently underway for the revision of Chapter 65C-13, F.A.C.,. The licensing group has been able to work together in a cohesive manner to address issues that impact the community-based care lead agency’s ability to function smoothly within their system of care and issues that create difficulty for the foster parents’ during the licensure process.

Program Support

- The Department of Children and Families continues to collaborate with the Statewide Foster Parent Association. The Department of Children and Families provides support to the Statewide Foster Parent Association. One such example is an annual conference specifically for foster parents. The Department of Children and Families made financial assistance available to foster parents to attend the conference by sponsoring 20 families.
- The Department of Children and Families continued to provide technical assistance and address questions regarding policy implementation and interpretation through monthly conference calls with licensing staff. The licensing specialists were encouraged to set the agenda for the call, in order to specifically address their concerns.

Future Plans

- Rule revision for Chapters 65C13, 14, and 15, F.A.C., governing licensure requirements for foster and group care facilities;
- Continued monthly conference calls with the regional licensing staff;
- Empowerment and inclusion of regional staff and foster parents in the decision making process; and
- Revision of the bilateral services agreement.

Adoption

The Executive Office of Adoption and Child Protection

2009 - 2010 Update

- The 2007 Legislature created, within the Executive Office of the Governor, Office of Adoption and Child Protection. In addition, the 2007 Legislature created the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet charged with developing and implementing a “shared and cohesive vision using integrated services to improve child, youth and family outcomes...” An Advisory Council of 32 members was established with members representing child service and advocacy agencies, parents and community stakeholders. In addition, twenty local planning teams were established, one in each judicial circuit, to assess the quality, quantity, and availability of community services related to promoting adoption of foster children and supporting adoptive families after adoptions are finalized. The Advisory Council met twice and the local planning teams held monthly conference calls. The focus of both groups was to utilize the approved 18 month plan as an outline to develop a five year plan for prevention of child abuse by strengthening families, promoting adoption of foster children and support of adoptive families after finalization.

Accomplishments

- The 18 month plan on child abuse prevention and permanency was implemented in January 2009 and the Office of Adoption and Child Protection monitored the progress of the plan with the twenty local planning teams. The efforts and results of this work continued through the first six months of 2010 and laid the foundation for development of the five year plan. The five year plan was implemented on July 1, 2010. The following were accomplished during this reporting period:
 - ◆ A second contract with Ron Sachs Communications was procured and a second round of the “Explore Adoption” recruitment campaign was developed and implemented including media spots for television and radio; tool kits were disseminated to all agencies to use for their own individualized recruitment efforts; and a “Life Book” for young children was created and

disseminated for use by adoption staff and adoptive parents. The statewide recruitment campaign has significantly increased the number of calls from prospective adoptive parents;

- ◆ A statewide Florida Heart Gallery Association was established with a goal to provide collaboration and coordination between the fifteen Heart Galleries across Florida;
- ◆ A customer service protocol was established and incorporated in all of the Community-Based Care Lead Agency contracts. The customer service protocol focuses on staff providing a response within three business days when potential adoptive families inquire about a waiting child and adoptive families request post adoption services after finalization.; and
- ◆ A direct support organization, The Trust for Florida's Children, Inc., was established to raise money from private foundations and individuals and to submit requests for grants from the federal government, state or political subdivisions.

Collaboration

- The Office of Adoption and Child Protection continues to engage and collaborate with staff of the Department of Children and Families at the Regional and Circuit level, Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and their sub-contracted providers, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Health and the Office of Children's Mental Health Services. These collaborative efforts are evident by the diverse members who belong to the various workgroups who are working on the Governor's Five Year Plan. In addition, a statewide workgroup was established that includes faith leaders from a wide variety of denominations. This faith-based workgroup is working on three objectives in the Governor's Five Year Plan that address how the faith-based communities can assist with child abuse prevention efforts, promotion of adoption of children from foster care and support of adoptive families after finalization.

Program Support

- The Adoption Program Manager and Central Office data staff continues to be integral partners in providing adoption data, adoption research documents, and policies and best practices to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, local planning teams, and the statewide advisory council. The Adoption Program Manager also serves as the lead on six workgroups for the objectives related to promotion and support of adoptive families as documented in the Governor's Five Year Plan.

Future Plans

- A monitoring and evaluation plan is being developed in order to assess the progress being made by each Circuit regarding the objectives in the Governor's Five Year Plan. As soon as the plan is reviewed and approved by the Advisory Council in December 2010 and January 2011, the evaluation plan will be implemented.

Adoption Incentives

2009 - 2010 Update

- *Adoption Incentive Payments.* Florida received an incentive award of \$5.7 million for the adoptions finalized in FFY 2009. The Department of Children and Families exceeded the number of adoptions in all three adoption incentive categories over our baseline numbers of 2007. All of the incentive dollars are being used to assist with our significant maintenance adoption subsidy budget because of completing almost 17,000 adoptions in the last five years.
- *Adoption Assistance.* There was no change in Florida's maintenance adoption assistance during this reporting period.
- *State Employee Adoption Benefit Program.* Section 409.1663, F.S., provided a lump sum benefit to qualified applicants who adopted special needs or non-special needs children was repealed during the last legislative session. Repeal of the law was effective July 1, 2010. In addition, there was no funding appropriated for the qualified applicants who applied during the open enrollment period in 2009. The program was funded with state general revenue dollars.

Collaboration

- The Office of Family Safety data unit provides error reports related to our AFCARS federal reporting and the Adoption Program Manager collaborates with the Community-Based Care lead agencies and their subcontract provider staff to correct and make our adoption finalization data accurate.

Program Support

- A brochure that describes the benefits available to adoptive parents who adopt children from foster care was updated during the reporting period to include a description of the federal adoption tax credit and the repeal of the State Employee Adoption Benefit Program.

Future Plans

- The Adoption Program Manager and Adoption Specialist in the Office of Family Safety are developing and planning to provide several webinars to staff regarding documentation of adoption data in our SACWIS system, FSFN. The upcoming

statewide training in May 2011 will provide a forum to emphasize the importance of adoption staff participating in all three webinars during the upcoming months.

- All incentive dollars received in the future will be applied to the subsidy budget.

Adoption Training/Technical Assistance

2009 - 2010 Update

- Training and technical assistance was provided by the Adoption Program Manager on topics such as preparation of a child for adoption and the necessary child specific recruitment activities needed to successfully recruit an adoptive family for a teen. The audiences included adoption case managers, permanency specialists, Guardians ad Litem and Children Legal Services attorneys. The “100 Longest Waiting Teens” project has continued with casework tools for conducting a comprehensive review of each teen’s case file were provided and case specific consultations were also conducted.

Accomplishments

- During the reporting period, another seven youth of the 100 Longest Waiting Teens were placed and/or finalized in an adoptive family. Another project, Permanent Connections, was initiated to assist staff with youth who have a goal of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement. Seventeen adoption competency trainers have conducted training with 125 mental health professionals and 100 child welfare staff.
- Florida has also partnered with Casey Family Programs to implement Permanency Roundtables in three areas around the state (Gainesville, Jacksonville and Ft. Lauderdale), although this initiative targets specifically youth with case plan goals of APPLA, the technical assistance and direct case consultation received through the Permanency Roundtables has been instrumental in assisting child welfare staff in understanding the possibilities for older youth adoptions as viable case plan options.

Collaboration

The Department of Children and Families continues to partner with its Community-Based Care Lead Agencies to provide ongoing training, professional development and case consultative assistance. Through a contract with Daniel Memorial, the Department of Children and Families provides ongoing support to adoption staff including adoption case managers, adoption supervisors and adoption specialists. For one of these statewide adoption training events, Dr. Barbara Tremetiere was the keynote speaker. Over 100 adoption staff attended the two day training. This training forum also included a third day with a focus on adoptive parents, with at least 25 parents in attendance.

Program Support

- Technical assistance is provided by the two adoption specialists in the Family Safety Office via four conference calls per month. One conference call is for post adoption services counselors, one call is for the homefinders/recruiters, another call is for adoption supervisors and specialists and the fourth call is for the adoption competency trainers.

Future Plans

- A workgroup was established in June 2010 to make necessary revisions to the adoption administrative rule with a goal of completing the revisions by January 2011. Regional trainings will be conducted as soon as the rule process is completed. In addition, Teen Lifebooks will be purchased in January 2011 and disseminated to adoption staff. The Teen Lifebooks provide staff with an outline and guidance for what information must be “pulled” from the youths’ case records. The adoption competency trainers are planning to conduct training with over 100 more mental health professionals and to develop and implement a 10 - 12 hour adoption competency curriculum for educational professionals.

Post-Adoption Services

2009 - 2010 Update

- Two new adoptive parent support groups were established and at least one staff person with each Community-Based Care Lead Agency has been designated to provide post adoption services. Seventeen of the 28 designated staff is providing post adoption services as their full time job responsibility. The provision of post adoption services is required as a part of the contracts for Community-Based Care lead agencies.

Accomplishments

- Florida implemented adoption competency curricula in partnership with Rutgers University. A total of seventeen trainers became certified as “trainers of adoption competency” with the Rutgers University curricula. These trainers subsequently conducted twelve classes across Florida with approximately 125 mental health professionals completing the 42 hours of adoptions competency curricula. In addition, over 100 child welfare staff and Guardians ad Litem also completed this training content.
- Florida, through a contract with Daniel Memorial, also continues to offer adoption staff ongoing training opportunities with two statewide forums held annually. 100 adoption staff attended each of the two training conferences offered during the last reporting period and each training conference also included a third day of training/education by the national adoption expert for adoptive parents.

Collaboration

- Children's Mental Health offices at the state and local community levels have been collaborating with the Department of Children and Families, Community-Based Care staff and the adoption competency trainers to identify and encourage attendance of mental health professionals in the adoption competency training in each of the communities. St. Petersburg College Continuing Education Department collaborated with the Department of Children and Families in supporting the adoption competency trainers by providing online registration, sign-in sheets and certificates of completion and Continuing Education Units for all mental health professionals who completed the training.

Program Support

- The two Adoption Program Specialists in the Family Safety Office facilitate four conference calls each month to provide support to post adoption services counselors, adoption supervisors and specialists, trainers for the adoption competency curriculum and adoption homefinders/recruiters. Two statewide adoption training conferences with a national adoption expert are provided each year. Generally, over a hundred attend. In addition, the third day of training by the national adoption expert occurs on a Saturday and is devoted to an educational opportunity for adoptive parents. The Department of Children and Families and local adoption staff assist in providing child care, if it is needed.

Future Plans

- The plan is to continue to focus on building a healthy and strong post adoption services program in each community. The adoption competency training will continue with a goal of another 100 mental health professionals completing the adoption competency training by June 2011. In addition, the trainers are meeting in February to establish an Advisory Council to oversee updates or revisions to the curricula, such as additional trauma informed care materials and to assist in developing a 10 - 12 hour adoption competency training for educational professionals from the existing Rutgers University curricula. When the adoption competency curriculum for educational professionals is finalized, the trainers will engage their local school guidance counselors to attend during June and July 2011.

Inter-Country Adoptions Entering State Care

- During FFY 2009 - 2010 there were five international adoption dissolutions and one disruption which resulted in six children being placed in Florida's foster care program. Two children were adopted from Russia, three were adopted from Haiti, and one child from Guatemala was in adoptive placement at the time of removal into foster care. One child from Haiti was subsequently adopted by a relative, two children, one from Russia and one from Guatemala, were in emergency shelter, while the other four children remained in foster care at the end of the reporting period. The two children in emergency shelter were recently removed and after the reporting period, they were placed in a family foster home setting. None of the children were related to each other and all have received a variety of therapeutic services. Florida will continue to ensure that children affected by dissolution or disruption of an inter-country adoption are placed in care. Florida will also provide support to these children and collaborate with all adoption service providers.

Independent Living Services

2009 - 2010 Update

- During the period under review, the Department of Children and Families and Community-Based Care partners continued their emphasis on the delivery of comprehensive independent living services to eligible youth in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care. This is illustrated by the level of funding provided by the Florida Legislature. For example, during SFY 2009 - 2010, Florida's contribution of state funds for independent living services was almost three times the amount of the Chafee/Education and Training Voucher federal grants. The two federal grants amounted to approximately 11.5 million dollars, which includes the 20% state match amount, and the state contributed an additional 40 million dollars above the required state matching funds.
- Florida's system of care continued to provide youth ages 13 - 17 in licensed foster care with a variety of services, including assessments, life skills classes, educational support, employment training, counseling and support services. The Quality Parenting Initiative has begun to assist foster parents in heightening their commitment, skills and knowledge regarding their role in preparing these youth for leaving foster care.
- In Florida, 1,142 youth "aged out" of the foster care system in SFY 2009 - 2010. These youth set out to establish themselves and their future in Florida's communities without parental guidance. The Independent Living Program provides services to youth in foster care and youth who were formerly in foster care.
- Services provided included life skills training and financial, educational and social support. Examples of such services are parenting classes, career counseling, therapy and psychological counseling and assistance with time management and

organization. These services were funded through a web of federal grants, general revenue dollars, and national, state, and community private funds.

Accomplishments

- Accomplishments included: increased numbers of youth participating, emphasis on skill building, compilation of data from staff and youth, and outcome measures, to inform policy and practice, have been included in the July 1, 2010 standard community-based care contract template, in which data will be collected during SFY 2010 - 2011 to establish a baseline for these measures. Florida's stakeholders and providers are committed to continued improvements in this service area.
- Florida continued to increase the number of youth participating in services after reaching age 18. For example, in SFY 2009 - 2010, 5,797 youth were eligible to receive the Road to Independence program and 3,698 youth received the service.
- The statewide youth survey checklist for 13 through 22 year olds was implemented again in SFY 2009 - 2010, providing helpful status information in the youths' key life domains. The survey participation will also help youth prepare for the implementation of the National Youth Transition Database (NYTD).
- The Performance Measure Workgroup reviewed the youth outcome work products of other agencies to develop the best approach for implementing outcome measures specific to the Independent Living Program. This included the Florida Office of Program Policy, Analysis, and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) Report 04-78 entitled "Independent Living Minimum Standards Recommended for Children in Foster Care," the 2006 Annual Report of the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, and the February 2008 Federal Rule for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). Each of these reports contains recommended youth outcome measures and they were crosswalked to determine similarities and differences. As a result, the Department of Children and Families in collaboration with the Performance Measure Workgroup selected five (5) key Independent Living indicators that were included in the state FY 2010-2011 standard Community-Based Care Lead Agency contract template. Data for these measures will be collected during state FY 2010-2011, and will serve as the baseline for subsequent state fiscal years.
- The Florida Youth Leadership Academy was a successful event. Each of the participating youth is sponsored by a graduate of the Department of Children and Families' Child Welfare Leadership Academy. Participation by the youth was enthusiastic and they expressed appreciation for the opportunity.

Collaboration

- This is a particular strength in Florida. The active and effective Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC) is comprised of youth, foster parents, advocates, providers, representatives of education, disability, workforce, medical and housing service fields. In its ongoing effort to be transparent and approachable, the

Department of Children and Families maintains a web site specific to the Council's work at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/incliving/AdvisoryCouncil/index.shtml>.

- In 2009, key Florida stakeholders convened to discuss the 2008 Federal Fostering Connections legislation. These stakeholders identified the need to consider redesign of the "Road to Independence Program" (RTI) to better meet the needs of youth in the foster care system and to promote better and more successful outcomes for those youth. A workgroup was convened in December 2009 through a joint invitation from the Department of Children and Families, the Florida Coalition for Children and the Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC), and consisted of a wide and diverse group of providers, advocates, and youth, who were charged with considering and recommending changes for the necessary services and supports for 18 to 21 year old youth. The group was asked to consider the optional provisions of extending foster care, guardian assistance, and adoption subsidies under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008. The group was able to reach a consensus, and in July 2010 submitted their proposal to the Department of Children and Families.

Program Support

- The Secretary's personal, continued, observable, and demonstrated commitment to the population of youth eligible for independent living services was one of the most effective supports for this program. Technical assistance and consultation was provided directly by the Family Safety Program Office and also by other divisions within the Department of Children and Families, including the Assistant Secretary for Programs Transitional Living Coordinator and the contract/fiscal oversight units.

Future Plans

- Florida looks forward to implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database. Despite the challenges in implementing any new data system, many staff and stakeholders are enthusiastic about the potential this project holds for improving outcomes for youth. (Please see Chapter 5, Chafee Foster Care Independence Program for details). Collaboration with the ILSAC and all stakeholders will continue to figure prominently in all future planning regarding redesign of services through the Fostering Connections Act of 2008, education of all stakeholders and leaders, education of staff through regional training events, identification of areas needing improvement, outcome measures, conducting a statewide Quality Assurance Review and its subsequent analysis and using contract monitoring to improve practice.

Title IV-E Foster Care Demonstration Waiver

- Florida received federal funding during the course of a five year period based on the amount the state would have received under standard Title IV-E rules. This amount increased by three percent per year over the foster care funding in the federal fiscal year that ended September 30, 2005. The program aligned its funding incentives with the program goals of maintaining the safety and well being of children and enhancing permanency by providing services that help families remain intact whenever safe to do so. The Waiver has afforded Florida the flexibility to refocus its efforts on prevention, while safely and effectively reducing the number of children who enter foster care.
- The Department of Children and Families will continue its participation in the Waiver Demonstration Project through July 2012 as currently authorized. The State of Florida has begun discussions with its federal partners for the potential extension of the waiver. All indications are that the waiver continues to be successful in meeting goals and safely reducing the number of children in out-of-home care.

2009 - 2010 Update

- In September 2010, the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) approved a 10 month extension of the Waiver demonstration until July 31, 2012: This allows time for Florida to submit its evaluation and financial reports, and for ACF to determine whether to extend the project for another 5 years.
- Florida's flexible Title IV-E funds continue to allow the Department of Children and Families and its partner lead agencies to create a more responsive array of community-based services and supports for children and families typically funded using Title IV-B funds. Capped allocations of the waiver funds are comingled with Title IV-B funds to support child welfare practice, program, and system improvements that promote child safety, prevent out-of-home placement, and expedite permanency.
- This strategic use of the funds has also allowed Community-Based Care Lead agencies to implement individualized approaches that emphasize both family engagement and child centered interventions as they had in the past.
- In FFY 2009 - 2010 Title IV-E waiver allowed the Department of Children and Families and its partner agencies to implement regional family preservation service models. The goal of these programs is to divert children from entering out-of-home care by providing Family Preservation services for cases where there is imminent risk of removal if provision of services fails to ensure child safety and that have (or may eventually have) legal sufficiency for filing a shelter petition.
- Agencies have the flexibility to work with local communities to organize and purchase services for families in which children have been abused, neglected or abandoned in order to strengthen parenting skills and make reasonable efforts to

prevent removal and placement. When children cannot remain safely in their own homes, we provide services to ensure not only safety, but also timely achievement of permanency and well-being. In the past, in-home protective supervision, foster care and adoptions were separate program components. Now the case management process (assessment, planning, monitoring of service provision, and evaluating progress) and the array of services are essentially the same, whether the child remains at home or is in a formal placement outside of the home. The major difference is that when children are placed outside the home, strict time standards, concurrent case planning, visitation, permanency staffings, judicial reviews and permanency hearings are added to the standard requirements. Children placed with relatives are entitled to the same safeguards as children placed in licensed, board paid foster care until they achieve permanency.

Procedures for Family Preservation Cases

1. A report alleging abuse or neglect is received by the Florida Abuse Hotline and assigned to a Child Protective Investigator (CPI). The CPI conducts a risk and safety assessment to determine if a child can safely remain in their home. If so, a determination is made as to what supports are necessary for the family to stay together safely and if not, to identify at time of shelter who within the family can provide temporary care. Based on the assessment of safety and risk issues, the CPI will make a determination to either leave the child in the home with or without supports and appropriate services or remove the child from the home. Upon removal, a dependency petition will be filed by Children's Legal Services (CLS).

2. If the allegations and subsequent findings include substance misuse (parents test positive and demonstrated negative impact on child safety or well-being; strong evidence to support substance misuse), a referral is made to the Family Intervention Specialists (FIS) for assessment to determine treatment and services.

3. If the allegations and subsequent findings include domestic violence, the case is either assigned to a Domestic Violence Subject Matter Expert (SME) or the CPI will seek consultation from a SME. The Domestic Violence Protocol is followed utilizing the DV Initial Assessment Checklist and Safety Planning Procedures.

Accomplishments

- Innovative Practices continued during FY 2009 - 2010: Examples of these are:
 - ◆ Family Connections – expanded use of Family Team conferencing and other family centered practices;
 - ◆ Peaceful Paths – expanded and enhanced domestic violence prevention;

- ◆ Family Finding – expanded use of Family Finding to improve permanency;
 - ◆ Resource/Diversion Specialists – to provide protective investigators with immediate services to prevent the need for removal;
 - ◆ Foster Parents Mentoring – and other strategies to improve recruitment and retention of foster parents; and
 - ◆ Parenting with Love and Limits – parenting skill development to improve family functioning for families with children between age 10 and age 18 with emotional or behavioral problems.
- When comparing SFY 2009 - 2010 to SFY 2008 - 2009, the average number of children in out-of-home care decreased steadily from 21,020 in SFY 2008 - 2009 to 18,457 in SFY 2009 - 2010. For SFY 2009 - 2010 the average percentage reunified within 12 months of their latest removal was 67.5%. This was a significant decrease in the number of children served in out-of-home care when compared with 64.5% from SFY 2008 - 2009. For SFY 2009 - 2010 the average percentage who was adopted within 24 months of removal was 42.5%. The analysis showed no significant difference between the number of children adopted in a timely manner in SFY 2009 - 2010 and 2008 - 2009 (40.7%). Florida continues to exceed the national standard of 32% performance measure.
 - Other trends examined from the pre-Waiver year (SFY 2005 - 2006) through SFY 2009 - 2010 showed that the ratio of out-of-home care expenditures to prevention/family preservation/in home expenditures has decreased from 7.96 to 3.6.
 - The reduction in the proportion of children who entered out-of-home care after receiving services is consistent with the practice where the majority of Community-Based Care Lead Agencies have expanded their array of prevention and diversion services available to children and families that are involved in an allegation of abuse or neglect. Based on these two measures, it would seem as if these preventive efforts aimed at providing supports and services to the families and keeping children safely at home have been successful.

Collaboration

- As previously reported, the waiver proposal was developed as a joint effort by Department of Children and Families and its Community-Based Care Lead Agencies. In keeping with the truly collaborative nature of this project, a steering group continues to oversee implementation and meet regularly as needed.

Program Support

- Florida will receive federal funding during the course of a five year period based on what the state would have received under Title IV-E rules. This amount will increase by three percent per year over federal foster care funding in the federal fiscal year that ended September 30, 2005. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

(ARRA) has also provided for additional funding in support of waiver services, however, this funding is being adjusted by the federal government. The program put funding incentives in line with the program goals of maintaining the safety and well-being of children and enhancing permanency by providing services that helped families remain intact whenever possible.

- ◆ Oversight and Coordination - The steering group has continued to meet via conference call on an as needed basis.
- ◆ Communication and Training – The steering group continues to respond to region and Community-Based Care Lead Agency specific needs, including training and technical assistance related to the implementation of the demonstration project. During this federal fiscal year, training and technical assistance were provided regarding the waiver and transition to Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), our SACWIS system.
- ◆ Independent Evaluation - The evaluator continues to complete the semi-annual progress reports on the status and activities related to the evaluation of Florida's Title IV-E waiver demonstration project. These are available on the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice's website at: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/Pages/Default.aspx>
- ◆ The evaluation will describe and track Title IV-E waiver implementation and determine over the course of the waiver, the effectiveness of an expanded array of services and supports in improving outcomes for children and families. Implementation of the waiver serves as a catalyst for systemic improvement efforts.

Future Plans

- Initial indicators are that the waiver continues to be successful in meeting safety, permanency and well-being goals for Florida's children and reducing the number of children in out-of-home care. The Department of Children and Families will continue its participation in the Waiver Demonstration Project through August 2012 as currently authorized. Florida is also requesting an extension of the Title IV-E waiver for another five years with implementation of the Fostering Connections options.
 - ◆ Waiver extension request;
 - ◆ Redesign of Services to Young Adults Formerly in Foster Care; and
 - ◆ Waiver renewal steering committee;
 - Policy development;
 - Financing strategies;
 - Communications plan; and,
 - Comprehensive project plan.

Chapter 2

Collaborative Activities and Initiatives

Overview of Collaborative Partners, Activities and Initiatives Across Child Welfare

- As previously noted in Chapter One, Florida’s child welfare system engages in a high degree of collaboration. All child welfare systems involve many stakeholders and partners, and Florida is no exception. In developing policies and programs, the Department of Children and Families collaborates with other state and local agencies, tribal representatives, foster parents, relative caregivers, foster youth, service providers, Children’s Legal Services, the Office of Court Improvement, child advocates, the Legislature and other stakeholders to maximize families’ opportunities for success. The Department of Children and Families’ internal program and operations offices also collaborate across their specialties, such as mental health, substance abuse, developmental disabilities and economic supports, to the benefit of Florida’s children and families touched by the child welfare system.
- However, Florida is unique in that it contracts for the delivery of most of the child welfare core services and initiates new services through Community-Based Care Lead Agencies. For the child welfare system to function optimally, this requires a high degree of ongoing collaboration. This structure also provides an excellent opportunity to tailor services that address the diverse needs of Florida’s children, families and communities and fosters creativity and productivity of child welfare professionals. During the report period, many examples of collaboration efforts occurred and are discussed below.
- In addition to state level partners, communities have worked together with local governmental agencies, such as the schools and law enforcement agencies, as well as private and nonprofit service or advocacy groups. Examples of interagency efforts in Florida included:
 - Coordination of physical and behavioral health services that involved shared data;
 - Collaboration and coordination with agencies responsible for services to the developmentally disabled and for public education so child welfare client needs were being properly addressed;
 - Alignment of services and supports when child welfare and juvenile justice issues overlapped;
 - Identification of resources for child care, employment, and other services under the responsibility of non-child welfare agencies; and
 - Designation of “champions” for children and families whose needs were unusually complex and were being met across different agencies’ areas of responsibility.

- The local agencies and external stakeholders provided input into this Annual Progress and Services Report. Extensive collaboration between the Department of Children and Families, the courts, Guardian ad Litem Program, and community agencies led to many innovative court processes that helped to facilitate timely permanency. One such collaborative project, Best Practices Model for Child Support in Dependency Cases, involved the Department of Revenue's Child Support Enforcement division, Children's Legal Services, Circuits, and the Office of State Court Administrator.
- The Best Practices Model for Child Support in Dependency Cases provided guidance on issues related to child support in dependency proceedings so that Florida's children receive the financial support they need. According to the principles of unified family court as described in *re Report of Family Court Steering Committee*, 794 So.2d 518 (Fla. 2001), the best practice is to handle the child support matter before the same judge hearing the dependency case to avoid conflicting orders and multiple court appearances by the parties, as well as to increase efficiency and wisely utilize court resources. Three judicial circuits have implemented this best practice model.
- Through collaboration with Community Alliances, Community-Based Care Lead agencies learned about new programs and ways to support families and children in each community. The Alliances were catalysts for information sharing opportunities and were provided a unique opportunity for hands-on involvement in the local systems of care.
- Community-Based Care lead agencies reached out to the faith-based community. For example, Churches in Partnership was a new initiative in Pinellas County wherein a child protective investigator was paired with a church in the community, which assisted in ensuring that the basic provisions of a family, such as clothing, food, furniture, special medical equipment, etc., were met.

Ongoing Collaborative Activities and Initiatives

Florida's Emergency and Disaster Plans for Child Welfare

- The Department of Children and Families has a statewide Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The plan includes a section dedicated to "Child Welfare Disaster Plans." The plan is a "good business practice" -- part of the fundamental mission of all government agencies to be responsive to the needs of the residents of Florida, particularly in times of emergency. The Department of Children and Families' plan contains additional critical components of disaster preparation plans, such as: staff education; evacuation plan development and update for caregivers of children under care or supervision of the Department of Children and Families; staff phone trees; alternate operations locations; responding to varied expected and unexpected threats; servicing displaced staff, etc.

2009 - 2010 Update

- Florida's privatization of child welfare case management services has created lead agencies. Each lead agency has locally driven Continuity of Operations Plans and Child Welfare Disaster Plans. The disaster plans address how the lead agency, along with any subcontracted case management agencies, would assist families in maintaining uninterrupted services if displaced or adversely affected by a disaster. All written plans are updated and submitted annually to the Department of Children and Families. Copies of the written plans are provided to the Department of Children and Families' Offices of General Services and Family Safety Program Office, as well as being made available to the circuits, regions and within all community-based care locations.

Accomplishments

- After the Hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, Florida's state agencies began to develop more comprehensive disaster plans. On May 2006, the Department of Children and Families published the Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan. The plan establishes policy and guidance to ensure the execution of mission essential functions in various emergency situations, to include natural disasters, accidents, technological emergencies and military or terrorist related incidents. The COOP integrates the various programs under the Department of Children and Families. Along with the integrated COOP plan, each community-based care lead agency has a disaster preparedness plan to address child welfare specific activities throughout the state in such emergency.
- In case of a disaster, one of the aftermath activities of local agencies responsible for case management services is to quickly begin to contact families that care for children under state custody or supervision. During these contacts, the child's case manager (primary case manager) explores if there are any services to the child interrupted by the disaster.
- The case manager will explore with the family expected duration of interruption, alternative service providers, transportation considerations, etc.
- In addition, local agencies make determinations as to the extent of damage and interruption of services. If the agency identifies that certain services to children may be interrupted, such as speech therapy, mental health services, educational supports like tutoring, etc., they will work with local community providers and volunteers to address the provision of alternative services and ensure that the case manager supervisors make the staff aware of the alternative services available.
- If a family relocates intrastate due to a disaster, the child's primary case manager will request, through the Courtesy Supervision mechanism, that a secondary case manager be assigned in the new county. The secondary case manager will be responsible for conducting visits, identifying new needs based on the relocation, providing stabilization services to the family, and completing referrals that would ensure the child is provided services for previously identified needs. The primary and secondary worker would also work with each other and with the local providers in their respective areas to ensure

that new providers have current, relevant information as to the child's needs and status in service provision prior to leaving their originating county.

- If the family relocates interstate, the primary worker will immediately notify the Florida Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Office (ICPC) and will forward a packet of information to be sent to the receiving state so that notification and a request for services can be made. The packet will include a Child Social Summary that will contain information as to service needs and will request that once a local case manager is assigned, that case manager make contact with the child's Florida case manager to discuss service needs. The receiving state's case manager will be asked to affect continued services to address the child's previously identified needs as well as any new needs identified in their own contacts with the family.

Collaboration

- Local and National Coordination
 - ◆ The Florida Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Office (ICPC) continues to work directly with central ICPC offices in other states to send and receive information and documents, as customary. If the central ICPC office in another state is unable to communicate, ICPC will work with the child welfare program office equivalent in that state as well as the American Public Human Services Association to identify alternate means of communication.

Program Support

- The Florida ICPC Office, located in Tallahassee, also plays a key role during times of emergency. In this ever mobile society, services are provided for many children for whom family members reside in other states. There are more than a thousand Florida dependent children placed with parents, relatives and other caregivers in sister states at any given time, as well as more than a thousand children placed in Florida who come to us from other state's child welfare systems. The ICPC Office serves as the central point of contact for state-to-state communications regarding the welfare of these children.
- The ICPC Disaster Preparation and Response Plan (DPRP) aims to provide case managers who have children in other states or who are providing services to children from other states a single point of contact for communications. The primary point of contact in the ICPC Office is the ICPC Administrator.
- The Department of Children and Families' leadership and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies provide up-to-date information and communications at times of potential disaster as well as follow-up to any emergency situation. Support can range from "ready" conference calls to deployment of additional staff to impacted areas.

Future Plans

- Currently, ICPC does not address emergency or disaster related movement of dependent children. ICPC Administrators in states receiving these children have worked together to review current law and identify avenues to allow the provision of services and supervision in such emergency situations. It was determined that these types of movements could receive immediate ICPC approval, services and supervision under Regulation 1.
- Regulation 1 provides a notification and approval mechanism for situations in which a family caring for a dependent child in one state wishes or needs to move to another state. Regulation 1 allows for the dependent child to move with the family rather than having to wait in his or her home state while the family relocates and goes through the home study and approval process, which can often take months. Regulation 1 applies to all placements: parents, relatives, licensed care and adoptive settings.
- It is of the utmost importance that states receiving these children notify the state of origin and request all documentation that can be obtained regarding the child's medical, behavioral and educational history, reasons he or she came into care, family history, case plan, information on visitation allowances and limitations, contact information for siblings and other significant persons in the child's life, etc. Evidence of the suitability of the current caregivers, particularly the home study, background checks and information on training and education provided should also be obtained as quickly as possible.
- The Department of Children and Families and its Community-Based Care Lead Agencies will continue to work with state emergency management personnel and agency leadership to ensure the safety of its clients and staff prior to, during, and after any disaster that Florida may experience.

Tribal Consultation

- The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) requirements are codified in Florida Statutes and are found in Florida Administrative Code and Operating Procedures. A statewide Indian Child Welfare Act Manager and Tribal Liaison works directly with eight Regional Indian Child Welfare Act Specialists in Florida, with designated liaisons from three federally recognized tribes in Florida and Alabama, with ICWA managers in other states and tribes, and with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The statewide ICWA Manager is in communication with a national group of statewide ICWA managers who meet by conference call and online website via a collaboration sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America.
- Florida Administrative Code requires that Child Protective Investigators make a determination of eligibility for the protection of the Indian Child Welfare Act at the onset of each investigation. A standardized form, written policy, procedural guidance, training documents and instructional videos are posted online. Child Protective Investigators, Case Managers and legal staff are required to enter electronic documentation of ICWA eligibility and compliance in the state's SACWIS system.

- During the reporting period, the Department of Children and Families continued negotiations with the Seminole Tribe of Florida toward a state-to-nation agreement. The agreement will enable the Seminole Tribe to assume full responsibility for child protective investigations and case management services on their six reservations in Florida.
- At the statewide Dependency Summit in August 2010, the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, the Director of the Family Safety Program Office, other Department of Children and Families leaders and members of the Office of State Court Administrators met with leaders from the Seminole Tribe of Florida to discuss the tribe's work toward establishing a tribal court and key child welfare projects proposed by the tribe. The meeting resulted in a statewide work group to support the Seminole tribe in their child welfare planning and to further efforts toward negotiating a state to nation agreement. The initial meeting is set for December 8, 2010.
- All three tribes (the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians) have agreed to serve on the Department of Children and Families' statewide Family Safety Policy Council. Tribal representatives continue to be encouraged to participate in the Dependency Summit and on subsequent committees and work groups associated with Summit goals and objectives throughout the year.
- Communications during the year include email and telephone conversations with Kristi Hill, Family Preservation Administrator with the Seminole Tribe Family Services Department; Carolyn White, Family Services Executive Director with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Atmore, Alabama (while the Poarch Band of Creek are not a federal tribe with reservations located in Florida, their reservation is very close to the Florida-Alabama border); and with Dr. John De Gaglia, Director of Social Services with the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. Subjects of communications with the tribes include the Seminole Tribe's work toward a tribal court and other child welfare initiatives, resolution of concerns and issues involving services to tribal children, improving compliance with ICWA policy, and developing training opportunities.

Data

- Florida has developed a standing data report to track ICWA compliance. The following data has been extracted from *Florida Safe Families Network*:
- The data effective October 1, 2009:
 - ◆ The number of children in Out-of-Home Care with race of American Indian/Alaskan Native (regardless of other races): 119
 - ◆ Of the 119 children referenced above, the number who have an identified one Tribal affiliation : 102
 - ◆ Of the 119 children referenced above, the number who have an identified more then one Tribal affiliation: 15

- ◆ The number of children in Out-of-Home Care identified as ICWA Eligible: 101
- ◆ Of the 101 children referenced above, the number placed in an ICWA compliant placement: 25
- The data effective September 30, 2010:
 - ◆ The number of children in Out-of-Home Care with race of American Indian/Alaskan Native (regardless of other races): 116
 - ◆ Of the 116 children referenced above, the number who have at least one Tribal affiliation is: 105
 - ◆ The number of children in Out-of-Home Care identified as ICWA Eligible: 70
 - ◆ Of those 70 children referenced above, number who are placed in an ICWA compliant placement: 55
- The above data was extracted from the *Florida Safe Families Network Data Repository* on December 10, 2010. The data reflects that the numbers of children identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native by race did not change dramatically during this time period. The numbers of children identified as eligible for the protections of the Indian Child Welfare Act dropped from 101 to 70; however, the percentage of ICWA compliant placements rose dramatically from 24.7 percent to 78.5 percent.

Accomplishments

- Florida's SACWIS supports accurate identification and tracking of children eligible for the protections of ICWA. This new electronic functionality has significantly improved Florida's ability to track and monitor data on ICWA eligible children and is essential to improving ICWA compliance.
- Specific modifications to FSFN were proposed by tribal representatives and others participating in the statewide Florida Dependency Court Improvement Panel. Their recommendations were included in written requests for system modifications that were added to FSFN in December 2009. The effectiveness and accuracy of data related to ICWA compliance should improve as staff becomes more proficient in utilizing the system. Some ICWA elements are text fields and are reviewed as a part of the quality assurance process as opposed to access by numeric data extract.
- In addition to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) elements for race and ethnicity, the child's eligibility for the protections of the Indian Child Welfare Act are captured on FSFN's basic person management screen. Additional fields in FSFN electronically document the following:
 - ◆ An adult or child's tribal affiliation (there are two data fields available in the event the person has an affiliation with more than one tribe);

- ◆ Whether or not the child's placement is in compliance with the mandates of the Act (if the child is documented as ICWA eligible, this field becomes a required response);
 - ◆ Documentation of efforts made to determine ICWA eligibility and prevent removal or a noncompliant placement;
 - ◆ Documentation that the mandated Placement Preferences have been explored;
 - ◆ Documentation of participation in case planning;
 - ◆ Documentation when a case involves tribal representation and action; and
 - ◆ Documentation when a case is closed to transfer to tribal jurisdiction
- Onsite ICWA training is available to the field and tribal participation in the training is encouraged. An ICWA training video, accompanying PowerPoint and other documents have been developed and posted online for easy access to these resources. The ICWA training resources accompany a new ICWA resource webpage located on *Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice* website. <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/icwa/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Collaboration

- Ongoing interaction with the Seminole, Miccosukee and Creek tribes has enhanced effective communications and more active participation in activities that support ICWA practice and policy. As a part of child abuse prevention work in Florida, the Department of Children and Families has shared prevention materials with the Seminole Tribe of Florida and has discussed prevention planning and collaboration with the Seminole, Miccosukee and Poarch Band of Creek. Future collaboration will include an increased emphasis on prevention.
- Copies of the previous Annual Progress and Services Report have been provided via email to the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians for their review and input. The Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Poarch Band of Creek are included in Florida's annual Dependency Summit and in subsequent workgroups and committees associated with the Summit and the development of statewide policy and programs.
- As required, the Department of Children and Families provided the Seminole Tribe of Florida, Poarch Band of Creek Indian and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians a copy of the Child and Family Services Plan for 2010-2014 and the 2009 Annual Progress and Services Report.

Program Support

- Program support to the field has included onsite training and consultation and the addition of direct access to ICWA resources online, including training materials, key

documents for practice, forms, sample correspondence, and state and national contact information. State and tribal child welfare staff has immediate access to local Department of Children and Families ICWA Specialists and to the statewide ICWA Specialist when assistance is needed. The state office averages more than a hundred calls and emails per year for guidance with ICWA matters, originating both in-state and out-of-state. Florida is ranked eleventh nationally in American Indian/Alaskan Native population (Source: 2000 United States Census). Although the population of our two federally recognized tribes is under 5000, census data reflects more than 110,000 American Indian/Alaskan Native persons residing in Florida.

Future Plans

- Continuing negotiations with the Seminole Tribe toward a state-to-nation agreement;
- Continuation of the statewide work group established in August 2010 to assist and support the Seminole Tribe of Florida in their work toward establishing a tribal court and other collaborative child welfare initiatives;
- Department of Children and Families and Seminole Tribe of Florida staff met on October 4, 2010 on the Immokalee Seminole reservation to explore ways to improve communications and collaboration in providing services to Seminole children. The meeting was followed by state and tribal staff co-training in several counties with plans to replicate this work in the coming year.
- Develop joint ICWA training sessions to be co-trained by Department of Children and Families and Seminole staff.
- Participation of all three tribes (the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians) in the Department of Children and Families' statewide Family Safety Policy Council.
- Continuing to involve Florida's federal tribal representatives in our annual Dependency Summit, statewide committees and other training opportunities, especially co-training opportunities with Department of Children and Families and tribal staff;
- Increase tracking of data on ICWA compliance through the SACWIS functionalities and quality assurance monitoring activities to determine causes in identified areas of need and to improve compliance through the development of a standing ICWA data report;
- Providing training and technical assistance, as requested by the field and the tribes;
- Sharing this year's Annual Progress and Services Report;
- Continuing the regularly scheduled statewide ICWA conference calls beginning in January 2011 and ensuring that the calls include tribal representatives and representatives from other state agencies in addition to the Regional ICWA Specialists; and

- Establishing contact with other tribal associations and groups in the state who wish to participate in training and initiatives that support families and protect children and to develop collaborative training opportunities. (CFSP Goal # 2; Benchmark 1: Developing a Family Centered Practice Framework, QIP Goal 1, Strategy A, Action Step 1).

Health Care Services

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Health Care Plan has been updated to reflect the work on Medical Homes and the continued integration of medical and behavioral health care. The Department of Children and Families continues to address the key issues associated with the oversight and coordination of health care for children in foster care. This work includes close coordination with Medicaid, Children's Medical Services, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health, as well as implementation of the plan in the local areas. To enhance the Health Care Plan, the Department of Children and Families is conducting onsite visits to selected sites to determine in detail how the local areas have arranged for and coordinated health care services. Practices are compared against a list of core components to determine the various mechanisms that the local areas have established to arrange for and coordinate health care. The onsite visits address medical, behavioral, developmental, and dental care. Additionally, the Department of Children and Families has established an Integration of Services initiative that addresses integration of medical and behavioral health care and domestic violence within the Family Centered Practice framework. The Integration of Services Steering Committee is lead by the Department of Children and Families' Assistant Secretaries, the Chief Operating Officers of the community associations for mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and the Florida Coalition for Children (child welfare). Exchange of health care information remains a challenge.
- Please refer to Chapter 5, Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and Chafee
- Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program for information regarding the transitioning process in regards to the health care needs of children aging out of foster care.

Accomplishments

- The Department of Children and Families still relies on the Medicaid funded Child Health Check-Up (EPSDT) and the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment (CBHA) to complete the physical screening and the behavioral health assessments. The CBHA also provides a screening for developmental issues, including social and emotional development. During this reporting period the Department of Children and Families reviewed resource materials regarding the medical home concept and constructs for children in foster care, including best practices in the list of key components addressed in the onsite visits discussion guides. Three onsite visits

have been completed including one in Ft. Myers, Jacksonville and Sarasota. Best practices have been identified such as: the use of nurse case managers, coordination and referral of children to Children's Medical Services, coordination with Federally Qualified Health Care Centers, integrated review and interpretation of the medical and behavioral information and use of electronic information to identify prior medical providers and health care plans as well as electronic information on immunizations (the Florida SHOTS system).

- The Department of Children and Families has increased the coordination of planning and collaboration with Children's Medical Services. During the onsite visits and regional meetings, the local areas are being encouraged to strengthen their working relationships with Children's Medical Services and ensure that eligible children are referred on a timely basis. Also, the Regional Directors have been asked to investigate the opportunities offered by Federally Qualified Health Care Centers to establish Medical Homes for children and their families. Many of the Federally Qualified Health Care Centers are part of the Children's Medical Services network providing the opportunity for continuity of care for the child's special health care needs within a comprehensive medical home.
- The Integration of Services initiative was expanded during this reporting period. The Department of Children and Families has established Steering and Leadership committees including local and state level representatives of health care and domestic violence. The purpose is to ensure that integration of health care, including behavioral health and domestic violence services, are integrated throughout the Family Centered Practice Framework. In conjunction with the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare, work has begun on the completion of an Integration of Services Capacity Assessment Instrument. When completed, this instrument will be used in the local areas to determine the perceived level of integration of services. The results will be used as a basis for discussion to improve the integration of health care services within the Family Centered Practice framework.
- The website of the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice (the Center) is the primary portal to a "knowledge base" for Florida's child welfare professionals, stakeholders such as legislators, and related programs such as mental health and substance abuse. Resources for medical, dental and behavioral health are made available on an ongoing basis. The main page for these resources provides a wealth of links to items and other sites. The Center's page on health, dental, and behavioral resources is:
http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/mhsa/MHSA_Phys_Dent_Resources/Forms/AllItems.aspx
- Integration of services across the child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence has been a major focus of the Department of Children and Families and its community partners. A Leadership Group comprised of key representatives from Department of Children and Families, the Florida Coalition for Children, the Florida Council for Community Mental Health, and the Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association held strategic planning sessions to identify common

goals, program models, resources, and innovations that exemplify best practice in Florida communities. Such topics as the effects of trauma on children (trauma informed care), autism, family centered treatment for women with substance abuse, and many others have been addressed and the information is available on the child welfare portal. For example, see

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/IntegrationOfServ/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

- In addition, the first ever joint Department of Children and Families operating procedure defining service linkages for child welfare and children's mental health was developed (CFOP 155-10/175-40).

Collaboration

- With Department of Children and Families input, the Office of Court Improvement created judicial checklists addressing the physical, mental, and dental health of the child and the parents involved in dependency cases. The first one, for children, was approved by the Dependency Court Improvement Panel and given to new dependency judges at the 2010 Florida Judicial College, Phase II (March 24, 2010). A checklist on the mental health of the parents (with emphasis on dual diagnosis with substance abuse) was completed and approved by the multidisciplinary dependency court improvement panel in June, 2010. The "checklists" provide the courts with questions to elicit critical information that will assist in addressing the physical, mental and dental health needs of children and parents in the child welfare system.

Future Plans

- During SFY 2010 - 2011, the Department of Children and Families will continue the work on the implementation of integrated health care services. Four more onsite visits will be completed including Hillsborough, Polk, Orange and Escambia counties to determine implementation of the Health Care Plan. At the completion of the onsite visits, a summary report will be completed on the best practices and the local areas will be asked to review their practices, and where necessary, make modifications in their implementation strategies. The Quality Improvement system will continue to monitor implementation using the existing methodologies and key indicators.
- Also, the Department of Children and Families will continue its work with Children's Medical Services, Medicaid, the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and regional and local Department of Children and Families offices to determine the most efficient and effective means to ensure that children it serves benefit from Children's Medical Services program for children with special needs. The Department of Children and Families also intends to continue the efforts to expand the coordination of care with the Federally Qualified Health Care Centers. At least one local area is considering developing an agreement for the Centers to provide screenings for children coming into care without an established primary care provider.

- The Department of Children and Families will administer the Integration of Services Capacity Assessment in at least four parts of the state and work with the local areas to implement needed improvements based upon the results of the surveys. The Integration of Services Steering Committee will establish three workgroups that will address: practice implications, organizational issues and finance. The workgroups will work with stakeholders at both the local and state level to resolve issues impacting integration of services throughout the Department of Children and Families.
- The Department of Children and Families will also continue to work with Medicaid and others to establish linkages to electronic medical information. The Agency for Health Care Administration has a Health Exchange project underway to develop the capacity for electronic medical records in Florida. The Department of Children and Families has representatives that are working with the Agency on this project.
- Coordination of eligibility determination for Medicaid will continue to be a focus of the Department of Children and Families. Through the onsite visits, it has been determined that some dependency case management and child protection investigators have access to Medicaid information on the child's current Medicaid status and provider , while others do not. The Department of Children and Families, through the Family Safety Program Office will address this issue with the ACCESS and the local area. The Department of Children and Families plans to work with at least one Community-Based Care Lead Agency to develop a small pilot on health care exchange.

Consultations with Physicians and other Medical Professionals

2009 - 2010 Update

The Health Care Plan has been updated to reflect work done on creating a Medical Home for foster children. Work leading to integration of medical and behavioral health care is ongoing. The Department of Children and Families continues to address key issues associated with oversight and coordination of health care for children in foster care. These issues include close coordination with Medicaid, Children's Medical Services, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health, as well as implementation of the plan in local areas.

Practices are compared against a list of core components to determine the various mechanisms that local areas have established to arrange for and coordinate health care. The onsite visits address medical, behavioral, developmental, and dental care. Additionally, the Department of Children and Families has established an Integration of Services initiative that addresses integration of medical and behavioral health care and domestic violence within the Family Centered Practice Framework. The Integration of Services Steering Committee is lead by the Department of Children and Families Assistant Secretaries, the Chief Operating Officers of the community associations for

mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence and the Florida Coalition for Children (child welfare). Exchange of health care information remains a challenge.

A series of site visits began in July of 2010 and were completed in December 2010. The visits brought together key people and agencies that play a role in ensuring that foster children receive health care. The Community-Based Care lead agencies hosted these site visits with DCF regional and circuit staff participating. Health care professionals, such as nurses, directors of Federally Qualified Health Care Centers, and admissions specialists from Children Medical Services attended the meetings and were key sources of information in mapping local processes for linking health care services to professionals who work with foster children. Each meeting was spent discussing health care resources, processes, and goals that each geographic area (judicial circuit) has in place, using a discussion guide prepared by the Department of Children and Families Office of Family Safety. Onsite visits took place at the following locations:

- Circuit 1 - Family First Network, Pensacola
- Circuit 4 - Family Support Services of North Florida, Jacksonville
- Circuit 10 - Heartland for Children, Bartow
- Circuit 12 - Sarasota Family YMCA, Sarasota
- Circuit 13 - Hillsborough Kids Inc., Tampa
- Circuit 20 - Children's Network of Southwest Florida, Ft. Myers

The most fully developed and long standing system for providing health care to foster children is located in Jacksonville. However, there are some very good practices in other parts of the state that were or were not visited.

Practices that were explored and discussed during these visits include:

- Health Insurance Status
- The role of Nurse Case Managers
- Use of the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment (CBHA)
- 72-hour Health Care Screenings
- Information sharing
- Tracking ongoing health care, such as screenings, health care check-ups, immunizations
- Collaboration and use of health care resources

Findings from these visits have been used to correct problems that did not require any kind of systems change, but just putting the right people together.

There were some "early wins" from these visits where local problems were corrected that did not require any kind of systems change, but just putting the right people together. These will be assimilated into a state wide phase in plan for other local

community-based care agencies, while developing their own unique processes and practices.

- Review of other states approaches, especially Utah's which was referenced in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, *State Practices for Assessing Health Needs, Facilitating Service Delivery and Monitoring Children's Care*, as having a good system.
- Review of literature, especially *Fostering Health, Health Care for Children and Adolescents in Foster Care*, publishes by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Onsite visits in Ft Myers, Sarasota, Jacksonville, Tampa, Bartow, and Pensacola and a phone interview with Our Kids in Miami. (See Attachment A.)
- Development of a document entitled, *Department of Children and Families, Initiatives Impacting Medical Home Development*. (See Attachment B.)

One course of action was to begin working with Children's Medical Services (CMS) to ensure that all children in foster care were eligible to be clients of CMS. Initial discussions with the Agency for Health Care Administration have occurred and we are hopeful this will happen very soon.

Accomplishments

The Department of Children and Families, its community-based partners and Children's Medical Services have been working to establish stronger communication and coordination of medical care for foster children during the past year. The goal was to further understand what communities are doing and to build upon existing practices to establish a medical home for foster children.

The Department of Children and Families still relies on the Medicaid funded Child Health Check-Up (EPSDT) and the Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment (CBHA) to complete the physical screening and the behavioral health assessments. The CBHA also provides a screening for developmental issues, including social and emotional development. During this reporting period the Department of Children and Families reviewed resource materials regarding the medical home concept and constructs for children in foster care, including best practices for the list of key components addressed in the onsite visit discussion guides. Three onsite visits have been completed including one in Ft. Myers, Jacksonville and Sarasota. Best practices have been identified such as: the use of nurse case managers, coordination and referral of children to Children's Medical Services, coordination with Federally Qualified Health Care Centers, integrated review and interpretation of the medical and behavioral information and use of electronic information to identify prior medical providers and health care plans as well as electronic information on immunizations (the Florida SHOTS system).

The Department has increased the coordination of planning and collaboration with Children's Medical Services. During the onsite visits and regional meetings, local areas

are being encouraged to strengthen their working relationships with Children's Medical Services and ensure that eligible children are referred on a timely basis. Also, Regional Directors have been asked to investigate opportunities offered by Federally Qualified Health Care Centers to establish Medical Homes for children and their families. Many of the Federally Qualified Health Care Centers are part of the Children's Medical Services network providing the opportunity for continuity of care for the child's special health care needs within a comprehensive medical home.

Future Plans

During SFY 2010 - 2011, the Department of Children and Families will continue to work on implementation of integrated health care services. Four more onsite visits will be completed including Hillsborough, Polk, Orange and Escambia counties to determine implementation of the Health Care Plan. At the completion of the onsite visits, a summary report will be completed on best practices and local areas will be asked to review their practices, and where necessary, make modifications in their implementation strategies. The Quality Improvement system will continue to monitor implementation using existing methodologies and key indicators.

Also, the Department of Children and Families will continue to work with Children's Medical Services, Medicaid, Community-Based Care lead agencies as well as regional and local DCF offices to determine the most efficient and effective means to ensure that children they serve benefit from Children's Medical Services programs for children with special needs. The Department of Children and Families also intends to continue efforts to expand the coordination of care with Federally Qualified Health Care Centers. At least one local area is considering developing an agreement for the Centers to provide screenings for children coming into care without an established primary care provider.

The Task Force on Fostering Success

- The Task Force was established in July 2007 by then Secretary of the Department of Children and Families, Bob Butterworth, to examine child protection issues that were brought to light during media coverage of the Courtney Clark case. This 23 member panel, comprised of child protection professionals and other child welfare stakeholders, initially focused attention on the gaps that exist in the system when responding to and locating missing children.
- The Task force was re-established in December 2008 by Secretary George Sheldon and has continued throughout 2010. With extensive public comments and analysis of current case practice, the panel continues to recommend administrative, policy, legislative, education, and training efforts to be undertaken to ensure the safety of Florida's children.

2009 - 2010 Update

- Various subcommittee conference calls and work group meetings occurred over the course of this reporting period. During the reporting period there were four quarterly statewide meetings:
 - ◆ August 24, 2010 -Orlando
 - ◆ May 14, 2010 - Jacksonville
 - ◆ February 25, 2010 - West Palm Beach
 - ◆ November 19, 2009 – Tampa
- Information related to the Task Force can be located at:
<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/initiatives/childsafety/>

Accomplishments

- In addition to those accomplishments listed under the Criminal Justice Act section of this chapter, the Task Force on Foster Success achieved the following:
 - ◆ The Subcommittee on Safe Families was established to On November 16, 2009, by Secretary George Sheldon as part of the Task Force on Fostering Success. The subcommittee was asked to assess the status of the Department of Children and Families' efforts to achieve safe reductions in the number of children in out-of-home care. Five components of Florida's child protection system were analyzed by the subcommittee:
 - Hotline calls accepted and sent to the field for response that do not result in a formal child protection investigation with maltreatment findings
 - Hotline calls accepted for formal child protection investigation that result in a maltreatment finding (verified, not substantiated, no indicators) and either closure with no additional action, or non-court ordered or court ordered interventions
 - Services provided to families that have led to reductions in the number of children in out-of-home care
 - Supports and resources available to families after the finalization of an adoption to minimize the possibility of a post-adoption dissolution
 - Child deaths called to the Hotline with allegations of abuse or neglect that are investigated by the Department of Children and Families
 - ◆ Recommendations from the subcommittee were made to the Department of Children and Families and submitted to the Task Force that resulted in the implementation of several new strategies and practices.

- ◆ A Trauma Informed Child Welfare Committee was established on February 25, 2010, to coordinate trauma informed care efforts within child welfare and to specifically address trauma as it relates to out-of-home child removals.
- ◆ Continued work on the Gabriel Myers case. A second Gabriel Myers' workgroup was appointed and charged to determine the facts and sexual abuse circumstances surrounding the tragic death of 7 year old Gabriel Myers. Gabriel died on April 16, 2009, when police indicated he apparently hanged himself in the shower of his foster parents' home. The work group conducted a full inquiry into the facts of the case, in light of case management and judicial decisions, as well as determined the contributing effects of alleged sexual abuse and child-on-child sexual abuse. The work group's final report has been designated as the Task Force 2010 annual report in that it reviewed the child welfare system through this case and identified areas of change and improvement. The report can be located at the following Website:
<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/initiatives/GMWorkgroup/docs/Gabriel%20Myers%20COC%20Report%20May%2014%202010.pdf>
- ◆ A Child-on-Child (COC) Sexual Abuse and Children with Sexual Behavior Problems Committee was established on May 14, 2010, and charged to address several recommendations provided in the Gabriel Myers Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse Report (see above). The workgroup began efforts to collaboratively develop strategies related to COC and children with sexual behavior problems for the upcoming year.

Collaboration

- The Task Force, by its design and composition, is able to accomplish the charge to review issues that cross agencies and organizations with emphasis on Child Protection and Child Welfare. Membership includes representatives from the Judiciary, State Social Service and Criminal Justice agencies, Education, local children's services, child advocates, child welfare and substance abuse and mental health providers, parents and youth. This unique group and its committees have the capacity to leverage and influence both policy and practice through their recommendations.

Program Support

- Program Support is primarily provided by the Department of Children and Families, Family Safety Program Office and Operations. Other agencies are called upon for specific support when needed.

Future Plans

- Task Force is focusing its attention on child-on-child sexual abuse and children with sexual behavior problems. They will continue to collaboratively develop strategies related to children for the upcoming year.
- The Task Force is currently developing a plan for Florida to be a more Trauma Informed Child Welfare System. Strategies are being developed within the context of the following six areas:
 - Safety
 - Screening and Assessments
 - Impact of Trauma
 - Services and interventions
 - Child and Family Support
 - Professional Support (Vicarious Trauma)

Operation Full Employment (OFE)

2009 - 2010 Update

- Operation Full Employment (OFE) began in January 2008, when former Secretary Bob Butterworth challenged leadership throughout the Department of Children and Families and partners in the community to offer employment opportunities to young adults aging out of the foster care system. The goal is to provide young adults formerly in care with employment experience in a professional environment and a steady paycheck, especially in light of the slowing economy. During 2008, more than 100 young adults formerly in care were hired in Operation Full Employment.
- In January 2009, former Secretary George Sheldon identified Operation Full Employment as a key Department of Children and Families initiative in the Department of Children and Families' Strategic Direction for 2009-2011 and OFE supported CFSP Goal #3: Benchmark 1: *Individualizing Services for Family Members to Meet Their Specific Needs and Enable Families to Nurture Their Children*; QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Step 2) providing youth with the skills and supports they need in overcoming the detrimental effects of a childhood damaged by factors leading to involvement in the child welfare system.
- In addition to OFE, Florida has developed an array of services to build life skills for children ages 13 - 17, to include educational funding and other supports which are also aligned with federal requirements of Chaffee and Road to Independence. Additionally, the Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC) has also focused on the area of employment for foster youth who have aged out of care. Including adding a member of the Work Force Board to their committee in 2010

Accomplishments

- During 2008 as a result of Operation Full Employment, more than 100 youth formerly in care, have been hired within the child welfare and social services system. To further develop this initiative, a statewide workgroup was convened in October 2008 and adopted a framework for action for the Department of Children and Families, Community-Based Care Lead Agencies, business partners, and other state and system agencies and partners. The process included youth driven input and perspective in both the content and design. The strategies included alignment of outcomes, the identification, accessibility, and coordination of relevant services and resources that were already in existence in Florida. Participating organizations included Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections, Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI), and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies. Additionally, AWI through its local workforce boards, committed to provide employment interest/aptitude testing, work related behavior and skills training.
- Throughout 2009 local and statewide collaboration continued, raising awareness and participation of both youth aging out of the system and communities and businesses willing to invest in their futures. The number of youth hired rose to 300 in October. (AWI reported more than 900 total foster youth in and aged out of care having worked within the 2nd Quarter of the SFY 2009).
- OFE continues to show success in 2010 despite state and national economic downturns. There are approximately 200 youth hired statewide through OFE, which has grown for Department of Children and Families hiring “ready to work” youth and young adults with OPS and Part Time, to either continued OPS, Full Time, moving to community-based care lead agency’s or out into the community, during 2010.
- A variety of community partners exist throughout the state to support OFE efforts. These partners include Regional Workforce Boards, community-based care lead agency’s and/or their providers, Paxen’s Forward March, various retail, grocery, restaurant, and warehouse employers, Florida Sheriff’s Youth Ranch, Cby25, ACCESS’s Food Stamps, Temporary Cash Assistance, Medicaid service departments, various Department of Children and Families departments statewide, and others. Additionally, for over 300 youth and young adults their resume and job readiness is excelling through the above community partners and others including; Paxen’s About Face, multiple community colleges, universities, and other educational programs throughout the state. They have offered (often in-kind) training of life and employability skills, job shadowing, follow-up, life coaching/mentoring, and other assistance. This assistance comes from the collaboration of the above mentioned partners and from the desire of the young client.
- The Department of Children and Families and its partners recognized the importance of data and continue to further develop effective collection tools to track outcomes of young adults participating in OFE. Additional data provided through AWI, the youth and employee surveys, and the Independent Living Critical Checklist verified employment outcomes. The Department of Children and Families completed

a three step statewide special review of Independent Living Services as a result of concerns raised by the Florida Youth SHINE an advocacy group whose membership includes youth who have been or are currently in Florida's foster care system. From this the Department of Children and Families acknowledged the need to include trained youth and young adults in ongoing QA processes and completed 8 youth perspective roundtable to be included in the 2010 QA report.

Collaboration

- Operation Full Employment for youth in foster care has supported youth in their transition to independence. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Step 2). One initial example of collaboration was a model developed in Tampa between the local Department of Children and Families' Automated Community Connection to Economic Self-Sufficiency (ACCESS), community-based care lead agency's Independent Living (IL) and the local Workforce Board. Variations of this collaboration have proven to be successful throughout the state of Florida. Most communities around the state collaborated with local agencies to align training with employers who offer in-kind training for young adults with soft and hard employability skills. Additionally, the Refugee Program and Touchstone Villages worked with young adults to assist their peers educationally and continue to gain work experience, while attaining their education. Touchstone Village opened its doors to the IL and Road to Independence (RTI) young people and continues to show success in their clients. By incorporating employability skills in every aspect of life (cooking, shopping, career planning, job searching, resume writing, etc), and providing follow-up supports, it has produced positive outcomes for these program participants.
- In June 2009, a group of dedicated stakeholders from Gadsden, Leon, and Wakulla counties supporting Big Bend Community-Based Care (Big Bend Community Based Care) created a structure to provide assistance, services, and support to the transitioning young adults (17+). This group researched the community for resources, and laid the foundation for employability skills training with motivational and inspirational speaker's career awareness, career assessment, financial aid assistance, and job shadowing opportunities with employability skills training. The outcomes in 2010 have lead to over 30 young adults over 18 years old building their resume, having opportunities to meet multiple employers, networking within their community, establishing their own Youth Advisory Board, and understanding the power of advocacy.
- During 2010 summer many youth participated in the Regional Workforce agencies at risk youth programs for the summer youth employment program. They were provided work readiness skills and work experiences that combined academics and professional development, mentoring and job shadowing programs.
- The Department of Children and Families, Community-Based Care Lead Agencies, and dedicated stakeholders, including Foundation of Foster Care, AWI and WorkForce Inc. have continued to reach out to the local city resources to find supports for their transitioning young adults. Central Region partnerships included

Connected by 25 (Cby25), FastTrack GED, Education Solutions International (ESI), Panera Bread, ManPower and others. Cby25 has employed four young adults, FastTrack GED attendees can obtain a degree in 12 days, and ESI has reached many of Florida's foster youth in North Florida giving them a 90% rate of completing their GED. ManPower, a for-profit temp agency has offered to develop a curriculum to enhance the young adult's opportunities for success. Panera Bread has stepped forward to provide over 100 young adults friendly and supportive training and employment in their franchise sites in the Greater Orlando area.

- As a result of collaboration, the Department of Children and Families, working in partnership with its community providers, offered a statewide two week About Face Training Program was offered in Lakeland, Jacksonville, Orlando, Plant City, Pensacola, Quincy, West Palm Beach, and Leesburg. The Paxen Group, Inc., a training resource contracted by the Florida National Guard, provided 300 foster care youth the opportunity to participate in this program free of charge. This reality-based program is designed to help 13 - 17 year old youth focus on life, health, fitness, and employability skills. Through this collaboration of Department of Children and Families/Community-Based Care Lead Agency contacts, 15 foster care youth completed the program with nine going on to attend programs in Orlando and Tallahassee. Currently, Paxen's Forward March intensive job readiness and job placement program for 18 - 23 year old adults is accepting transitional foster youth.

Program Support

- In an effort to ensure children served by Florida child welfare agencies received educational and vocational services and supports, the Department of Children and Families, Department of Education, and AWI entered into an Interagency Agreement in 2009. The coordination of services and supports across agencies was critical to positive educational and meaningful life outcomes for Florida's children. Such services required the coordinated flow of information across multiple child serving agencies to ensure that policy, procedure, service delivery, and resource development were provided in a manner that maximized the likelihood of positive outcomes. The State level agreement supported local agreements among service agencies and school boards.
- To establish and clarify expectations and outcomes for Regions and Circuits regarding OFE, each Regional Director appointed an OFE Champion/Point Person. These Champions tracked young adult's participation in local employment initiatives. The Champion, with key stakeholder's cooperation, established and maintained relationships with local public and private partners. Through this process the child welfare providers were able to identify the infrastructure and support necessary to improve the outcomes of employability for transitioning young adults.
- The Department of Children and Families developed a core group of policy staff and consultants to provide ongoing statewide technical assistance. This group has conducted technical assistance and training at:
 - ◆ the 2010 Dependency Summit, Regional Training meetings

- ◆ monthly calls to resolve current concerns and to share innovative practices statewide
 - ◆ Train-the-trainer stakeholder meetings, and
 - ◆ Independent Living youth events in order to share best practices for initiating and strengthening local employment initiatives.
- The Department of Children and Families also provided Technical Assistance Resource Packages to Regions, Circuits, and Community-Based Care Lead Agency providers. The Tool Kit was finalized in March 2009, and is located on the University of South Florida website: Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice ("Full Employment Tool Kit", "Youth Stuff", and "Independent Living" buttons) www.centerforchildwelfare.org. Additionally, an overview of OFE with the toolkit and Statewide Independent Living Contact List can be printed from <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/ils/ilconcoord.aspx>
 - This is the Strengthening Youth Partnership resource page and the Department of Children and Families' website.

Future Plans

- Continue to collaborate with the (ILSAC), Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections(DOC), Agency for Workforce Innovations (AWI,) the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice, Community-Based Care Lead Agency providers, and local stakeholders to provide technical assistance and support Operation Full Employment's continued expansion and Work with local communities to develop a cost analyses of the initiative;
- Continue to expand employment opportunities for transitioning young adults utilizing local and statewide community resources;
- Continue to research and share effective independent living curriculum with respect to work ethics and readiness and tools for young adults, caregivers, and services workers for a possible statewide standardized curriculum;
- Train policy, practice, and continue to participate in the IL Services RTI re-design workgroup established through the collaborative efforts of Department of Children and Families, Florida Coalition for Children, and ILSAC;
- Continue to engage Florida's young adults who —aged out of care in the QA initiatives and employability preparation;
- Explore data matching with other employment data bases using SSN of our youth ages 13 up to improve data collection and possibly add more qualitative data info from the youth re employment and pre-employment status and also match those data through NYTD or MY Survey data
- Continue to review and update the current employability and placement assistance planning for transitioning young adults to increase applicability, effectiveness, contact and advocacy for OFE with statewide employers (industry leadership); and

- Continue technical assistance to support and encourage the Regions/Circuits in defining their role in supporting, encouraging, and engaging their local communities to continue focusing on successful employment readiness, training, job opportunities, and best practices.

Additional Collaborative Projects

Innovation Sites

2009 & 2010 Updates

- The development of an overarching model of practice was a core improvement strategy in Florida's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP, Goal 1: Develop and Phase-In Family Centered Practice) to address the second round CFSR results for child well-being.
- Along with the Five Year Child and Family Services Plan, (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 1); (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 2); (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 3); and (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 5) the "Family Centered Practice Framework" will eventually undergird all child welfare rules, policy, training, quality assurance and contract requirements. . To develop the model, a competitive process was undertaken to select three catchment areas that would serve as "innovation sites" for assisting the Department of Children and Families with this endeavor. The sites selected were Circuit 1, Circuits 3/8, and Circuit 11. The three innovation sites with input from Florida stakeholders and some national organizations developed consensus on a written document that defines the system values, principles and core components. This document was disseminated to regional and circuit directors, protective investigations staff, and Community-Based Care Lead Agency directors and staff.

Accomplishments

- Florida's child welfare system is monitored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services using data from the statewide automated information system (FSFN) to assess outcome measures and also a qualitative review known as the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The CFSR involves a statewide assessment, an onsite review of each state's child welfare system including a small sample of actual cases. The CFSR conducted in 2008 found that Florida needed improvement in most measures related to child well-being, including family functioning. As a corrective action measure, Florida stakeholders developed an over-arching practice model known as "Florida's Family Centered Practice Framework." Three circuits/community-based care lead agency's volunteered to be demonstration sites for implementation of the practice model (Circuit 1, Circuits 3/8 and Circuit 11). These "Innovation Sites" agreed to have their implementation work

chronicled and to participate in a cross-site evaluation. The implementation work of these three sites will continue to be documented by the evaluator during their second year of rollout.

- The Ounce of Prevention is the contract-based evaluator for the three Innovation Sites with both funding and leadership for the evaluation provided by Casey Family Programs. Evaluation activities were completed through the reporting period and continue into FY 2010 & 2011. The evaluation used a “mixed methods” approach to develop findings about the quality and consistency of family centered practice in the CFSR-QIP Innovation Sites. Included in evaluation are site specific chronicles that highlight the unique strategies developed within each of the three innovation sites for advancing Family Centered Practice at the local level.
- The intent of the evaluation and chronicles are to provide “lessons learned” from the sites and to share the experiences of the Sites with other Community-Based Care Lead Agencies who are also undertaking a variety of their own local initiatives to implement Family centered Practice within their respective communities. The Innovation Site evaluations also are intended to provide baseline feedback about their level of progress and success, as work continue within the Sites to advance Family centered Practice and additional evaluation activities planned through 2011.
- At the 2010 Dependency Summit in August, information on Family Centered Practice was provided to members of the judiciary in collaboration with the Office of State Courts Administration, Office of Court Improvement. Bench card for nine specific types of dependency hearings were developed which incorporated family centered practice principles. These bench cards were major component of the revised dependency bench book finalized in September, 2010. Stakeholders were also invited to participate in an Innovation site meeting, including evaluation update, during the Summit.

Collaboration

- With financial and technical support from Casey Family Programs, an evaluation design for measuring family centered practice, implementation efforts and results of innovation site work was constructed and implemented. Other collaborative work thus far by the innovation sites and Department includes the identification of basic casework practice activities and attributes that reflect the framework components of engaging families, building and leading collaborative teams, assessing children and families, case planning and tracking/adapting case plans.

Program Support

- The Department of Children and Families established a Child and Family Services Review Oversight Group as a subgroup of Secretary’s Task Force of Fostering Success. The subgroup met monthly via conference call and included regular updates from the in the Innovation Sites. The sub-group and conference call was chaired by Judge Cindy Lederman, of the 11th Judicial Circuit, and included the

Office of State Court Administrators as regular participant to provide status reports on the Office of Court Improvement's initiatives to support family centered practice through the dependency court. These monthly calls also included updates on the Innovation Site evaluation. The Innovation Sites also met quarterly, rotating around the three Innovation Sites statewide. These quarterly meetings were supported through both the Department of Children and Families and through Casey Family Programs. Casey also brought in technical assistance and peer support from other statewide child welfare systems (Utah and Idaho) who had previously implemented family centered practice initiatives.

- Information and resources about Family Centered Practice and the related Innovation Sites has been posted on the Florida Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice site at:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/FamilyCenteredPractice/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

Future Steps

- Continued year two evaluation activities including additional quantitative and economic analysis, completion of site specific narratives or chronicles highlighting the change efforts undertaken at each Innovation Site to implement Family Centered Practice.
- Dissemination of the evaluation findings so that these "lessons learned" can be shared with other Community-Based Care Lead Agencies around the state
- The CFSR-QIP required Family Safety Program Office's (FSPO) plan for continuing to support and promote the implementation of local Family Centered Practice after the QIP monitoring period ends is also attached for your review. This plan was developed with input provided by stakeholders including the Innovation Sites and the Child and Family Services Review oversight group and outlines the actions that will continue to be taken by the FSPO for the ongoing support of Family Centered Practice.

The Office of Court Improvement

- The Department of Children and Families has a strong history of collaborating with the court system to address the legal aspects of child welfare and the needs of children and families. Program staff, service agencies, Guardians ad Litem, Children's Legal Services, court officials and staff, and others come together to learn and plan at major events such as the Dependency Court Improvement Summits. These Summits have symbolized the major commitment the Department of Children and Families and its partners have toward full collaboration on topics that are critical to safety, permanency, and well-being.
- The Office of Court Improvement has been a strong partner in the statewide Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in response to the 2008 Child and Family Services review. The state was also selected as a participant in a court targeted technical assistance

project, offered by a collaborative comprised of the American Bar Association Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, the National Center for State Courts, and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The Court Improvement Plan, arising from the Court Collaborative Targeted Technical Assistance, was the source of several action steps included in the QIP. During FFY 2009/10, OCI supported the completion of such steps as delivering training and information on family centered practice to judges and court staff (Goal 1, Strategy A, Action Steps 2, 3, 4, 5); compiling and distributing tools relating to caregiver and child participation in court (Goal 1, Strategy C, Action Steps 5,6) to placement (Goal 1, Strategy D, Step 8), and to assessing safety and risk (Goal 2, Strategy A, Step 8); and distributing court checklist for mental health of children and parents (Goal 3, Strategy B, Step 6).

- The Department of Children and Families and the Office of Court Improvement have continued meeting jointly on a monthly basis for more than three years. These meetings have provided a forum for planning for shared events such as conferences or technical assistance, sharing information on joint projects, and identification of potential problems and solutions.
- This was and continues to be the means for staying mutually informed on the progress of the Child Welfare and the Dependency Court Quality Improvement Plans. During this reporting period, these meetings effective collaboration efforts have resulted for training and other projects. Examples:
 - ◆ Florida's federal Quality Improvement Plan,
 - ◆ Data sharing between Florida Safe Families Network and the court's judicial tracking system, and
 - ◆ 2010 Dependency Summit.
 - ◆ OCI has also implemented a series of Lunch and Learn workshops for the judiciary for the 2011 calendar year. Presenters and content experts will provide workshops on a range of topics to include:
 - ◆ Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
 - ◆ The Opening Doors Project Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Gay, Transgender and Questioning Youth.(LBGTQ)
 - ◆ Evidentiary Issues in Dependency Cases
 - ◆ Trauma Informed Care
 - ◆ Legislative and Case Law updates
 - ◆ The Science of Early Childhood
 - ◆ Educational Needs of Children/Interagency Educational Agreement Co-Parenting
 - ◆ Benefits of Healthy Relationships vs. Consequences of Domestic Violence on the Development of Children

- ◆ Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children

The 2010 Statewide Dependency Summit

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Department of Children and Families organized and implemented the 2010 Dependency Summit. The Summit is one of the largest child welfare conferences in the country, with more than 2,000 participants attending in August 2010, which was the 11th year of this event. The Summit is also seen as the most significant force in driving improved practice by convening a broad array of child protection stakeholders annually to renew our collective goal to lead the nation in the protection of vulnerable children. It is considered a national model for promoting court improvement initiatives with the joint legal and child welfare audience attending the event. All twenty circuits developed local action plans to address areas of concern within their respective communities.

Accomplishments

- The Department of Children and Families reached out to a rich array of stakeholders to bring people together and make change happen during the Summit. The 2010 Dependency Summit boasted record attendance of more than 2,000 child welfare professionals including: Child Protection Investigators (CPI); staff representing: Department of Children and Families regional/circuit administration, Florida Abuse Hotline Central Office, Communications and Community Relations, Contracts, Department of Juvenile Justice, Agency for Persons with Disabilities; Community-Based Care Lead Agencies, Providers and Community Partners, Office of Court Improvement, and Research, Curriculum Development and Training; Substance Abuse & Mental Health professionals, Domestic Violence and Refugee Services professionals, Children's Legal Services/State Attorney's Office/Office of Attorney General and/or other legal staff, Department of Health/Child Protective Team (CPT) members; Guardians Ad Litem; attorneys for parents; Judges and Magistrates (more than 80 attendees), Law Enforcement Child Protection professionals, former foster youth, Foster and Adoptive Parents, Colleges and University staff/faculty, and Legislators and/or legislative staff. Federal Children's Justice Act grant funds were used to provide scholarships for attendees to ensure a diverse audience of child welfare and related stakeholder professionals.
- More than 60 different workshops were offered to increase professional knowledge with major content tracks including Family centered Practice, Multidisciplinary Teaming, legal and legal advocacy, and child protective investigations. Workshop sessions were recorded and made available on the Center's website at: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/videos/Pages/depend09all.aspx>.

Collaboration

- The training content developed for the 2010 Summit was established by an interdisciplinary panel including representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups in Florida including: Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Department of Juvenile Justice, Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program, Task Force on Fostering Success, Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA), Department of Health Child Protection Teams, Florida Coalition for Children, Adult Mental Health Program, Children's Mental Health Program, Substance Abuse & Mental Health programs, Florida Abuse Hotline, Big Bend Community-Based Care, Children's Legal Services, Family Services of Metro Orlando, Office of Court Improvement, Department of Education, Florida's Children First!, Domestic Violence Program, Regional Conflict Counsel, Florida's YouthSHINE, Circuit Judges, Citrus County Sheriff's Office, Executive Office of the Governor, Agency for Workforce Innovation, Foster Parent Association, and Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

Program Support

- The Summit provides support and technical assistance to Program staff, service agencies, Guardians ad Litem, Children's Legal Services, court officials and staff, and others by providing an opportunity to come together to learn and plan. The Summit symbolizes the major commitment the Department of Children and Families and its partners have toward full collaboration and sharing on topics that are critical to safety, permanency, and well-being. The Department of Children and Families also uses its Criminal Justice Act grant funds to provide scholarship support to ensure a broad array of professional disciplines in attendance. During the 2010 Summit, over 600 scholarships were offered allowing youth, foster parents, frontline staff (case management and investigations), child protection team, juvenile justice, legal, mental health, disabilities and medical providers to attend.
- The Summit also includes both Circuit and Professional Breakout sessions. Circuit breakout allow for all Summit attendees from their specific geographical area to convene to address local issues. Accordingly, Circuit breakout sessions complete an action plan that is used as a strategy for addressing their specific issues.

Future Plans

- Future plans include continuing the annual Dependency Summit in September 2011. The theme for the 2011 Summit is a focus on Family Accountability.

Florida Dependency Court Improvement Program (CIP)

- The Department of Children and Families continues to partner with the Office of Court Improvement to plan and conduct statewide conferences that include workshops on multiple aspects of the case planning process. These workshops are attended by many different types of professionals from the child welfare system. Examples of professionals include parents' attorneys, judges, case workers, clerks and service providers.
- The Office of Court Improvement (OCI) staff has supported implementation of the Department of Children and Families' Quality Improvement Plan particularly in the areas of family centered practice, permanency, and well-being. For example:
 - ◆ At the August 2009 Dependency Summit, the judges and court staff attendees were provided a session titled "Introduction to Family Centered Practice" presented by Judge Joanne Brown and Judge John Frusciante. Other topics complementary to family centered practice were offered on the court specific track and in the regular sessions, which were also available to court staff and judges. Judge Joanne Brown and Judge John Frusciante taught a workshop on "Key Components of Good Case Planning" to judges and magistrates at the judicial track of the 2009 Dependency Summit. Judge Frusciante also provided a fifteen minute summary of the workshop on a follow-up conference call to judges and magistrates who did not attend the summit. A "Family Centered Practice" fact sheet, which provides an introduction to the concept, the Florida approach to implementing it, and references the information shared at the Dependency Summit, was distributed to all relevant judges and magistrates in December 2009.
 - ◆ Following an extensive study and report on appellate delays in termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings by the District Court of Appeal Performance & Accountability Commission, several rules of court procedure were amended to improve timeliness in TPR cases. In addition, an OCI attorney conducted training with law clerks and one appellate judge at the First District Court of Appeals that provided an overview of the dependency and termination of parental rights process (November 6, 2009). The OCI attorney conducted training, open to all appellate law clerks and appellate judges throughout the state as well as Supreme Court law clerks, on February 4, 2010. Also, complementary training was provided and is available online for Children's Legal Services attorneys.
 - ◆ OCI staff created a judicial checklist outlining promising practices aimed at improving placement stability. The checklist was approved by the Dependency Court Improvement Panel and given to new dependency judges at the 2010 Florida Judicial College, Phase II on March 24, 2010. The checklist will be included in the 2011 dependency bench book, and a placement stability section highlighting appropriate items from the checklist has been added to each of the newly revised dependency hearing bench cards. The 2011 bench book is expected to be released in May 2011.

- ◆ OCI staff created a judicial checklist addressing the mental health of the child and a checklist addressing the mental health of the parents (with emphasis on dual diagnosis). The checklist for the mental health of a child was provided to new dependency judges at the March 2010 Florida Judicial College, Phase II. The checklist on mental health of the parent was included in the revised bench book which was released in September 2010.
- ◆ OCI and the Dependency Court Improvement Panel met on December 8, 2009 in Tampa, Florida for a one day meeting to discuss the ABA publication "Child Safety: A Guide for Judges and Attorneys." Co-author Therese Roe Lund (National Resource Center for Child Protective Services) and Timothy Travis (Travis Consulting Company) led the discussion of the safety guide with the panel. The panel decided to adopt the ABA guide as a tool for Florida judges and magistrates. The guide was taught to judges and magistrates at the Advanced Judicial Studies Judicial College in May 2010 and at the 2010 Dependency Summit in August.
- ◆ The Office of Court Improvement and the multidisciplinary Dependency Court Improvement Panel (chaired by Judge Jeri Beth Cohen) created bench cards for 9 of the major dependency hearings. Family centered practice principles were incorporated into all of the bench cards. These bench cards constitute a major component of the revised dependency bench book, which was finalized in September 2010.

The Performance Measures Workgroup

- In 2008, the Department of Children and Families' Secretary appointed the Performance Measures Workgroup to manage the implementation of the Regional Quality Assurance (QA) Model. The workgroup is composed of senior managers from the Department of Children and Families and Chief Executive Officers and board members from several Community-Based Care lead agencies. This team coordinated with the Department of Children and Families on implementation of the federal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) and addressed performance indicators and measurement topics, especially by working with community-based care lead agency contract measures. This group continues to help the Department of Children and Families identify measures that provide over-arching strategies that guide improvement in Florida's child welfare system.

The Florida Relative Search Pilot Project Update

- In June of 2008, the Family Safety Program Office within the Department of Children and Families launched the Florida Relative Search Pilot Project as one of our innovative strategies for helping to achieve permanency and/or placement stability in a more timely, efficient and effective manner for Florida's children in care. The goal of the pilot project was threefold:
 - ◆ To help meet the 2012 goal, while also increasing out-of-home placement stability by increasing the number of children in approved relative placements;
 - ◆ To help increase the number of children in out-of-home care who are able to achieve timely permanency; and
 - ◆ To help provide our children in care with permanent family connections.
- For the pilot project, the Department of Children and Families contracted with an established company to provide search operators who would perform searches and detailed data analysis of results for relatives of missing parents or others significant to a child in the state's care. Searches were to be conducted for unknown relatives of specifically named birth parents, adoptive parents, step-parents and grandparents of the region's children in care, and results were to be made available to the child welfare professional/requestor on a secure site no later than 48 hours after the search request was submitted.
- The six month pilot commenced on June 1, 2008, and concluded on November 30, 2008. The initial pilot area was the Northeast Region (both Department of Children and Families Child Protective Investigations personnel as well as Community-Based Care Lead Agency/CMO Case Management staff); subsequently, the pilot was expanded to include local Department of Children and Families Child Protective Investigations staff in Circuit 2.
- In the final analysis of the pilot (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy E, Action Step 4), albeit outside the reporting period, it is noteworthy to mention that pending the availability of funds, this type of system could provide much needed assistance to areas that have no current search capabilities other than what the Child Protective Investigators and Case Managers are able to do on their own. Over 20% of non-users with no search person in their area indicated that they "do not always have time" to conduct relative searches, and 7.7% indicated that searching for relatives is not a priority, because their time is taken up with conducting required diligent searches for absent parents. The relative search pilot project was closed out due to available funding being reallocated to other strategic initiatives.

Chapter 3

Program Support

Training & Quality Assurance

Training

Child Welfare Staff

2009 - 2010 Update

- During the reporting period of October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010, the Office of Family Safety continued to be responsible for the establishment of statewide training policy, provision of technical assistance, and implementation of several statewide training events. The office also continued to provide oversight of content for three contracts with two state universities involving pre-service curriculum development; trainer and child welfare staff certification through a state Training Academy; and a web-based knowledge resource, “Florida’s Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice”.
- The Department of Children and Families’ commitment to the education, training and professional development of child welfare staff continues to focus on the following key areas:
 - ◆ Pre-service training and certification programs;
 - ◆ Advanced in-service training focused on program specific systems of care;
 - ◆ Integration of service delivery across social service agencies, programs and systems;
 - ◆ Parental engagement and family centered practice;
 - ◆ Supervisory training, focusing on (a) management/leadership and (b) clinical supervision skills development;
 - ◆ Emergent needs training;
 - ◆ Foster and adoptive parent recruitment, preparation and ongoing training; and,
 - ◆ Child Welfare staff recruitment and retention programs.

- The Child Welfare Training Program is designed to achieve the following goals:
 - ◆ Positively impact the quality of decisions made regarding children and families who require assistance from programs providing child welfare services;
 - ◆ Positively impact the quality of care of children who must be removed from their homes due to abuse, abandonment or neglect;
 - ◆ Support the state's achievement of the goals of the Federal Child and Family Service Review and Florida's Quality Improvement Plan;
 - ◆ Support the Department of Children and Families' child protection staff, contracted Sheriffs' Offices and contracted community-based providers of child welfare services through the development of a single integrated pre-service curriculum that can be delivered to reflect the local culture of the state and the system of care of the employer;
 - ◆ Provide quality information and resources to the child welfare workforce in a user friendly and timely manner; and
 - ◆ Maximize federal financial participation funding through the appropriate design and delivery of Florida's Child Welfare Pre-Service Curriculum Training Program.
- In addition to building a sustainable partnership with child welfare stakeholders, the Department of Children and Families continues to support the implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), through the development of mandatory performance improvement solutions designed to achieve the QIP outcomes and goals.

Accomplishments

- During 2009 - 2010, the Department of Children and Families, working in partnership with the Child Welfare Training Academy (University of South Florida) and its pre-service curriculum provider (Florida International University), as well as, its' Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and Sheriffs' Offices, implemented a new statewide Single Integrated Pre-Service Curriculum. The Single Integrated Curriculum built upon the existing child welfare pre-service instructional content, however, Florida Safe Families Network (SACWIS/FSFN System) navigational training was woven into the content throughout the relevant instructional modules. In addition to the FSFN related instructional content, curriculum materials related to Florida's recently implemented statewide Family Centered Practice Framework, family preservation services, and other strategic initiatives were included in the content. In order to support statewide implementation of the new curriculum, significant advance preparation work was necessary to construct a series of "gold standard" teaching cases in the training region of the FSFN system. The training region allows newly hired staff participating in pre-service training to complete a variety of "shell" or "dummy" case activities in a mock-FSN system so that they may gain competence in system navigation and documentation requirements. Phase

in of the new single integrated curriculum occurred from January 2010 – October 2010, on a Community-Based Care Lead Agency -by-Community-Based Care Lead Agency basis according to the unique hiring and training schedules. A variety of ongoing technical assistance, data entry workshops, consultant-based support and train-the-trainers events were completed in order to support statewide implementation.

- During 2009 - 2010, the Department of Children and Families, working in conjunction with its community-based partners, embedded the policy and procedure framework that has historically structured the statewide training system into Florida Administrative Code, by developing Florida's first "Training and Certification Rule." Rule promulgation occurred two weeks after the end of this reporting period, becoming effective on October 14, 2010.
- The Training and Certification Rule, 65C-33, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), codifies the training and certification process of Florida's child welfare services staff, by carrying out the provisions of Section 402.40, Florida Statutes (F.S.), regarding child welfare training, and the provisions of Section 402.731, F.S., regarding child welfare certification. The rule:
 - ◆ Sets forth the minimum standards for Florida's Child Welfare Professional training and certification process;
 - ◆ Establishes the position classifications and certification designations requiring Child Protection Professional certification, and identifies specific casework and interpersonal skills (through Department of Children and Families approved "Performance Assessments" included by reference in the rule) which must be successfully demonstrated by each candidate in order to be certified;
 - ◆ Provides for qualified individuals to maintain multiple certifications;
 - ◆ Defines terms relating to the training and certification of Child Protection Professionals and Child Welfare Trainers;
 - ◆ Addresses additional training and certification requirements for Supervisors;
 - ◆ Establishes Child Welfare Trainer certification requirements; and
 - ◆ Sets forth in-service training requirements for continuing professional development in the areas of Professional Ethics, Legal, and Practice Skills for the recertification of Child Protection Professionals.
- These minimum standards ensure that each participant has successfully attained and continues to maintain and develop the knowledge, skills, abilities and priorities necessary to competently carry out his or her child welfare work responsibilities. In order to support the tracking of training and certification requirements of staff, Florida also completed a series of information technology enhancements to SkillNET its web-based learning management system.
- Child welfare professionals throughout the state must also be proficient in their use of Florida's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS),

known as the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN). During the past several years, numerous in-service navigational trainings have occurred across the state as the new FSFN components have been deployed, however, during this reporting period, the ongoing navigational FSFN system training has been integrated into the state's newly revised single, core pre-service child welfare curriculum.

- The Department of Children and Families approved integrated pre-service curriculum, required by s. 402.40, F.S., was completely revised and implemented across the state during the final months of this reporting period. In order to help provide flexibility and help meet local provider needs, each agency was able to set its own timetable for transition to the new curriculum, beginning January 1, 2010. Through the expertise and collaboration of the Florida International University contracted curriculum developers as well as the University of South Florida Child Welfare Training Academy, full statewide implementation of the integrated pre-service curriculum was accomplished by September 15, 2010, and the previous curriculum was archived on September 30, 2010.
- In addition to integrating FSFN functionality with statutory/rule requirements, and in response to identified needs cited in the Florida QIP, the new core pre-service curriculum focuses heavily on the importance of the worker's relationship with the family, as well as the frequency and quality of the contacts between the worker and the child and family during home visits (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 2). Included in the revised curriculum are best practices in a family centered approach to child welfare, along with the state's Family Centered Practice Framework; family centered practice is now prominently woven throughout the pre-service training for all newly hired child protective investigators, case managers, and Children's Legal Services attorneys.
- Beginning in 2008 and continuing through this reporting period, the Department of Children and Families, working in partnership with state and local subject matter experts and a team of instructional designers, developed a week long intensive training workshop entitled, "The Family centered Practice Training Series". Workshop content focuses on the theory, philosophy and paradigm change related to a family centered approach to intervention, as well as a number of engagement and family teaming strategies designed to improve the quality and consistency of practice. Implementation occurred in 2009, through a number of local train-the-trainer initiatives; ongoing implementation of family centered practice training has been and continues to occur for investigators, case managers, supervisors, program managers, and legal services (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Steps 2 and 3) through both pre-service and in-service training opportunities.
- Best practices in a family centered approach to child welfare, along with both the frequency and quality of home visits are also now included in the state's newly redesigned Performance Assessments, each of which identifies position specific competencies to be demonstrated through investigation, casework and interpersonal standards which must be met in order for child welfare professionals to become certified. After successful completion of all required classroom, field and online training provided as part of Florida's Child Welfare Pre-Service Training Program,

and upon approval of the candidate's supervisor, the candidate is considered eligible to take the Performance Assessment. The Performance Assessment is a standardized, on-the-job, competency-based performance evaluation of child protection professionals' demonstrated casework and interpersonal skills, in order to assess their knowledge, skills, abilities and priorities in performing their jobs. Each child protection professional is evaluated in terms of the primary function(s) of the position which he or she occupies.

- Performance Assessments (formerly known as “Field Based Performance Assessments”) have been part of the certification process for Florida child welfare professionals since certification was established in the early 1990's. However, with the completion of the new Training and Certification Rule, and in conjunction with Florida's new QA model, in addition to the new capabilities and structure of the FSFN system, it became necessary to update the Performance Assessments for all three program position classifications (Protective Investigations; Case Management; Licensing) and certification designations (frontline worker; supervisor) in order to ensure statewide consistency and adherence to quality practice standards. Statewide workgroups comprised of representatives from the Department of Children and Families, Sheriffs' Offices and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies for each of the three program areas were formed in August 2009, and the groups diligently worked on the development of the new Assessments for over eight months.
- Each Performance Assessment was developed to be strengths-based and quality focused (rather than compliance driven), in order to evaluate the quality of the candidate's ability to demonstrate core competency elements through skilled performance of minimum applicable key case activities. Once completed, the new Performance Assessments were included by reference in the new rule, and with the adoption of the rule. Although every agency must utilize the standard Performance Assessment approved by the Department of Children and Families for certification candidates, each agency may incorporate into the Assessment additional components which reflect the agency's own System of Care, Peer Review, or Quality Assurance measures. These additions must not change the core elements of the Assessment, and although they may be more prescriptive than statute, rule and Department of Children and Families policy, they may not be less so. Both the Casework and Interpersonal components of each Performance Assessment must undergo a two tiered evaluation, whereby each component is assessed by two evaluators, either internal or external to the employing agency, both of whom must be certified, and at least one of whom shall be an “independent evaluator” of the candidate's Performance Assessment (i.e., “independent” in that s/he is not in the candidate's chain of command). If certified as a supervisor, the candidate's supervisor may serve as the first tier evaluator, but is not required to do so.
- The Department of Children and Families recognizes the supervisor as the foundational element in modeling a family centered approach with his or her staff and in mentoring staff in critical analysis skills which are so important in good child welfare practice. The Training and Certification Rule requires that in order to be certified, all child welfare supervisors must successfully complete (a) the applicable

Performance Assessment (which will evaluate the supervisor's interpersonal skills as well as his or her ability to accurately and appropriately assess frontline staff investigative or casework practice), and (b) the recently revised "Supervising for Excellence" curriculum.

- During 2009, the Department of Children and Families, working in partnership with state and local subject experts and a team of instructional designers, began the process of updating the required "Supervising for Excellence" training for all newly hired/appointed supervisors, so that the content would more clearly frame the role and expectations of a supervisor as a mentor and teacher. Concurrently, this update to the curriculum was designed to also convey the critical link between effective supervision and quality assurance systems, as the Department of Children and Families' recently developed regional quality assurance model builds upon the role of supervisors as a key frontline measure for ensuring quality of practice. Other revisions to the curriculum include integrating the Department of Children and Families' Family Centered Practice Framework. The new "Supervising for Excellence" curriculum was completed in the summer of 2009, and several train-the-trainer sessions were conducted during this reporting period to help facilitate local in-service training of supervisors (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action Steps 4 and 5). Future plans include ongoing minor revisions to the "Supervising for Excellence" curriculum as a way to further enhance the content.
- During 2009 and continuing into 2010, the Department of Children and Families, working in partnership with state and local subject experts and a team of instructional designers, developed the Integration of Services Training Series (ISTS). The ISTS was a week long intensive in-services training curriculum that built on the Family Centered Practice Series and provided module specific instruction related to child welfare professionals working in partnership with medical/developmental, substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health professionals. Essential teaming strategies were included within the instructional content and woven through each of the content specific modules. The ISTS was rolled out statewide in Spring 2010.
- In January 2010 the Family Safety Program Office coordinated with the University of South Florida Child Welfare Training Academy to produce a series of statewide trainings on "Teaming With Families". This practice initiative was separated into two components. The initial trainings were train-the-trainer sessions with the goal of expanding the number of certified trainers in the state with the capacity to train field staff on Family Group Decision Making, Family Group Conferencing, Family Team Conferencing, Team Decision Making and Permanency Teaming Process. Subsequent trainings were directed at child protective investigators and case managers and reinforced that "teaming" activities can and should occur throughout the life of the case and are not solely precipitated by major crisis events. Teaming should be a regular, integral component of various aspects of casework practice.
- During 2009 and 2010, a variety of trainings were made available related to the use of psychotropic medications for children in out-of-home care. These trainings were prompted by recommendations of the Gabriel Myers workgroup, convened after a

high profile suicide of a child in foster care who was taking psychotropic medications at the time of his death. Training included the implementation of a three tiered strategy that included a web-based tutorial of foundational content related to policy and statutory requirements on informed consent and case planning considerations, a series of half day seminars made available through statewide Regional Trainings or the Annual Dependency Summit that included more in-depth practice considerations, and the aforementioned Integration of Services Training Series, which offered a detailed focus on teaming strategies, a key finding and recommendation of the Gabriel Myers Workgroup.

Collaboration

- Florida's child welfare training programs integrate strategies to enable child welfare staff to develop and refine the knowledge, skills, abilities and priorities that staff must possess and demonstrate on a regular basis in order to provide the level of care required by the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).
- Planning reflects the current and future needs of the Department of Children and Families and child welfare stakeholders and partners, and is based on a continuous cycle of integrating needs assessment data and program evaluation results into the established critical education, training, certification and professional development needs of child welfare staff. This process is designed to be flexible and responsive within the framework of federal and state requirements and national best practices.
- Florida continues to facilitate monthly trainer's conference calls and maintains a trainer's list-serve as key strategies for information sharing across providers. The Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice is also used as a web-based information dissemination system, with over 7,000 registered users who can receive "blast" email from the Center. The Center also continues to maintain the "Trainer's Corner" a web page dedicated to training related policy, procedure, curricula, job aides and other related information. The Center has averaged approximately 2,000,000 "hits" per month throughout 2010.
- The Office of Family Safety has continued to work with numerous stakeholders throughout the state in the design/redesign of the integrated pre-service curriculum, as well as the core Performance Assessments, and in-service trainings including "The Family centered Training Series," "Mentoring through Qualitative Discussion," "Supervising for Excellence" and the "Integration of Services Training Series." As a matter of practice, the Department of Children and Families convened teams of subject matter experts, assisted by instructional designers, to review and develop all of the training materials for each of the projects named above.
- Through our contract and close working relationship with the Florida State University (FSU) Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation, during this reporting period the Office of Family Safety has been able to ensure that the daily practice of a family centered approach is embedded in all Clearinghouse trainings, posters and technical assistance provided to all 64 Supervised Visitation programs and Centers serving children and families in the child welfare (or family court) system throughout the

state. Through the Office of Family Safety's collaboration with Clearinghouse personnel in the concept, development and design of each poster, not only do program/center staff statewide become familiar with and proficient in family centered practice, but the eye catching posters are designed to engage and educate the children and families served as well.

- The Department of Children and Families has also been working with the Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Health and the Department of Law Enforcement to develop cross-training opportunities for law enforcement and related child protection staff working within these state agencies. This partnership culminated with a signed interagency agreement to support resource sharing, cross training and collaboration, as well as, core instructional objectives that must be included in each agency's foundational training content. This partnership was made possible through the oversight and support of the Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Council.

Program Support

- During this reporting period, the Department of Children and Families relied heavily upon current initiatives through our partnership with the University of South Florida's "Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice," as a model for online instructional learning. The "Center" continues to provide ready access by any interested stakeholders to training and reference materials, reports, "best practice" links, and other supports of excellence in child welfare practice. The primary objectives of the Center are:
 - ♦ To ensure timely and consistent information and training to Florida's child welfare professionals emphasizing easy access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, resulting in one right answer accessible to all users statewide on demand;
 - ♦ To link customers to resources, innovations, and evidence-based models and best practices throughout the country;
 - ♦ To provide virtual meetings, live training and educational events, and online collaborative forums that facilitate communication and information sharing among Florida's child welfare professionals and related stakeholders such as foster parents, youth, and education professionals; and,
 - ♦ To provide consistent and authoritative answers to frequently asked questions posed by the Center's customers, and to disseminate answers statewide in cooperation with the Office of Family Safety.
- The Center supports Florida's child welfare professionals in achieving practice excellence and helping to keep children safe, by providing immediate access to relevant, accurate and consistent information to Florida's child welfare community.
- During this reporting period, the Center has provided significant benefit to the child welfare community by serving as the host site for numerous webinars in order to

disseminate vast amounts of information on any number of important topics quickly and efficiently to a statewide audience of trainers, investigators, case managers, supervisors, executive staff and other interested agency personnel. Center queries for information (“hits”) now exceed 2,000,000 per month, attesting to recognition of the enormous value of this resource by child welfare staff around the state. In addition, the Center’s “Trainer Corner” site, implemented during the last reporting period, is fully functional, and has proven to be an excellent resource for child welfare trainers statewide to access relevant information such as the statewide master training calendar, numerous state and national web-based in-service trainings, and informative/instructional child welfare resources. The Center may be accessed at: www.centerforchildwelfare.org.

- Another area of program support during this reporting period is the ongoing enhancement of the Department of Children and Families’ ability to accurately track and monitor statewide training information through the technology platform. The SkillNET Learning Management System is the approved system used to train, test, track and manage child welfare training in the State of Florida. In 2000, SkillNET was developed in order to meet identified needs by being accessible to all authorized users statewide, and by performing functions related to:
 - ◆ training registration and tracking;
 - ◆ reporting, testing and evaluation;
 - ◆ online training delivery; and
 - ◆ tracking of certification/recertification status.
- The system also provides statistical data that assists in determining the effectiveness of both classroom and computer-based training; in providing this information, the system helps evaluators assess the extent to which Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and training entities are meeting their contractual obligations and performance expectations.
- SkillNET was designed to deliver real time data to users, and is one means by which the Department of Children and Families is able to draw down federal dollars with regard to tracking training information; use of the system is also required in the new rule, 65C-33, F.A.C. Currently, the system is utilized by the Department of Children and Families, Community-Based Care Lead Agencies, Sheriffs’ Offices, and the Child Welfare Training Academy, and includes archival information dating back to the mid-1990’s.
- During this reporting period, the Department of Children and Families contracted with the system developers and Department of Children and Families IT staff to work to stabilize the system and bring it up to current technology standards. Deployment of the most recent “Build” is scheduled for mid January, 2011; it is anticipated that within the next reporting period, the system will be fully functional and will meet users’ identified needs so that, at a minimum:
 - ◆ The system capacity will be sufficient to meet the needs of all authorized users;

- ◆ All authorized users will be able to input, retrieve and access current, accurate, real time information in the reporting and tracking components of the system;
- ◆ The system training capability will enable users to reliably access online curricula when needed;
- ◆ The system testing capability will enable designated authorized individuals to add, delete, shuffle and otherwise configure pre-test, post-test and waiver test questions/answers as needed;
- ◆ The system tracking and reporting capability will enable authorized users to obtain accurate information from the SkillNET database in a timely manner and usable format; and
- ◆ The system will be able to perform all other functions identified by the Office of Family Safety as necessary to meet user needs and optimize system effectiveness.

Future Plans

- Continued implementation of the Integration of Services Training Series
- Working in partnership with the Department of Children and Families' Children's Mental Health Program Training related to Trauma Informed Care
- Ongoing training and professional development related to Family Centered Practice, including specific technical assistance in Florida's Innovation Sites, or CFSR demonstration sites
- Training and technical assistance related to youth in care with case plan goals of APPLA
- Training related to safety planning and related risk assessment
- Expanded library of web-based ongoing or in-service training content
- Continued implementation of the statewide Dependency Summit
- Review and modification of required Child Welfare Training Academy structure and related pre-service training content
- Expansion of Title IV-E student stipends available for BSW and MSW students and related partnerships with Schools of Social Work

The 2010 Statewide Dependency Summit

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Department of Children and Families organized and implemented the 2010 Dependency Summit. The Summit is one of the largest child welfare conferences in the country, with more than 2,000 participants attending in August 2010, which was the 11th year of this event. The Summit is also seen as the most significant force in driving improved practice by convening a broad array of child protection stakeholders annually to renew our collective goal to lead the nation in the protection of vulnerable children. It is considered a national model for promoting court improvement initiatives with the joint legal and child welfare audience attending the event. All twenty circuits developed local action plans to address areas of concern within their respective communities.

Accomplishments

- The Department of Children and Families reached out to a rich array of stakeholders to bring people together and make change happen during the Summit. The 2010 Dependency Summit boasted record attendance of more than 2,000 child welfare professionals including: Child Protection Investigators (CPI); staff representing: Department of Children and Families regional/circuit administration, Florida Abuse Hotline Central Office, Communications and Community Relations, Contracts, Department of Juvenile Justice, Agency for Persons with Disabilities; Community-Based Care Lead Agencies, Providers and Community Partners, Office of Court Improvement, and Research, Curriculum Development and Training; Substance Abuse & Mental Health professionals, Domestic Violence and Refugee Services professionals, Children's Legal Services/State Attorney's Office/Office of Attorney General and/or other legal staff, Department of Health/Child Protective Team (CPT) members; Guardians Ad Litem; attorneys for parents; Judges and Magistrates (more than 80 attendees), Law Enforcement Child Protection professionals, former foster youth, Foster and Adoptive Parents, Colleges and University staff/faculty, and Legislators and/or legislative staff. Federal Children's Justice Act grant funds were used to provide scholarships for attendees to ensure a diverse audience of child welfare and related stakeholder professionals.
- More than 60 different workshops were offered to increase professional knowledge with major content tracks including Family centered Practice, Multidisciplinary Teaming, legal and legal advocacy, and child protective investigations. Workshop sessions were recorded and made available on the Center's website at: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/videos/Pages/depend09all.aspx>.

Collaboration

- The training content developed for the 2010 Summit was established by an interdisciplinary panel including representatives from a variety of stakeholder

groups in Florida including: Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Department of Juvenile Justice, Statewide Guardian ad Litem Program, Task Force on Fostering Success, Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA), Department of Health Child Protection Teams, Florida Coalition for Children, Adult Mental Health Program, Children's Mental Health Program, Substance Abuse & Mental Health programs, Florida Abuse Hotline, Big Bend Community-Based Care, Children's Legal Services, Family Services of Metro Orlando, Office of Court Improvement, Department of Education, Florida's Children First!, Domestic Violence Program, Regional Conflict Counsel, Florida's YouthSHINE, Circuit Judges, Citrus County Sheriff's Office, Executive Office of the Governor, Agency for Workforce Innovation, Foster Parent Association, and Agency for Persons with Disabilities.

Program Support

- The Summit provides support and technical assistance to Program staff, service agencies, Guardians ad Litem, Children's Legal Services, court officials and staff, and others by providing an opportunity to come together to learn and plan. The Summit symbolizes the major commitment the Department of Children and Families and its partners have toward full collaboration and sharing on topics that are critical to safety, permanency, and well-being. The Department of Children and Families also uses its Criminal Justice Act grant funds to provide scholarship support to ensure a broad array of professional disciplines in attendance. During the 2010 Summit, over 600 scholarships were offered allowing youth, foster parents, frontline staff (case management and investigations), child protection team, juvenile justice, legal, mental health, disabilities and medical providers to attend.
- The Summit also includes both Circuit and Professional Breakout sessions. Circuit breakout allow for all Summit attendees from their specific geographical area to convene to address local issues. Accordingly, Circuit breakout sessions complete an action plan that is used as a strategy for addressing their specific issues.

Future Plans

- Future plans include continuing the annual Dependency Summit in September 2011. The theme for the 2011 Summit is a focus on Family Accountability.

Regional Training

- Statewide Regional Trainings were also held on January and June 2010, in which day-long training seminars were held in all six Department of Children and Families operational Regions. Approximately 1,000 participants attended each of the two Regional Trainings (2,000 total participants for the year), in which a variety of workshops were made available ranging on topics from investigations, domestic violence., mental health, developmental issues, teamwork and family engagement,

independent living services, psychotropic medications and considerations and Florida Safe Families Network.

Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice (The Center)

- The Center was established to provide needed information and support to Florida's professional child welfare stakeholders. Funding was provided through a contract with the Department of Children and Families. Operating within the University of South Florida's College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI), the Center served Child Protective Investigation professionals from the Department of Children and Families and various Sheriffs' Offices, Child Welfare Legal Services provided by Department of Children and Families and the Attorney General or State's Attorney Offices, and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies.
- The Center functions under the guidance of a joint statewide Steering Committee of stakeholders who act similarly to a Board of Directors. The Steering Committee's mission is as follows:
- "The Steering Committee will establish the vision for excellence in the protection of children and promotion of families. Through oversight and guidance to the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice, strategies will be developed to ensure sustained support of customer needs in addition to addressing solutions for emerging issues."
- To review the Center's primary objectives refer to Program Support in the Child Welfare Training section of this Chapter.

Accomplishments

- A fully searchable online knowledge base is built around current rules and policies, embedded links to relevant Florida State and Federal statutes and rules, recent decision memoranda or policy interpretations, fiscal requirements, national best practices, research, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) with authoritative answers. The Center processed requests from customers for policy clarification or interpretation by acquiring answers from the Department of Children and Families and posting those in the Center database. Knowledge base access is available online to all users 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- The Center sponsored live meetings and other web conferencing services for stakeholder customers. Interactive web events may be coordinated by the Center or by the leadership of each stakeholder agency without the need for Center involvement. Training, meetings, workgroup events, etc. are among the many ways this service can be used. The Center provided training and support in using these services at the request of stakeholder members.

Collaboration

- The collaboration component served as an interactive online information sharing portal where peers and experts can interact with each other and share documents. This component featured video conferencing, video streamed educational and training presentations, and other interactive functions designed to facilitate learning, information sharing, and identification of training and technical issues for inclusion in the Center's services.

Program Support

- The Center's mission is to support and facilitate the identification, expansion, and transfer of expert knowledge and best practices in child welfare case practice, direct services, management, finances, policy, and organizational development to child welfare and child protection stakeholders throughout Florida.
- Florida continues to expand the breadth of online training available to staff through the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice (Center). During the reporting period, Florida added numerous web-based training content and developed tracking and testing mechanisms for those persons completing online training via the Center. The successful completion of web-based trainings can then be used for meeting ongoing training requirements needed to maintain professional certification. During 2009 - 2010, over 100 additional hours of web-based training hours were made available to staff via the Center.
- The Department of Children and Families continues to work with the Center to enhance the number and quality of online in-service training. This will include improving both the post-testing and the tracking of post-testing, functions available through the Center so participants can obtain needed ongoing training hours to maintain professional certification.
- The Department of Children and Families continues to work with the Center to improve the type of information available in the Center's Knowledge Library including:
 - ◆ reclassifying available information categories so they align with the major child welfare service delivery functions of prevention, investigations, in-home, and out-of-home; and
 - ◆ assigning key program staff as the programmatic lead for advising and providing input on the type of information made available within each category.
- The Department of Children and Families works with the Center to develop specific Family centered Practice and Quality Parenting resource pages on the Center's website. This will allow key information pertaining to these strategic initiatives of the Department of Children and Families to be readily available.

Technical Assistance

- Florida requested and received technical assistance from numerous national resource centers (NRC), as well as private foundations. The technical assistance was helpful with defining and implementing a sustained practice framework (for both child protective and child welfare staff) with an emphasis on a strengths-based/individualized approach to family engagement. Family centered practice was a key factor underlying many gaps in safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families.
- The Court Collaborative Targeted Technical Assistance group continued to support implementation of the Court Improvement Plan, particularly on activities that are embedded in the Department of Children and Families' Program Improvement Plan such as developing a Judicial Safety Checklist.
- The National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections continues to provide support to Circuit One in the implementation of a Family Centered Practice Framework. In particular, they worked with this circuit on implementing a peer coaching model.
- The National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare continued technical assistance on recognizing and addressing relapse dynamics and other special issues for families with identified substance abuse problems. The basic substance abuse and mental health (behavioral health), physical, and dental health needs of children are an ongoing concern. NCSACW staff conducted a Webinar related to family centered treatment in March, 2010. NRC for Organizational Improvement provided assistance and support regarding performance measurement and other processes relevant to a continuous quality improvement model. This National Resource Center provided technical assistance for statewide quality assurance staff relating to case review capacity.
- The National Resource Center for Child Abuse Prevention (FRIENDS) assisted local prevention planning teams with information regarding the importance of parent leadership, evidenced-based programming, and training on the five protective factors.
- The state also worked with national and state consultants, such as Eckerd Family Foundation and the Youth Law Center, to continue efforts that focus on recruiting and retaining quality foster families and adoptive families that meet the needs of children.
- Finally, Casey Family Programs has been a major partner in several significant technical assistance and implementation projects. These included working with Circuits 3 & 8 on implementing Solutions-based Casework and creating a Library Partnership for service referrals; with Circuit 4 on establishing prevention programs in neighborhood centers; training and support for Permanency Roundtables in Duval, Alachua, and Broward Counties; and evaluating the model fidelity, results, and lessons learned for innovation site use of family centered practice;

- Florida will continue to request assistance from the National Resource Centers and national foundations as we move forward with statewide implementation and institutionalization of family centered practice. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 4) (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 8) The Children’s Bureau facilitates quarterly Technical Assistance Integration conference calls with Department of Children and Families, the National Resource Centers and other participants. These calls and the consolidated status/activity documentation are proving very helpful to assure coordination and share knowledge.
- The Department of Children and Families will continue our partnership with the Office of Court Improvement and with the Court Collaborative. Family centered practice involves the entire child welfare system and is dependent on the legal/judiciary process to advocate for children. The involvement of children and youth, as age appropriate, is critical to making sure legal processes meet their needs. In addition, caregivers need information and assistance in order to participate in legal activities appropriately and effectively, and to serve as key partners in family engagement. Leaders, staff, caregivers, managers, attorneys and the judiciary need knowledge and skills on the concept and application of family centered practice. Children’s Legal Services staff must have the knowledge and skills to promote family and child involvement, and ensure individualized case planning.

Federal Funding Training and Technical Assistance

2009 - 2010 Update

- Fiscal year 2009 - 2010 saw continued efforts to stabilize the workforce and improve training for eligibility specialists, their supervisors and related staff. Federal funding training and technical assistance continued to teach staff about major federal funding sources and the tasks to meet specific guidelines and eligibility requirements for ensuring continued funding. The goal of the training was to help staff recognize that eligibility requirements are based on the provisions of the Florida Statutes and the Social Security Act, as amended and related enactments relevant to the tasks of promoting child safety, permanency and well-being. These requirements are synonymous with quality case management and documentation (CFSP Goal 2: Objective 3).

Accomplishments

- In June 2010, the Department of Children and Families completed the initial phase of development of federal funding training. A workgroup comprised of eligibility, SACWIS and Title IV-A/ACCESS Florida staff was convened to assess the training needs of revenue maximization and related staff. A consultant was hired to develop and update the federal funding curriculum. This training curriculum will support both pre-service and in-service training needs for federal funding eligibility.

- The Department of Children and Families' June 2010 Regional Trainings were completed the week of June 6th. Trainings were conducted in five cities including Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Tampa, Jacksonville and Tallahassee. Approximately 700 persons attended statewide. Some of the topics were:
 - ◆ Recent changes to FSFN, and
 - ◆ Pertinent 2010 Legislative updates.
- The Department of Children and Families also facilitated Master Trust training at its annual Dependency Summit. Additionally, the Department of Children and Families provided training and technical assistance on federal funding specific topics through webinars, monthly statewide conference calls, and online training opportunities. Frequently Asked Questions were also posted on the website of the Florida Center for Child Welfare Practice.

Collaboration

- The Department of Children and Families collaborated with ACCESS Florida, the Department of Revenue, and the Agency for Health Care Administration to discuss implementation of the federal funding programs made available to states through Title IV of the Social Security Act. Training was provided through collaboration between the Department of Children and Families and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies.

Program Support

- The Department of Children and Families embraced the cross-training concept by sharing and utilizing resources both internal and external to the Department of Children and Families. The child welfare system is interrelated and cross-training of all parts of the system was both an efficient and effective way to learn.

Future Plans

- Finishing the updated federal funding training curriculum.
- Continue to integrate federal funding training into the family centered practice curriculum. The flexibility afforded by the Title IV-E Foster Care Waiver, the new SACWIS system and the Department of Children and Families' focus on prevention provide the opportunity for such integration. In addition, the cross-training opportunities will continue in the future.

Quality Assurance Review System

2009 - 2010 Update

- The Regional Quality Assurance (QA) Model, which was implemented in July 2008, continued to operate as the state's standardized child welfare quality assurance system. The Quality of Practice Standards used to assess performance in case management and child protective investigations were updated and refined in May 2010 and implemented in July 2010.
- In response to the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) findings and subsequent submission of the Performance Improvement Plan (known in Florida as the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), the state continued its improvement efforts and reporting on progress.

Accomplishments

- Four quarterly reviews of ongoing case management services in each local system of care, and two comprehensive reviews of child protective investigations (CPI) in each of the 20 circuits, were conducted. In addition, the child welfare quality assurance system conducted a special review of independent living services for children in licensed foster care who had reached their 17th birthday. The focus was to assess the service delivery system's performance in ensuring these youth were prepared to be on their own should they age out of the foster care system when they reached 18 years of age.
- Another review was completed of children in licensed care between the ages of 13 through 16 to assess education needs and services, normalcy, and case planning practices.
- The results and analyses of these reviews were provided in written reports that are maintained on the Florida Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice, Quality Assurance web site. QA and performance results were also used in regular meetings of executive and local leadership to review status and discuss improvement efforts.
- Also, 251 Department of Children and Families and Community-Based Care child welfare employees from across the state were trained as quality assurance reviewers. The 16 hour curriculum included a competency assessment and "certification" that the trainee was qualified to conduct quality assurance reviews.
- Florida's QIP was developed through the Department of Children and Families' collaborative and productive efforts with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF)'s Children's Bureau and culminated in Children's Bureau's formal approval of the QIP on July 20, 2009. Implementation proceeded on schedule, as reflected in the quarterly reports submitted to the Administration for Children and Families throughout the year.

Collaboration

- The implementation of the QIP provided many opportunities for collaboration. External stakeholders, such as the Florida Office of Court Improvement and its Court Collaborative partners, continued to play a vital role. Ongoing meetings were held throughout the year with the Florida Office of Court Improvement and its Court Collaborative partners; these meetings were essential in resolving barriers, building partnerships and making ongoing systemic improvements in the dependency court system. Other partners, such as the Community-Based Care providers and the Mental Health/Substance Abuse Program, also participated in various improvement planning activities.
- Workgroups were assembled using subject matter experts from the Department of Children and Families and the Community-Based Care providers from around the state to refine the Child Protective Investigator (CPI) and Case Management Quality of Practice Standards and the Regional QA Model processes. Other collaborations included facilitating and participating in Performance Measure Workgroups to identify and formalize reporting measures.
- During this reporting period, the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Juvenile Justice collaboratively planned, staffed, and began the joint review of dually served youth; dependent youth committed to DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE residential care. Although other data was collected, this review focused on transition planning from the facility back to the community.
- The Department of Children and Families participated in the beginning discussions of CFSR re-design.

Program Support

- Department of Children and Families staff planned, prepared, and facilitated four quarterly Quality Assurance Managers' meetings/trainings with 20 Community-Based Care QA Managers and six regional (Department of Children and Families) QA Managers. These ongoing meetings/trainings continue to build strong working relationships between and among QA staff and facilitated the Department of Children and Families' ongoing efforts to ensure inter rater reliability among reviewers throughout the state.
- Information resources to support both quality assurance and quality improvement were made available to program staff and other stakeholders. Topical web pages were designed into the Center's website for ready access to training, reference material, reports, "best practice" links, and other useful items.
- FSFN continued to support the state's quality management system that encompassed ongoing quality assurance and quality improvement activities at the state and local levels. FSFN provided case specific data used for routine quality assurance reviews and special or high profile case reviews and for measuring performance within the child welfare system, providing a statewide view, as well as unit or worker specific views. FSFN also supported continuous quality improvement

efforts. Analysis of FSFN data allowed state and local operations to identify issues related to safety, permanency, and well-being (CFSP Goal 1: QIP, Goal 4, Strategy A).

Future Plans

- The Department of Children and Families' future plans for the next reporting period of October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011 include:
 - ◆ continue quarterly QA Reviewer Training through June 2011;
 - ◆ continue quarterly QA Managers Meetings and conference calls;
 - ◆ continue quarterly reviews of case management and semi-annual reviews of child protective investigations through June 2011;
 - ◆ consider re-design options for the state's QA system;
 - ◆ conduct Community-Based Care Lead Agency specific peer review;
 - ◆ conduct additional data analyses as new data points are developed;
 - ◆ complete analysis of cases with the goal of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement;
 - ◆ establish new and improved performance measures;
 - ◆ conduct a survey of foster parents to learn about their experiences in transitioning a child from their home to another setting;
 - ◆ complete the joint review with the Department of Juvenile Justice and publish a report of findings.

Chapter 4

Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) State Grant

- The “Promoting Safe and Stable Families” program assists the Department of Children and Families in achieving CFSP Goal #3: Improve Service Array. To increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities and to afford children a safe, stable and supportive family environment is a priority within Florida’s foster homes. The “Promoting Safe and Stable Families” program allows the Department of Children and Families to develop, expand and operate coordinated programs of community-based services.
- Florida supports the hypothesis that expanded and improved prevention efforts and early intervention services contribute to a safe reduction in the number of children in the local dependency system, while facilitating a more efficient and timely movement of children to permanency and preventing the reoccurrence of child abuse and neglect.
- Through family support, family preservation, time limited family reunification, and adoption services, Florida’s system of care strives to:
 - ◆ prevent child maltreatment among families at risk through the provision of supportive family services;
 - ◆ assure children’s safety within the home and preserve intact families in which children have been maltreated, when the family’s problems can be addressed effectively;
 - ◆ address the problems of families whose children have been placed in foster care so that reunification may occur in a safe and stable manner in accordance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997; and
 - ◆ strengthen adoptive families by providing support services as necessary so that they can make a lifetime commitment to their children.
- Florida’s lead agencies work closely with subcontracted providers to provide training and technical assistance related to funding criteria and rules, which results in collaborative and successful use of resources. Recruitment Services have been previously discussed in Chapter 1.
- Given the importance of preventing child abuse and neglect and the wide range of programs and strategies available, the Department of Children and Families continues to invest in a continuum of prevention services. The Department of Children and Families strives to prevent child abuse and neglect in various communities throughout the state through its community-based care approach and specific contracts and partnerships with recognized experts in the fields of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention programs and strategies. The Department of

Children and Families continues its renewed interest in ensuring the success in new and existing child abuse prevention programs.

- Embraced strategies continue to be:
 - ◆ assessing the current strengths in the public child welfare system and in the communities for preventing child abuse and neglect;
 - ◆ building effective partnerships with important partners in prevention, including community-based child abuse prevention programs, the faith community, early childhood programs, schools, health care providers and other relevant entities;
 - ◆ engaging parent leaders who have experience using services to strengthen their families as key partners in planning, implementing and evaluating prevention activities;
 - ◆ reviewing national models of prevention programs and incorporate those that best fit the state's needs and interests; and
 - ◆ utilizing training and technical assistance opportunities to support these activities as needed.
- Core strategies in serving all families have strived to reflect family centered practice, a strengths-based approach, providing services that are accessible and expanding the array of available services. Please refer to Chapter 2 regarding discussion on three Innovation Sites.

Family Preservation Services (25.54% of the FFY 2010 Grant)

- Florida continues to increase efforts towards families (including adoptive and extended families) at risk or in crisis, including:
 - ◆ information and referral to include substance abuse and domestic violence related services¹;
 - ◆ targeting services geographically in zip codes where there is a high volume of calls to the Hotline;
 - ◆ use of Diversion Court²;
 - ◆ use of multi-disciplinary assessment teams³;

¹ Activities that provide families with needed information about community and statewide services and agencies that provide specific services and if necessary, provide referral information.

² This specialty court division is dedicated to hearing cases involving families in which dependency petitions have been filed, but due to the family's circumstances and level of need, case plan completion is expected in a very short time. The Court is able to closely monitor progress and ensure that the children involved are able to quickly gain safety and stability in the care of their own parents.

³ Multi-disciplinary team staffing completed on all substance-exposed newborns.

- ◆ creation of the Clinical Response Teams⁴;
- ◆ use of Family Team Conferencing model;
- ◆ use of Crisis Intervention Service plans⁵;
- ◆ use of intensive in-home weekly parenting education services⁶; and
- ◆ creation of Family Preservation specialist positions.

Family Support Services (23.21% of FFY 2010 Grant)

- Florida continues to increase efforts to provide caregivers with available supports in the community to promote the safety and well-being of children and families. There are numerous examples of extended family and non-relatives stepping forward, often at some personal sacrifice, to provide home placements, transportation, mentoring, or other supports. There are many situations where it is clear that parents would be unable to fulfill the requirements of their case plan without support from extended family.
- While there are many examples of typical supportive programs to families, Florida has readily embraced:
 - ◆ the *Pinwheels for Prevention*, the Child Abuse Prevention Month Public Awareness Campaign (Prevent Child Abuse Florida's Child Abuse Prevention Month statewide campaign) and various other public awareness campaigns designed to increase the protective factors necessary for the well-being of both children and their families;
 - ◆ parenting classes geared toward various developmental ages and stages and the effects of family violence and substance abuse on children;
 - ◆ health and nutrition education training sessions;

4 Clinical Response Team is a process by which key community providers have agreed to come together to ensure appropriate front loaded services are identified for families with substance abuse and/or mental health issues that threaten the safety of their children. The team works to engage the family in treatment immediately via expedited access to assessment and linkage to services. The assessing clinician will work with first responders in the identification of a safety plan relevant to the level of risk identified with the goal of preventing the removal of children from their biological home.

5 The plan encompasses several areas including safety, placement stabilization, natural supports, psycho-education to new caregivers, and family/sibling therapy. Also, short-term support and therapeutic guidance and linkage to services are provided as well as ongoing assessment and case management as clinically indicated.

6 Services individually designed to meet the family needs and circumstances, including but not limited to: home safety to prevent unsafe or unhealthy conditions for children, promotion of parent/child bonding and nurturing, early learning/literacy information and activities, conflict resolution skills, anger and stress management strategies, positive discipline skills and strategies, communication skills, problem solving, organizational skills and assistance in connecting with area resources. Active Parenting and Making Parenting a Pleasure is the core curricula used; however, other resources are used as supplements. The Forty Developmental Assets, teaching researched-based prevention strategies, are included in every parent's educational plan.

- ◆ home visiting activities and services;
 - ◆ the principle of Family Consultants⁷;
 - ◆ early developmental screening of children to assess needs, and assistance to families in securing specific services to meet those needs; and,
 - ◆ information and referral to community resources, such as job employment services and ACCESS Florida (for online benefits applications).
- The Title IV-E waiver has enabled Florida to invest in services and initiatives that generate alternatives to a child's removal from his/her family. One example is Florida's use of Family Support Teams which provide round the clock wrap around and in-home services. These services improve the well-being and stability of the family, by assisting caregivers in the areas of basic housekeeping, budgeting, parenting, understanding child development, and awareness of what services exist in their communities.
 - Another service available to families is therapy by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Licensed Clinical Social Workers are available as needed for children & their family members. Family Support plans are created when consumers have goals that they would like to obtain in order to become self sufficient, thus no longer being in need of assistance from government or local agencies, as well as some that may be court ordered. These families may choose their goals and in conjunction with an Outreach Coordinator who supports and encourages, families to work toward attaining the goals they have selected. With the possibility of changing their futures in front of them on paper, it anecdotally seems to have a positive effect on consumers as they have helped choose these goals and now have a step by step process in how to obtain their goals, (i.e., housing aids gaining stable employment, better paying job possibly furthering their education, etc.). This in itself gives the consumer self-worth.

⁷ Family Consultants provide families with resources to engage in positive family activities. This may include bringing games or appropriate movies for the family to play together, arranging for trips to the library for books to read together, assisting families to plan outings to other free or low cost activities (parks, zoos, community events), as well as teaching with parents regarding ages and stages of child development and how to be their child's first teacher

Time Limited Family Reunification Services (23.21% of the FFY 2010 Grant)

- Time Limited Family Reunification Services are provided to a child once removed from his/her home and placed in foster care and to the parents or primary caregivers. These services are designed to support the reunification of the child safely and appropriately within the 12 - 15 month period. Time Limited Family Reunification Services in Florida include:
 - ◆ supervised visitation programs;
 - ◆ Family Assistance Support Team (FAST) ⁸;
 - ◆ family team conferencing⁹ with all families prior to reunification, and just before post-placement supervision services are successfully terminated;
 - ◆ follow-up care to families¹⁰;
 - ◆ mentoring/Tutoring tutoring services¹¹;
 - ◆ therapeutic child care services;
 - ◆ transition centers¹² ;
 - ◆ follow-up care to families;
 - ◆ relationship skill building activities; and,
 - ◆ quarterly permanency staffing on all children who are in out-of-home care placements.

⁸ Classroom and in-home education services provided to parents who will be or have been reunified with their children.

⁹ Prevention/Reunification Specialists facilitate meetings. These conferences are made available to clients referred under the prevention referral process.

¹⁰ Activities include weekly home visits to discuss parenting and communication issues as well as specific strengths and challenges to the family.

¹¹ Activities provided to children to enhance their self-esteem, self-confidence, and provide a positive adult role model. Tutoring allows the child to obtain additional educational support and training.

¹² Transition Centers provide temporary emergency shelter for children newly removed from their home, children who have undergone a placement disruption; or as day respite for foster parents and /or relative/non-relative caregivers.

Adoption Promotion and Support Services (24.67% of the FFY 2010 Grant)

- Adoption services and activities are designed to encourage more adoptions from the foster care system, when adoption promotes the best interests of children, and to support children and adoptive parents during the adoptive placement process and after finalization.
- In Florida, *Adoption Promotion and Support Services* have encouraged the adoption of children from the foster care system when adoption promotes the best interests of the child. Pre- and post-adoptive services and activities have expedited the adoption process and supported adoptive families to prevent disruptions.
- The adoption of foster children continues to be a state, as well as a local strength. In recent years, Florida has received federal bonuses for its adoption performance.
- Examples of *Adoption Promotion and Support Services* include:
 - ◆ child specific or targeted population recruitment efforts;
 - ◆ quarterly matching events for children available for adoption and potential families;
 - ◆ Heart Galleries¹³
 - ◆ collaboration with Early Learning Coalitions;
 - ◆ home and school visitation with post adoptive families and children;
 - ◆ launch of the “100 Longest Waiting Teens” initiative
 - ◆ adoptive parent support groups;¹⁴
 - ◆ counseling referrals;
 - ◆ media blitzes targeting severely medically fragile available children;
 - ◆ town hall meetings and “Lunch and Learn” activities;
 - ◆ individual and family counseling for adopted children and/or family members (must be of 12 month duration or less);
 - ◆ adoption workshops/seminars for adopted children and their families and professionals on topics relevant to ongoing issues facing adoptive families;
 - ◆ ongoing parent education and training opportunities for adoptive families; and
 - ◆ follow-up support services and liaison to adoptive families¹⁵.

¹³ In a southern area of the state, Heart Galleries are located in 15 of 17 legislators' offices.

¹⁴ Activities related to creating new adoptive and foster parent support groups and supporting and maintaining existing parent support groups. The support groups seek to reduce the social isolation of families by developing a peer support network.

¹⁵ Lead agencies designate staff whose sole responsibility is to work with families who need assistance after their adoption is finalized. Staff attempt to locate resources within the community for pre and post-adoptive families to

Community Facilitation and Innovative Practices

- Recognizing that when the Department of Children and Families, Community-Based Care Lead Agencies and our many partners such as faith-based organizations, civic groups and our business partners collaborate and provide family centered practices, we can make a difference in the preserving Florida's children while protecting children. Several innovative practices are listed below to illustrate the State's commitment. Examples of innovations include:
 - ◆ **Public Awareness and Education** Activities occur frequently throughout the state centered on topics such as child abuse prevention and domestic violence.
 - ◆ **Trauma Informed Care - Child and Family Connections Clinical** Department convenes the mental health providers in the community monthly to discuss trauma informed care practices, the changes/occurrences in the Agency and with the Community Providers, and to identify strengths and challenges with providing services to our families. This quarter we discussed insurance issues, authorizations, new referral process and the addition of Targeted Case Management for children on psychotropic medication. Child and Family Connections Clinical Specialists meet with the providers at their agencies to continue a personal relationship with the staff and to offer assistance when necessary.
 - ◆ **Strengthening Ties and Empowering Parents (STEPS)** helps healthy families in Duval and Nassau Counties avoid abuse and neglect. This program was partly underwritten by the Monique Burr Foundation for Children, Inc. STEPS offers activities through its service center network and community providers. One such provider is Cassat House, an outreach center giving families tools to build healthy homes, such as financial assistance, food stamps and parenting classes. In 2007, the outreach center opened with the goal of keeping kids out of foster care by empowering families. Officials chose the Cassat Avenue location because a high number of out-of-home placement referrals come from that area.
 - ◆ **Personal Enrichment through Mental Health (PEMHS) - Family Reunification Team**-primary reunification support program in Pinellas County provides services to families in the process of reunification with their children. The Family Reunification Team provides rapid, 24/7 onsite response, including family and individual counseling, anger management, behavior modification, parenting instruction, substance abuse and domestic violence services in order to support and stabilize reunification process. Services are intensive, home-based and are limited to 90 days.

meet both the child's and family's needs. This person also educates adoptive parents, biological parents, and adoptive children on available resources to obtain family birth information. The Post-Adoption Specialist also documents, records, and maintains case files for post adoption services rendered, and provides mini-trainings for staff and community service providers on post-adoptive services and related issues.

- ◆ **Community Action Stops Abuse's - CASA Peacemaker Program** hosts the Elementary Peacemaker program which provides a newsletter for students to take home to their parents at each class presentation. The newsletter has a summary of the topic covered in class, resources on the topic and activities that parents can do with their children to help reinforce the presentation. Students in both the Elementary and Middle School Peacemaker program are also encouraged to talk with their parents about specific topics covered in class. Parents frequently will email or call the Peacemakers for additional information. Additional handouts on specific topics such as internet safety, bullying and sibling rivalry are provided to students to take home. Students are encouraged to have family meetings to discuss topics.
- ◆ **Foundation Village Neighborhood Family Center** focuses on supporting families and children in the county by offering the following services: Information and Referrals to local community resources have remained high due to lack of employment and we are seeing more families that are unaware of the assistance that is available in the community as they have never found themselves needing to ask for assistance for basic necessities. Small donations of food for the area's Food Bank are received and are provided to community members free of charge.
- ◆ **Hibiscus Children's Center Diversion Case Management Services** model is designed as an in-home diversionary program striving to offer targeted child welfare cases an alternative to court engagement through the provision of direct case management services and other support services while ensuring each child's safety, well-being and permanency. The goals of the Diversion Case Management Program are to: 1) reduce the number of families requiring court intervention, 2) reduce the number of children removed from their homes, 3) reduce the need for future intervention by the child welfare system and 4) promote the likelihood of family stability. Diversion Case Managers conduct frequent home visits with the goal of engaging the family as a cooperative unit in order to increase communication, to reinforce bonds and to establish a strong support system. Family members are referred to appropriate interventions for their identified obstacles by the Diversion Case Manager and their progress is monitored through regular communication among all involved parties. Diversion Case Management cases are provided services for a duration no longer than six (6) months and receive follow-up calls at 90 and 180 days after closure.

Administration (3.37% of the FFY 2010 Grant)

- Includes the costs of in-home and out-of-home "community facilitation services" that are not provided through contributions from state and local sources. These services are defined in Title IV-B of the Social Security Act, Section 431 as the costs associated with developing, revising and implementing and coordinating the comprehensive Child and Family Services Plan/Promoting Safe and Stable Families five year plan.
- The table on the next page displays the specific details regarding the differences between the estimated and actual grant award.

FY 2010 Title IV-B, Part II	Estimated Award	% of Est. Award	Actual Award	% of Difference Actual
				Award
Family Preservation -0.12%	3,680,699	25.42	3,728,155.35	25.54
Family Support 1.58%	3,132,175	21.63	3,388,425.32	23.21 -
Time Limited Family Reunification 0.09%	3,373,538	23.30	3,388,853.37	23.21
Adoption Promotion & Support 1.50%	3,789,215	26.17	3,601,819.04	24.67
Administration 0.11%	504,885	3.48	491,303.92	3.37
Actual Total Award	14,480,512	100.00		
14,589,557.00				100.00

Chapter 5

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

The federally funded Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and the Chafee Educational and Training Voucher Program help ensure youth are engaged in decision making related to their transition to adult life. This includes involvement in becoming economically self-sufficient and achieving desired educational and career goals. Services and supports include education, training, housing assistance, counseling, and other services. In addition, the state of Florida provides funds to supplement the federal grants and required match to assist youth reach their educational and employment goals. Florida's comprehensive program of independent living services is a priority for the Department of Children and Families. The following pages describe activities to date for the period beginning October 1, 2009 through the present and plans for FFY 2011.

PROGRAM SERVICES OVERVIEW

- Florida has continued to receive funding provided through the federal Chafee Road to Independence Grant and Chafee Education and Training Voucher Grant. Florida matches both grants through general revenue funding. During the 2010 Florida Legislative session, some concerns were raised regarding the accountability of the program's expenditures and outcomes. Legislation required the Department of Children and Families to develop administrative code to address payments made directly to youth.
- Independent Living services, designed towards the child's age while in foster care, were provided. Such services include life skills training, educational field trips, employment skill building, job shadowing, and conferences for the younger teens, while the older teens' services are more focused on banking and budgeting classes, parenting classes, time management and organizational classes, as well as enhanced employability skills, job shadowing, and job placement through initiatives throughout the state including Operation Full Employment. Independent Living services such as mentoring, tutoring, therapy and psychological counseling are available to all children while in foster care. These services are funded through a web of federal grants, general revenue dollars, and national, state, and community private funds. Independent life skills assessments for teens to help them prepare for leaving foster care were required.

- Independent Living services for young adults transitioning from foster care were provided through:
 - ◆ Aftercare Support Services - Services available to assist eligible young adults who were formerly in foster care in their efforts to continue to develop the skills and abilities necessary for independent living.
 - ◆ Direct and/or indirect payments may be made to and/or on behalf of the young adult for expenditures such as:
 - Mentoring and tutoring.
 - Mental health services and substance abuse counseling.
 - Life skills classes, including credit management and preventive health activities.
 - Parenting classes.
 - Job skills training
 - Counselor consultations
 - Room and Board costs, such as housing, food, utilities, and rental deposits.
 - ◆ Transitional Support Services - Services available, to eligible young adults who are former foster children, if the young adult demonstrates that the services are critical to the young adult's own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to develop a personal support system. In addition, these services are available to help eligible students who are former foster children to receive the educational and vocational training needed, on a part-time basis, to achieve independence.

Direct and/or indirect payments may be made to and/or on behalf of the young adult for expenditures such as:

- Educationally related expenses, such as tutoring, summer school, and/or school supplies.
- Graduation expenses, such as class rings, graduation invitations, yearbook, cap and gown, and/or senior portraits.
- Educational incentives, such as club fees, luggage and backpacks for graduating youths, calculators, activity fees, tuition, vocational fees, equipment and supplies, including specialized equipment (per the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) for youth with disabilities which includes talking computers, wrist watches, stipends for note takers during class, and other items and services needed, due to the disability, in order to attend school.
- Employment Service Fees.
- Tools for vocational purposes.

- Personal hygiene items
- Clothing and supplies for job interviews.
- Transportation Expenses.
- Start-up costs, such as household items.
- Child care.
- Room and Board costs, such as housing, food, utilities, and rental deposits.
- ◆ Road To Independence Program - This program is intended to help eligible students who are former foster children to receive the educational and vocational training needed, on a full time basis, to achieve independence.

Direct and/or indirect payments may be made to and/or on behalf of the young adult for expenditures such as:

- The cost of room and board.
- Educationally related expenses, such as tutoring, summer school, and/or school supplies.
- Graduation expenses, such as class rings, graduation invitations, yearbook, cap and gown, and/or senior portraits.
- Educational incentives, such as club fees, luggage and backpacks for graduating youths, calculators, activity fees, tuition, vocational fees, equipment and supplies, including specialized equipment (per the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) for youth with disabilities which includes talking computers, wrist watches, stipends for note takers during class, and other items and services needed, due to the disability, in order to attend school.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Chaffee Foster Care to Independence -

- The Chafee Program mandates are contained in Section 409.1451(1-3), F.S. In addition to Florida law, the Department of Children and Families references the federal policy documents, best practice materials, and consultation with stakeholders and the National Resource Center for Youth Development to implement the Chafee program. The program requirements specified in Florida law for youth ages 13 - 17 include:
 - ◆ Life skills assessments;
 - ◆ service array of life skills classes, educational support, employment training, counseling and support services; and,
 - ◆ educational and career goal setting starting at age 13;

- ◆ annual independent living staffings for youth ages 13 –14 (Specifies youth involvement);
- ◆ independent living staffings every six months for youth ages 15 - 17 (Specifies youth involvement);
- ◆ special judicial review specific to transition within 90 days after the 17th birthday and at 17 years 6 months ;
- ◆ removal of the age of disability before the age of 18 in order to open a bank account; and,
- ◆ expansion of Medicaid benefits to all youth exiting licensed care until age 21.

The program requirements specified in Florida law for youth ages 18 - 22 include:

- ◆ the Road to Independence Program;
 - ◆ transitional Support Services;
 - ◆ aftercare Support Services;
 - ◆ tuition and fee exemptions;
 - ◆ Medicaid for youth exiting foster care until age 21;
 - ◆ extended court jurisdiction until age 19 for youth that submit a petition to the court;
 - ◆ youth exiting foster care are eligible to remain in their foster homes or another licensed home arranged by the Department of Children and Families after reaching age 18;
 - requires the Department of Children and Families to advertise the Road To Independence program to specific parties including the youth in care and those involved in education and guidance;
 - case management services as requested; and
 - expansion of Medicaid benefits to all youth exiting licensed care until age 21.
- Based on eligibility, youth exiting foster care in Florida may receive services until their 23rd birthday. This includes an “open door” policy where youth who have reached age 18 years of age may receive services and return for additional services if needed after initial termination. The continuum of services for these youth includes:
 - ◆ Aftercare services for youth who were formerly in foster care to help them continue to develop the skills and abilities necessary for independent living. This includes but is not limited to mentoring and tutoring, mental health services and substance abuse counseling, life skills classes, (including credit management and preventive health activities), parenting classes, job and

career skills training, counselor consultations, temporary financial assistance, and financial literacy skills training.

- ◆ Road to Independence Program to help former foster children receive educational and vocational training. The program requires attendance in secondary or postsecondary education and provides a financial award based on the living and educational costs of each participant.
- ◆ Transitional support services for youth who have a plan for self-sufficiency. Services include but are not limited to financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, mental health, disability, and other services. Services are intended to provide short term funds or other services that are critical to the young adult becoming self-sufficient. These services may continue only as long as the young adult demonstrates that the services are critical to his or her efforts for self-sufficiency.

Educational and Training Voucher Program (ETV)

- The Educational and Training Vouchers Program (ETV) makes financial resources available to meet the postsecondary education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care and enrolled in a qualified higher education program. The program provides vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth to support their costs of attending schools for higher education. The Department of Children and Families is the program administrator and works in collaboration with other entities to provide this program to eligible youth. The Department of Children and Families contracts with community-based care lead agencies to provide child protective services, including independent living services, in the state's 67 counties.
- Florida remains committed to strengthening its post-secondary educational assistance program efforts to achieve the purpose of the ETV program. Progress towards improved outcomes and a more comprehensive, coordinated, effective child and family services continuum is evident in the strategies in place. The ETV funds are primarily used for the eligible youth attending post-secondary institutions on a full time basis through the RTI Program; however eligible youth attending post-secondary institutions on a part time basis, receive ETV through Transitional Support Services. The monthly award is based on the living and educational needs of the young adult with a maximum award based on federal minimum wage. In addition to youth exiting foster care at 18 being eligible for the RTI Program, the Florida statutes currently allow youth exiting foster care at ages 16 and 17, to adoption or permanent guardianship, eligible for the RTI Program.

Independent Living Program Clients Served and Expenditures

Clients served – 18+ (unduplicated count):

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)	ETV	Chafee Foster Care Independence Program	TOTAL
10/1/2008 – 9/30/2009	1,477	1,668	3,145
10/1/2009 – 9/30/2010	1,376	2,322	3,698
TWO-YEAR TOTAL	2,853	3,990	6,843

For Federal Fiscal Year 10/1/2009 – 9/30/2010, there were **398** new ETV enrollees.

Actual Expenditures of Chafee ETV allocated funds for FFY 2009:

\$2,970,833 (\$2,376,776 (Federal) and \$ 594,167 (State match))

Actual Expenditures of Chafee Foster Care Independence Program for FFY 2009:

\$8,481,288 (\$7,067,740 (Federal) and \$1,413,548 (State match))

Collaboration

Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC)

- Mandated by Florida Statute, the ILSAC consists of representatives from a wide variety of agencies and organizations. Representation includes Department of Education, Agency for Workforce Innovation, Florida Network for Youth, Department of Juvenile Justice, the Office of Homelessness, Housing Authority, the Department of Children and Families, youth, foster parents, business community, Guardians ad Litem, providers of transitional living services, foster parents, and other child advocacy organizations.
- The purpose of the ILSAC has been to assess the Independent Living Program and services and make recommendations to the Department of Children and Families and the Florida Legislature for improvement. Rather than operating as a part of the

Department of Children and Families, the ILSAC's external leadership has created the independent group specified in law that is committed to improving services for adolescents in foster care.

- The ILSAC has been in existence since October 2002. This has created an environment in which the Department of Children and Families has been able to collaborate and maintain contacts with people from other agencies. The Department of Children and Families' headquarters' staff have been involved in workgroups with workforce organizations, children, and adult mental health groups.
- The independent group specified in law that is committed to improving services for adolescents in foster care.
- The ILSAC provides the forum and the framework for collaboration at many levels, including extensive involvement in this year's Independent Living Redesign to be presented to the Legislature this session. Representatives of virtually all disciplines and resources needed by youth in foster care or formerly in foster care serve on the ILSAC. They are the central "force" for change and support in Florida. The annual reports posted on the internet provide detail about their activities and recommendations for improvement. These reports can be found at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/indliving/AdvisoryCouncil/index.shtml>

Program Support

- The Department of Children and Families provides support to youth receiving independent living services and the providers of this service in several ways including training, technical assistance, and providing an opportunity for youth and stakeholder voices to be heard. Throughout the year, youth representatives visit the Department of Children and Families' Secretary and senior leadership to provide input and recommendations regarding legislation, program design, and program improvements. In addition, the Department of Children and Families hires former foster youth to work at the Department of Children and Families and at community-based care lead agencies to perform a range of functions.
- The Department of Children and Families provides and/or arranges for training related to youth in multiple ways. During the reporting period, this occurred at regional trainings in January 2010 and June 2010, at a statewide meeting dedicated to independent living issues in September 2010, at the Child Welfare Dependency Summit in August 2010, and at the Florida Coalition for Children Conference in October 2010.
- In early 2009, the Department of Children and Families compiled a report as required by state law summarizing oversight activities of the Independent Living Program. This report is distributed to the executive and legislative branches of government. This report provides reviewers with a summary of the various means of assessing the effectiveness of the implementation of Florida's service delivery

system. It provides support in that the report highlights areas of progress and areas needing improvement.

- Throughout 2009 - 2010, the Department of Children and Families' child welfare Quality Assurance Program focused on the effectiveness of the delivery of independent living services and issued a report after the close of the reporting period. This quality assurance review is part of a comprehensive effort to respond to youth concerns and ensure continuous improvement.
- Florida is fortunate to have the support of Connected by 25 and the Eckerd Family Foundation. These agencies provide funding, expert guidance, and advocacy on behalf of young people. Their support is extensive and reaches individual youth, community-based care lead agencies, executive agencies, and stakeholders.

Accomplishments Year-to-Date (YTD) 2010 and Plans for 2011

1. Coordination of services with other state and federal agencies

Housing

Accomplished YTD

- The Department of Children and Families partnered with housing representatives during the 2010 Florida legislative session to expand the definition of eligible population(s) for housing services to include youth aging out of care. The bill did not pass during this difficult legislative session however relationships were strengthened for future efforts.

Plans for 2011

- The Department of Children and Families will continue to partner through the Independent Living Services Advisory Council and with housing providers/advocates to strengthen the service array for youth transitioning out of foster care. A redesign group is currently underway and expansion of housing options is a key issue.

School-to-work

Accomplished YTD

- School-to-work efforts exist across Florida, but concentrated efforts have occurred in two areas of the state—the Big Bend area in the North and Palm Beach in the South

under Operation Full Employment. Through contracts with individuals with special talent and interest in youth employment, promising models have emerged: Job Shadowing in local businesses while still in High School, peer-to-peer training; and finding large statewide/national businesses to agree to work with us to prepare youth for the workplace, e.g., Publix, Wal-Mart, etc.

Plans for 2011

- The Department of Children and Families will continue to partner with workforce agencies on expanding employment options for youth. A representative of Workforce Florida was recently appointed to the statutorily mandated ILSAC. The Department of Children and Families will utilize the three way interagency agreement with Florida workforce and education agencies to strengthen educational and vocational services and supports.

Transitional Living and OJJDP

Accomplished YTD

- The Department of Children and Families has collaborated with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice on improving services to crossover youth. Projects have included joint data analysis, quality reviews, employment, and educational planning.

Plans for 2011

- Collaboration will continue through the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, interagency agreements, and quality assurance reviews.

Disabled Youth

Accomplished YTD

- The Department of Children and Families continues to provide a template, specifically designed for teens, to structuring service delivery to disabled youth in collaboration with the advocacy group, Florida's Children First. The Department of Children and Families also continues to meet with Agency for Persons with Disabilities to encourage cooperation to attain shared commitment and responsibility for these youth.
- In October 2010, the Department of Children and Families and Agency for Persons with Disabilities signed an interagency agreement supporting permanency through the provision of waiver services. Youth who are within six months of their 18th birthday are being identified for Agency for Persons with Disabilities and community-based care lead agency providers' attention, to ensure that a multidisciplinary team

meeting can be scheduled for transition planning purposes to adult disability services.

Plans for 2011

- The Department of Children and Families will continue to partner with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, advocates, and community-based care lead agencies to increase awareness of and availability of services.

Abstinence

Accomplished YTD

- Florida's abstinence program is administered by the Department of Health, go to: <http://www.greattowait.com/>

Plans for 2011

- The Department of Children and Families will continue to partner with the Departments of Health and Education for this particular service.

2. Training Goal and Objectives re: Needs of Adolescents

Accomplished YTD

- At the invitation of the Florida Coalition for Children for their annual conference in October 2010, Connected by 25 hosted an independent living training session for community-based care lead agency chief executive officers. This event was designed to highlight the special needs of the teen population. The event included Gary Stangler of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and focused on teen and young adult outcomes. In addition, another training session was held for frontline staff specific to normalcy, career and education paths, employment support, etc.
- The Department of Children and Families sponsored regional trainings in January 2010 and again in June 2010. Independent living workshops emphasizing youth engagement strategies were featured. An example is the video developed in collaboration with court staff: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/youth/dependencyCourtVideo.shtml>
- At the same link as above, see publications and resources for training and technical assistance focused on services to teens in care eligible for independent living services.
- A statewide Quality Assurance Review was completed regarding independent living services received by young adults aged 18 years or older. These results, along with

the checklist survey results, have provided information on where improvement is needed and where practice and policy are working well.

Plans for 2011

- The Department of Children and Families is planning an "independent living" track at the annual Dependency Summit scheduled for August 24 - 26, 2010.
- The Department of Children and Families is implementing a National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) that exceeds minimum federal requirements. This database will feature youth friendly access and will be a key to future program planning/service delivery efforts for teens, young adults formerly in foster care, and case managers.
- The Department of Children and Families posted the results of the Independent Living Services Checklist/Survey (based on youth input and caseworker input) for review by each of the community-based care lead agencies. The Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC) is working with community-based care lead agencies at the local level to review their data to determine areas for improvement. The results are available at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/indliving/index.shtml>
- The Department of Children and Families conducts monthly effective practice calls with all interested parties serving teens in foster care. This call is facilitated by a former foster youth, and the Department of Children and Families senior policy advisor for transitional youth programs. Participants join from across the state and across disciplines including child welfare, education, workforce development and youth formally in care.
- The Department of Children and Families' Contract Oversight Unit monitors each lead agency and conducts reviews of compliance requirements of federal/state law and rule specific to independent living and services to teens in care. Their reports are circulated widely and used for program improvements, education of stakeholders and identification of needs of specific populations in specific locations. The tools are available at: <http://ewas.dcf.state.fl.us/asc/cou/cbc.asp>

3. Trust Fund Program

NA

4. Youth Participation in State Agency Efforts

Accomplished YTD

- Youth served on the Core Advisory Group identified by the Secretary to develop the quality improvement plan. It included representatives from the Governor's Office, judiciary and legal/law enforcement, community stakeholders, Department of Children and Families managers, youth, adoptive parents, and national experts, among others. The Core Advisory Group was linked to the Task Force on Fostering Success, chaired by former Secretary Bob Butterworth. Youth were named to this task force reflecting the importance of the 2008 Fostering Connections federal legislation. Emphasis was placed on including youth in local plan development and implementation.
- Another promising practice in Florida is the increasing awareness of the importance of the youth's perspective in child welfare decision making. Youth surveys, roundtables, and conference calls are completed by the Department of Children and Families senior policy advisor for transitional youth programs to gather feedback on topics such as extending care to age 21, independent living program improvements, independent living program change requirement and/or suggestions, and other policy and practice issues as they arise.
- Youth leadership programs include opportunities for youth to "teach" child welfare staff and managers about the benefits of inclusion and engagement of youth. One example is Florida YouthSHINE. This group is comprised of youth who are currently or formally in foster care. Currently there are eight youth groups across Florida. The youth groups have partnered or represent the local Youth Advisory/Advocacy Boards depending on the local youth's objectives. Local meetings and statewide update calls from each local meeting are held monthly to collaborate, share innovative practices, and discuss statewide patterns that are emerging. The next quarterly meeting will be in Tallahassee during 2011 legislative session/Children's Week.
- Youth provide leadership and advocacy for children in foster care through legislative testimony, training, workgroups, meetings, etc. These youth were instrumental in getting the 2010 Florida Legislature to maintain funding for the Independent Living Program. In addition, they worked closely with legislators to gain passage of a Florida law that gives them access to their child welfare records after they reach age 18.
- Florida continues to increase the number of youth participating in services after reaching age 18. For example, in SFY 2009 - 2010, 5,797 youth were eligible to receive the Road to Independence program and 3,698 youth received the service.
- The Florida Youth Leadership Academy was conducted again in spring 2010. The program allows for approximately twenty youth involved with the Department of Children and Families to participate in a training program that serves to facilitate development of their leadership skills and to carry these skills, especially advocacy, back to their own areas to assist other foster youth. This program has been jointly sponsored by the Department of Children and Families, Connected by 25, Jim

Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, and the Child Welfare Leadership Program Alumni Association.

- The Department of Children and Families has implemented the youth survey or the Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist (available at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/indliving/index.shtml>) in coordination with the ILSAC. In partnership with the community-based care lead agencies, the Department of Children and Families has collected data on youth skills and development for youths in foster care, ages 13 through 17, and youth formerly in foster care, ages 18 through 22, in the areas of: life skills; housing; education; employment; adult corrections; juvenile justice; case plan, aftercare, and transitional services. The youth survey results have been compiled and were posted in February 2010 at the same web site listed above.
- In 2010, the Department of Children and Families in coordination with representatives of the community-based care lead agencies formed the Performance Measure Workgroup and added outcome measures to the Community-Based Care Lead Agency contract template. During the calendar year, the workgroup reviewed the various approaches to implementing a system of outcome measures for youth receiving independent living services.

Plans for 2011

- Youth will continue to serve as advisors and performance improvement experts for Florida's child welfare system. They are involved in multiple aspects of the system including performance improvement activities, quality assurance, database development, and the advisory council.
- The Department of Children and Families intends to continue successful projects and activities described in earlier sections of this report. This includes the support of the ILSAC, Florida YouthSHINE, Youth Leadership Academy, quality assurance reviews focused on independent living, training and technical assistance initiatives.

5. Medicaid Expansion

Accomplished YTD

- During FY 2009 - 2010 Florida utilized the Medicaid option to provide Medicaid coverage to all youth exiting foster care up to age 21.

Plans for 2011

- This valuable service will continue through June 30, 2011 as it is specified in Section 409.903, Florida Statutes. Florida plans to use the Fostering Connections options to provide Medicaid coverage up to age 21 to a larger group of young adults formerly in foster care, guardianship or adoptive placement.

- Medicaid reform is scheduled for the next legislative session and Florida's child advocates will be watching closely to protect benefits for youth. Florida's SACWSIS and Medicaid technical staff are developing reports to ensure as many youth as possible access this service from age 18 through 20.

6. Tribal Consultation to Achieve Benefits for Native American Youth

Accomplished YTD

- See Chapter 2, Pages 83 - 87
- The tribes have chosen not to access Chafee funds, thus far.

Plans for 2011

- The Department of Children and Families will continue to reach out and partner with the tribes as they (the tribes) request.

7. Implementation of NYTD: Engaging and Preparing Youth and Technical Assistance Needs

Accomplished YTD

- Florida has exceeded the federal requirement to implement the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) by implementing NYTD Plus (full version survey), as well as surveying above the federal required third year series of youth cohorts by surveying each year as a cohort. The Department of Children and Families has contracted with the Connected by 25 Initiative to administer the NYTD survey. NYTD surveys began on October 1, 2010.
- Florida has continued to use a survey tool that gathers similar information contained in NYTD for youth ages 13 to 22 years of age. The results of the survey are reported annually. Continuing to administer this survey tool since 2007, has prepared youth and case workers for the expectations and processes needed to become compliant with NYTD. Approximately 7,000 surveys are returned each year from caseworkers and youth.
- Continued technical assistance in the form of meetings and conference calls related to implementation of NYTD has occurred and will continue to occur.

Plans for 2011

- The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) is expected to provide a wealth of new information and more opportunities for youth to work with the child welfare system to improve services. Implementation of NYTD began in October 2010; however, ongoing support and training will continue statewide as this implementation

year continues. The ILSAC has been instrumental in encouraging and supporting this effort. The ILSAC and the Department of Children and Families are committed to obtaining outcome data to improve program performance.

Chapter 6

Statewide Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

2010 - 2014

This report supports the activities outlined in Florida's Quality Improvement Plan (Florida's Program Improvement Plan as required by the federal Child and Family Services Review /CFSR process), and based on the second round CFSR results; the Department of Children and Families' Strategic Plan 2010 - 2014¹⁶ developed under former Secretary George Sheldon, and the Department of Children and Families Long-Range Program Plan for Fiscal Years 2009 - 2010 through 2013 - 2014¹⁷, as well as a number of other meaningful reform efforts.

Goal 1

Strengthen Policy and Improve Practice to Ensure Safety of Children

Initiatives such as the Task Force on Fostering Success, enhancements to SACWIS, along with the Title IV-E Waiver, enhance the Department of Children and Families' progress towards achieving this goal. The Department of Children and Families completed the following objectives for this goal:

Objective 1: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a statistically significant target for improvement in the data indicator for child abuse or neglect in foster care. By June 30, 2011, the state's objective is to reach the QIP target for improvement in the data indicator for child abuse or neglect in foster care. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Objective 1 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau reached consensus on the state's level of improvement specific to the national standards. At the time of the second round CFSR, Florida did not meet the two national standards for safety, or two of the four

¹⁶ <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/opengov/docs/strategicIntent.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/publications/plan0910/lrpp2009-2014.pdf>

permanency composites. Since then, Florida has met the improvement goals for one of the two safety standards and the two permanency standards. The remaining national standard for safety is on recurrence of maltreatment. Florida subsequently achieved the level of improvement for this standard as indicated in the Florida Data Profile- 2009, issued March 23, 2010.

Objective 2: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a statistically significant target for improvement in the data indicator for absence of recurrence of maltreatment. By June 30, 2011, the state's objective is to reach the QIP target for improvement in the data indicator for absence of recurrence of maltreatment. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Objective 2 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau concur with the baseline and improvement target for absence of recurrence of maltreatment. Florida's baseline is 98.66% from FFY 2008; the improvement goal is 98.76%. Florida met the improvement goal as indicated in the Florida Data Profile- 2009, issued March 23, 2010.

Objective 3: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a statistically significant target for improvement in services to families to protect children in their home and prevent removal or re-entry. By June 30, 2011, the state's objective is to achieve or exceed the QIP target for improvement in the services to families to protect children in their home and prevent removal or re-entry. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, CFSR Item 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida's QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 3 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau negotiated and concurred on the baseline and improvement target for services to families to protect children in their home and prevent removal or re-entry. This item was measured separately for case management and child protective services. For case management: baseline is 80.1% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 82.3% and Florida exceeded this goal in June 2009 (84.3%). For child protective investigation: baseline is 84.9%, the improvement goal is 90.9%, and Florida exceeded this improvement goal in December 2009 (91.8%).

Objective 4: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a statistically significant target for improvement in risk assessment and safety management. By June 30, 2011, the state's objective is to reach the QIP target for improvement in the services to family to protect children in risk assessment and safety management. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, CFSR Item 4)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida's QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 4 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau negotiated and concurred on the baseline and improvement target for risk assessment and safety management. This item was measured separately for case management and child protective services. For case management: baseline is 67.2% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 70.2%, and Florida exceeded this improvement goal in June 2009 (72%). For child protective investigation: baseline is 59.7% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 62.5%, and Florida exceeded this improvement goal in June 2009 (63%).

Objective 5: By the end of the five year period covered in this plan, the Department of Children and Families will build upon the interim progress toward meeting

or exceeding any national standards or targets set in the Long Range Program Plan.

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida has met the improvement goals for the national standards as reported above. Additionally, Florida continued to focus and improve performance in the areas of safe reduction of children in out-of-home care, placement stability, and safe and permanent homes for the longest waiting teens.

APSR FFY 2010

- Florida has met the improvement goals for the national standards and CFSR items related to safety as reported above.

Benchmarks:

- By June 30, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will reconstitute the Task Force on Fostering Success to address ongoing issues. Ongoing progress will establish further benchmarks. (Strategic Direction 2009 - 2011)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed.** The Task Force on Fostering Success was convened on an ongoing basis under the leadership of former Department of Children and Families Secretary and Florida Attorney General Butterworth, and Department of Children and Families Secretary George Sheldon. It includes representatives from the Governor's Office, judiciary and legal/law enforcement, community stakeholders, Department of Children and Families managers, youth, adoptive parents, and national experts, among others. A dedicated subcommittee regularly assesses progress on the Quality Improvement Plan and provides communication to the Task Force. Please refer to: Chapter 1 update on The Task Force on Fostering Success.
- By September 30, 2009, the safety plan and assessment features in FSFN will be implemented and a consistent approach to the assessment of safety, risk, protective capacity and family strengths will be in practice. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action Step 1)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed.** Florida's FSFN system includes several automated safety planning and assessment tools for protective investigators and case managers. Online training guides and modules are readily available to workers. Data reports for supervision and monitoring of worker completion of safety assessments are also available through FSFN. Details are available in Chapter 1, Intervention/Investigation and SACWIS sections.
- By September 30, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will develop and distribute requirements for maintaining certified second party reviewers. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action Step 2)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed.** A memo, distributed to the field on January 20, 2009, detailed the credentialing requirements for second party reviews. *Please refer to: Chapter 1, Intervention/Investigation section.*
- By September 30, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will develop curriculum and provide train-the-trainer sessions on supervisory discussion for local in-service training of supervisors. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action Steps 4 and 5)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed.** The supervisory discussion guides are in their second edition, and are an integral part of the child welfare quality assurance and supervisory practice model. The 2009 statewide guidelines for conducting QA reviews describe the requirements for use of the supervisory discussion guides. Introductory statewide sessions (field staff and train-the-trainer) on supervisory discussion were provided in 2008, and posted online for in-service training purposes. Train-the-trainer materials were also provided online. Revisions to the guides have been made, and an update memo reinforcing the need for training was issued September 4, 2009. Please refer to Chapter 3: Child Welfare Training and Quality Assurance sections for details.
- By December 31, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will deliver in-service training on "2nd Party Reviews." (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action Step 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed.** The Department of Children and Families prepared training materials and conducted in-service training online, as outlined in a memo to the field April 17, 2009. This memo also reinforced requirements for the process and reviewer certification.
- By March 31, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will deliver training on domestic violence topics at regional or statewide training events. (QIP, Goal 2, Strategy A, Action Step 6)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** The Department of Children and Families provided training related to domestic violence during its 2010 Regional Trainings (January and June) and 2010 Dependency Summit. The Department of Children and Families also continues to contract with David Mandel to provide “Safe and Together Training” around the state and added to its variety of web-based training content library available via the Center, including topics related to domestic violence.
- By June 30, 2011, we will increase the availability of and access to in-home intervention and support so that more children can remain safely in their homes. (Strategic Direction 2009 - 2011)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida’s flexible funding demonstration has targeted (1) Title IV-E eligible and non-Title IV-E eligible children ages 0 -18 who are currently receiving in-home child welfare services or who were in out-of-home placement, and (2) all families who entered the child welfare system with a report of alleged child maltreatment. The Title IV-E funds are used to expand the array of community-based services and programs available in Florida. Examples include intensive early intervention services; one time payments for goods or services that help divert children from out-of-home placement (e.g., rental assistance and child care); enhanced training for child welfare staff and supervisors; improved needs assessment practices; and long term supports to prevent placement recidivism.

APSR FFY 2010

- In September 2010, the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) approved a 10 month extension of Florida's Waiver demonstration until July 31, 2012.
- By December 31, 2011, the Department of Children and Families will establish alternative response system(s) that better serve the needs of children and families by eliminating unnecessary investigative protocols for low risk referrals.

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida concluded the ARS pilot in October 2008 with a final report issued in February 2009. This final report showed the benefits of an Alternative Response model while showing the need for additional modifications based upon the lessons learned from each of the pilot sites.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed:** As noted above, Florida's Alternative Response Pilot ended in February 2009. Federal Children's Justice Act grant funds were used to support the pilot. A Florida Senate Children and Families Subcommittee Interim Project was completed in 2010 that explored the use of Alternative Response as a potential legislative issue which has been proposed during the 2011 Legislative Session. At this time, no further actions have been taken on possible expansion of Alternative Response as the Department of Children and Families is awaiting the outcome of the 2011 Legislative Session.
- By December 31, 2011, the Department of Children and Families will implement and revise protocols as recommended by the Fostering Success Task Force (formerly the Task Force on Child Protection) enhancing the reporting and recovery of children identified to be missing.

APSR FFY 2009

- During the prior reporting period, the regional criminal justice coordinators were fully integrated into the child welfare system. We continued to drive the number of children missing downward from 339 in October 2008 to 265 children as of September 30, 2009.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** During this reporting period, an average of 242 children were categorized as missing on any given day with approximately 84% these children being teenage runaways.
- Additionally, on a regular basis, senior management and leadership will use the data and quality assurance reports to monitor the performance in reducing the recurrence of abuse or neglect and the repeated maltreatment of children in foster care. (QIP, Goal 4, Strategy A)

APSR FFY 2009

- Program leaders and selected Department of Children and Families managers at least monthly review performance data and improvement efforts. Additionally, performance data is available online as well as summarized in various presentations.
- Please refer to Chapter 3, Quality Assurance and Accomplishments and Program Support sections.

APSR FFY 2010

- Program leaders and selected Department of Children and Families managers at least monthly review performance data and improvement efforts. Executive leadership regularly visits each circuit and discusses status of performance and improvement. Additionally, performance data is available online as well as summarized in various presentations.
- Please refer to Chapter 3, Quality Assurance and Accomplishments and Program Support sections.

Goal 2

Develop and Phase-In Family Centered Practice

Additional efforts and discussion regarding family centered practice can be found in the following sections:

- Foster Care and Other Permanent Living Arrangements
- The Task Force on Fostering Success
- Foster And Adoptive Parent Recruitment
- Title IV-E Waiver
- SACWIS
- Licensing
- Chafee Foster Care (Chapter 6)

The Department of Children and Families has set the following objectives for this goal: Please keep in mind that this chapter serves as the crosswalk with the other chapters and activities discussed in the narrative.

Objective 1: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a statistically significant target for improvement in the data indicator for timeliness and permanency of reunification. By June 30, 2011, the state's objective is to reach the QIP target for statewide improvement of the proportion of children who exited to reunification and did so within 12 months of the latest removal. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy E)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Objective 1 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau reached consensus on the national standards. At the time of the second round CFSR, Florida did not meet the two national standards for safety, or two of the four permanency composites. Since then, Florida has met the two safety standards and the remaining two permanency standards.

APSR FFY 2010

- The Administration for Children and Families sent a letter dated November, 30, 2009, acknowledging that Florida had met its minimum improvement standard for timeliness and permanency of reunification.

Objective 2: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a statistically significant target for improvement in the data indicator for placement stability. By June 30, 2011, the state's objective is to reach the QIP target to increase the percentage of children who have two or fewer foster care placements in the first year of their latest removal. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Objective 2 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau concur with the baseline and improvement target for the data indicator for placement stability. Florida's baseline is 88.1. For the 12 month period ending 3/31/07; the improvement goal is 90.7. Florida met the improvement goal in FFY 2007.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 2 was achieved.** The Administration for Children and Families sent a letter dated November, 30, 2009, acknowledging that Florida had met its minimum improvement standard for Placement Stability.

Objective 3: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a target to improve the establishment of appropriate permanency goals. By June 30, 2011, the State's objective is to reach the statewide target on the establishment of appropriate permanency goals. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy E, CFSR Item 7)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida's QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.

APSR FFY 2010

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continued to negotiate the baseline and improvement level for permanency goals for children during FFY

2009 - 2010. Technical measurement factors were resolved and the Children's Bureau approved the baseline and expected level of achievement in December 2010.

Objective 4: By the end of the five year period covered in this plan, the Department of Children and Families will build upon the interim progress toward meeting or exceeding any national standards or targets set in the Long Range Program Plan.

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau reached consensus on the national standards. At the time of the second round CFSR, Florida did not meet the two national standards for safety, nor for two of the four permanency composites. Since then, Florida has met the two safety standards and the remaining two permanency standards.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 4 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau reached consensus on the national standards. At the time of the second round CFSR, Florida did not meet the two national standards for safety, or for two of the four permanency composites. Prior to approval of the Program Improvement Plan, Florida's data profile indicated the expected level of achievement on all national standards except Absence of Maltreatment in Foster Care. The expected level of achievement on this final national standard was met in March 2010 (see Goal 1, Objective 1).

Objective 5: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a target to improve caseworker visits with child. By June 30, 2011, the State's objective is to reach the statewide target on caseworker visits with child. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 19)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida's QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 5 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau negotiated and concurred on the baseline and improvement target for caseworker visits with child. The baseline is 53.4% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 55.5% and Florida exceeded this goal in June 2009 (56.2%).

Objective 6: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a target to improve caseworker visits with parents. By June 30, 2011, the State's objective is to reach the statewide target on caseworker visits with parents. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 20)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida's QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 6 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau negotiated and concurred on the baseline and improvement target for caseworker visits with parents. The baseline is 35.6% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 38.1% and Florida exceeded this goal in June 2009 (41.5%).

Benchmarks:

1. Developing a Family Centered Practice Framework

- By September 30, 2009, we will develop and disseminate policy statement on Family Centered Practice Framework. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy A, Action Step 1)

APSR FFY 2009

- Draft framework was provided to the Innovation Sites at the kickoff meeting (August 27, concurrent with Dependency Summit), and via

follow-up email from Program Director September 29, 2009. Innovation sites have assisted with refining the framework and policy during initial implementation.

APSR FFY 2010

- Florida's Family Centered Practice Framework was finalized and disseminated statewide in August 2010. Florida's Family Centered Practice Framework was developed in partnership with a variety of stakeholders, including its three CFSR-PIP Innovation Sites, state and community-based care lead agency leadership, in consultation with national experts, including Casey Family Programs, and under the direction of the Child and Family Services Review subgroup of the Secretary's Task Force for Fostering Success.

In addition, Florida has completed significant training related to Family Centered Practice, including the development and implementation of the Family Centered Practice Training Series, a week of intensive in-service training that is still being utilized by a variety of local community-based care providers. Modification of the standardized pre-service curriculum will include the Family Centered Practice Framework. Florida continues to work with its three Innovation Sites and developed and implemented a third party evaluation of those sites. Review activities were completed by the Ounce of Prevention, with funding support provided by Casey Family Programs. Information regarding Florida's Family Centered Practice Framework is available on the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice's webpage:

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/FamilyCenteredPractice/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx>

2. Implementing Family Centered Practice in Innovation Sites

- By September 30, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will select three innovation sites. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 1)

APSR FFY 2009

- In May 2009, areas interested in becoming innovation sites submitted letters of interest. The proposals were reviewed by a subcommittee of the Task Force on Fostering Success and Department of Children and Families management. The recommendations were then approved by the Secretary and letters announcing the sites were distributed on July

29, 2009. The three innovation sites are Circuit 11 (Miami-Dade), Circuit 1 (Escambia County) and Circuit 3 (Alachua County).

- Please refer to Chapter 2: Ongoing Collaboration section, Innovation Sites

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** Three Innovation Sites selected (Miami-Dade County, Pensacola and Gainesville) and Innovation Site activities underway and continuing to present day. Each Innovation Site has developed a local leadership team, implemented a variety of training and technical assistance initiatives, and is participating in a third party evaluation. Innovation Sites received Children's Justice Act grant funds to support child welfare improvement strategies and have been meeting via monthly conference calls and quarterly in-person meetings. A detailed update regarding the Innovation Sites is available in Chapter 2.
 - Please refer to Chapter 2: Ongoing Collaboration section, Innovation Sites
- By September 30, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will provide leadership development training on family centered practice for the Innovation Sites. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 2)

APSR FFY 2009

- Department of Children and Families leadership, and particularly the innovation site leaders, received information about family centered practice during August 2009, at meetings concurrent with the Dependency Summit. Paul Vincent, a national expert, was a key source and provided some historic background. A series of training events on the topic with a broad audience (including leaders, as well as trainers and practitioners) also occurred during February, July, and August 2009.
- Please refer to Chapter 3: Child Welfare Training section, Accomplishments; Chapter 3: Quality Assurance section; and Chapter 2: Ongoing Collaboration section, Office of Court Improvement.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** Significant training has been made available regarding Family Centered Practice. Content has included the development of a

week long Family Centered Practice Training Series, an intensive in-service curricula, a variety of Regional Training opportunities focusing on Family Centered Practice and Family Engagement, a dedicated “track” on Family Centered Practice during the 2010 Dependency Summit and a number of related web-based trainings available through the Center’s webpage. In 2009, then Secretary George Sheldon also developed a downloadable web message for viewing on the importance of Family Centered Practice that was publically available on the Department of Children and Families’ webpage. All Regions/Circuits were required to develop Diversion/Family Preservation Service Protocols that defined systemically how prevention/diversion services were being delivered at the local level by the Department of Children and Families and respective Community-Based Care Lead Agencies. Accordingly, principles of Family Centered Practice were woven into these protocols, as well as, the standard Community-Based Care Lead Agency contract template. As a result, discussion of Family Centered Practice initiatives is a standing review item during the Assistant Secretary for Operations regular circuit site visits and reviews.

In addition, Casey Family Programs facilitated two day long forums and a strategic planning session specifically for the leadership of the Innovation Sites in April 2010. Each Innovation Site’s leadership team participated in this forum and the working papers from this forum established the foundation for the subsequent Innovation Site third party evaluation. Included in this forum were representatives from the child welfare systems of Utah and Idaho, two states that also had implemented Family Centered Practice Frameworks.

- Please refer to Chapter 2: Additional Collaboration section, Innovation Sites.
- By December 31, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will develop and deliver in-service training on family centered practice for investigators, caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and legal services in the Innovation Sites. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed in 2009 - 2010.** Several sessions on family centered practice approaches and applications were offered at the 2009 Dependency Court Summit in August 2009. A series of train-the-trainer sessions across the state were offered September and October 2009, and all materials posted for statewide use. Family centered

practice philosophy and techniques have been integrated into the core curriculum for child welfare staff, including those in the innovation sites.

- Please refer to Chapter 3: Child Welfare Training section; and Accomplishments. And Chapter 3: Quality Assurance Section

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** Florida has completed significant training related to Family Centered Practice, including the development and implementation of the Family Centered Practice Training Series, a week of intensive in-service training that is still being utilized by a variety of local community-based care providers. Modification of the standardized pre-service curriculum will include the Family Centered Practice Framework. Florida continues to work with its three Innovation Sites and developed and implemented a third party evaluation of those Sites in which the review activities were completed by the Ounce of Prevention, with funding support provided by Casey Family Programs. Information regarding Florida's Family Centered Practice Framework is available on the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice's webpage:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/FamilyCenteredPractice/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx>

In addition, the Innovation Sites have also offered a variety of local training for their staff on Family Centered Practice. Innovation Sites are utilizing the Family Centered Practice Training Series (Pensacola and Miami), have engaged national expertise (Pensacola, Gainesville and Miami) and are developing their own training initiatives. Gainesville was awarded a federal grant that specifically supports the implementation, evaluation and comparison of several family teaming models (Family Team Conferencing and Family Group Decision Making) and is also implementing a Solutions-Based Casework model locally.

- Please refer to Chapter 2: Additional Collaboration section, Innovation Sites.

- By December 31, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will provide training on family centered practice for caregivers and service providers. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 4)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed in 2009 - 2010.** Community-Based Care Lead Agencies use materials as posted to the Center for their subcontracted providers and licensed caregivers. Various local events at the innovation sites have addressed family centered practice for audiences including caregivers/foster parents and service providers; for example, presentations at the Annual Families First Network Conference in 2009 by Jerry Milner, Janyce Fenton of the NRC-FCPPP and Joanne Brown, NCWRC/Legal. Various technical assistance efforts, such as the Youth Law Center and Eckerd Project, are also providing training and related information on family engagement.
- Please refer to Chapter 3: Child Welfare Training section, and Accomplishments.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** Florida has completed significant training related to Family Centered Practice, including the development and implementation of the Family Centered Practice Training Series, a week of intensive in-service training that is still utilized by a variety of local community-based care providers. Modification of the standardized pre-service curriculum will include the Family Centered Practice Framework. Florida continues to work with its three Innovation Sites and developed and implemented a third party evaluation of those Sites in which the review activities were completed by the Ounce of Prevention, with funding support provided by Casey Family Programs. Information regarding Florida's Family Centered Practice Framework is available on the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice's webpage:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/FamilyCenteredPractice/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx>
- Please refer to Chapter 3: Child Welfare Training section, and Accomplishments; Chapter 5: CAPTA, Additional Activities and Accomplishments in Program Areas not Included in the State Plan: Family Centered Practice Initiatives.

- By March 31, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will review progress on family centered practice in the innovation sites and modify as appropriate. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 5)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** The Department of Children and Families reviewed progress of the Innovation Sites through a third party contracted evaluation. As a condition for volunteering to be an Innovation Site for implementing the practice model, these Innovation Sites agreed to have their implementation work chronicled and to participate in a cross-site evaluation. The Ounce of Prevention was the contracted evaluator for the three Innovation Sites with both funding and leadership for the evaluation provided by Casey Family Programs. The evaluation used a “mixed methods” approach to develop findings about the quality and consistency of family centered practice in the CFSR-QIP Innovation Sites. Included in the evaluation are site specific chronicles that highlight the unique strategies developed within each of the three innovation sites for advancing Family Centered Practice at the local level. The intent of the evaluation and chronicles were to provide “lessons learned” from the sites and to share the experiences of the Sites with other Community-Based Care Lead Agencies who are also undertaking a variety of their own local initiatives to implement Family Centered Practice within their respective communities. First year Innovation Site activities were commenced in 2010 and continue through the reporting period. Innovation Site evaluation activities are planned to continue through 2011.
- By June 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will establish a plan to phase-in Family Centered Practice Framework statewide. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy B, Action Step 8)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **In Progress.** The plan to establish phase-in of a statewide Family Centered Practice Framework was deferred to a later reporting period in Florida's CFSR-QIP as findings from the third party evaluation described above are to be included in the phase-in plan. With the first year evaluation concluding in December 2010, with the report due in early 2011, Florida will develop its phase-in plan based upon lessons learned through the evaluation.

3. Improving and Expanding Family Centered Practice Statewide

Additional efforts and discussion can be found in the following sections:

- Foster Care and Other Permanent Living Arrangements
 - The Task Force on Fostering Success
 - Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment
 - Title IV-E Waiver
 - SACWIS
- By June 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will provide leadership development training on family centered practice. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy C, Action Step 1)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** Significant training has been made available regarding Family Centered Practice. Content has included the development of a week long Family Centered Practice Training Series, an intensive in-service curricula, a variety of Regional Training opportunities focusing on Family Centered Practice and Family Engagement, a dedicated "track" on Family Centered Practice during the 2010 Dependency Summit and a number of related web-based trainings available through the Center's webpage. In 2009, then Secretary George Sheldon also developed a downloadable web message for viewing on the importance of Family Centered Practice that was publically available on the Department of Children and Families' webpage. All Regions/Circuits were required to develop Diversion/Family Preservation Service Protocols that defined systemically how prevention/diversion services were being delivered at the local level by the Department of Children and Families and respective Community-

Based Care Lead Agencies. Accordingly, principles of Family Centered Practice were woven into these protocols, as well as, the standard Community-Based Care Lead Agency contract template. As a result, discussion of Family Centered Practice initiatives is a standing review item during the Assistant Secretary for Operations regular circuit site visits and reviews.

- By June 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will provide training to investigators, caseworkers, supervisors, managers, and legal services on family centered practice. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy C, Action Step 2)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** Florida has completed significant training related to Family Centered Practice, including the development and implementation of the Family Centered Practice Training Series, a week of intensive in-services training that is still being utilized by a variety of local community-based care providers. Modification of the standardized pre-service curriculum will include the Family Centered Practice Framework. Florida continues to work with its three Innovation Sites and developed and implemented a third party evaluation of those sites. The review activities were completed by the Ounce of Prevention, with funding support provided by Casey Family Programs. Information regarding Florida's Family Centered Practice Framework is available on the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice's webpage:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/FamilyCenteredPractice/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx>
- By September 30, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will provide family centered practice principles to the Office of Court Improvement. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy C, Action Step 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- The draft family centered practice framework document was provided to the Office of Court Improvement on September 18, 2009. The Office of Court Improvement replied that the approach was consistent

with the direction being taken for the Court Quality Improvement efforts.

APSR 2010

- **Completed.** The Office of Court Improvement partners with the Department of Children and Families in developing and implementing the statewide Dependency Summit. Office of Court Improvement staff and a significant number of the judiciary attend the annual Summit. In order to provide opportunity for Office of Court Improvement and related judiciary's participation in family centered practice training, the 2010 Dependency Summit included Family Centered Practice as one of its primary content tracks.
- By June 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will compile practice tools relating to caregiver and child involvement in court proceedings and disseminate statewide for local use. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy C, Action Step 5)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** The Department of Children and Families meets monthly with the Office of Court Improvement to coordinate interagency efforts and related support of the statewide Dependency courts. The Office of Court Improvement has provided a variety of bench cards and judicial training related to Family Centered Practice.
- Please refer to Chapter 2: Office of Court Improvement
- By 2012, the Department of Children and Families will continue to advance the 2012 Strategy: Safely reducing the number of children in out-of-home care by 50%. (Strategic Direction 2009 - 2011)

APSR FFY 2009

- The Department of Children and Families has continued advancing the 2012 Strategy: Safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home care by 50% by 2012. As of September 30, 2009, the number of children in out-of-home care represented a reduction of 33% from the 2006 baseline.

APSR FFY 2010

- As of September 30, 2010 the number of children in out-of-home care represented a reduction of 37% from the 2006 baseline.
- Continue to use the flexibility afforded by the Title IV-E waiver to build a comprehensive continuum of individualized services.

APSR FFY 2010

- When comparing SFY 2009 - 2010 to SFY 2008 - 2009, the average number of children in out-of-home care decreased steadily from 21,020 in SFY 2008 - 2009 to 18,457 in SFY 2009 - 2010. For SFY 2009 - 2010 the average percentage reunified within 12 months of their latest removal was 67.5%. This is a significant increase when compared with SFY 2008 - 2009. For SFY 2009 - 2010 the average percentage of children who were adopted within 24 months of removal was 42.5%. The analysis shows no significant difference between the number of children adopted in a timely manner in SFY 2009 - 2010 and 2008 - 2009. Florida continues to exceed the national standard of 32% performance measure.
- The ratio of out-of-home care expenditures to prevention/family preservation/in-home expenditures has decreased from 7.96 to 3.6 – percent?
- The reduction in the proportion of children who entered out-of-home care after receiving services is consistent with the practice where the majority of community-based care lead agencies have expanded their array of prevention and diversion services available to children and families that are involved in an allegation of abuse or neglect. Based on these two measures, it seems as if these preventive efforts aimed at providing supports and services to the families and keeping children safely at home have been successful.
- Ongoing progress will establish further benchmarks for statewide implementation of family centered practice.

APSR FFY 2009

- The Department of Children and Families has continued to work closely with the Innovation Sites around implementation of family centered practice. Several sessions on family centered practice approaches and applications were offered at the 2009 Dependency

Court Summit. A series of train-the-trainer sessions across the state were offered September and October 2009, and all materials posted for statewide use. Family centered practice philosophy and techniques have been integrated into the core curriculum for child welfare staff, including those in the innovation sites.

- Please refer to Chapter 2, Ongoing Collaboration section, The 2009 Dependency Summit.

APSR FFY 2010

- **In Progress.** The plan to establish a phase-in statewide of the Family Centered Practice Framework was deferred to a later reporting period in Florida's CFSR-QIP as findings from the third party evaluation described above are to be included in the phase-in plan. With the first year evaluation concluding in December 2010, with the report due in early 2011, Florida will develop its phase-in plan based upon lessons learned through the evaluation.

4. Improving Placement Stability and Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention

Additional efforts and discussion can be found described in the following sections:

- Foster and Adoptive Parents Recruitment
 - Title IV-E Waiver
 - SACWIS
 - Licensing
- By December 31, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will conduct a special statewide quality assurance review focusing on placement stability. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- **This benchmark was achieved.** The QA managers' special review of Placement Stability was published in August 2009. It included an assessment of service intervention to avoid disruption, the effect of frequency and quality of visits on disruption, and the reasons for placement changes.
- By March 31, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will ensure training curriculum places importance of the worker's relationship, frequent and quality contact for child and family visits. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 2)

APSR FFY 2009

- **This benchmark was achieved.** A number of video teleconferences and training have been conducted focusing on family engagement and quality visits with families (through family centered practice initiatives). Selected events were recorded and are available through the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice website, as are related materials.
- By March 31, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will develop and implement a statewide action plan to address root causes for placement instability based upon the special review and assistance from the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 5)

APSR FFY 2009

- A high level action plan was developed and distributed to the field. Local areas were directed to review status on placement stability using various data sources including the quality assurance special review and to revise local quality improvement plans as necessary.

APSR FFY 2010

- Local Circuit Actions plans were amended to address issues identified in the special study and implemented accordingly.
- Ongoing, the Department of Children and Families will continue to collaborate with Youth Law Center and Eckerd Family Foundation to provide technical assistance to selected lead agencies to recruit quality foster families to meet the needs of children in care. The best practices for recruitment and retention will drive additional benchmarks statewide. (Long Range Program Plan 2009 -2010 through 2013 -2014)

APSR FFY 2009

- Please refer Chapter 1: Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment
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APSR FFY 2010

- Foster parent recruitment activities continue to be driven by the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI). This work, led by the Youth Law Center and Eckerd Family Foundation, has expanded across the state and involves 14 of the 20 community-based care lead agencies in Florida. The goal was to develop and implement strategies built on the community-based system of care in Florida. Rather than focus on a uniform statewide initiative, the approach was individualized so that technical assistance was provided at the lead agency level and throughout the system of care at the local level.
- Please refer Chapter 1: Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment
- By September 30, 2009, we will request technical assistance from the National Court and Child Welfare Collaborative on courtroom practice and placement stability. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 6)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed.** The National Court and Child Welfare Collaborative held a technical assistance and planning meeting on December 28, 2008. This meeting and subsequent collaborative effort resulted in a Florida Collaborative Targeted Technical Assistance Plan that was signed by all parties during February 2009.
- By March 31, 2010, we will provide training or technical assistance to foster parents to help them better understand the dependency court system and empower them to properly advocate for children and assist in maintaining family connections. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 7)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Achieved.** Dependency court information was included in presentations at the statewide foster parent education conference in June 2009. This included a session on “Foster Parents and the Court” by Joanne Brown, consultant for the National Child Welfare Resource Center/Legal Judicial. The Office of State Courts’ Administrator has published “A Caregiver’s Guide to Dependency Court.”

- By March 31, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will provide guidelines for the development and revisions to local recruitment and retention plans for foster and adoptive homes, and other placement resources. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 9)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Achieved.** Foster parent recruitment and retention is embedded in an ongoing “Quality Parenting Initiative” that the Department of Children and Families and the Community-Based Care Lead Agency partners are implementing in collaboration with the Youth Law Center and Eckerd Family Foundation. Please refer to the Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment section.
- By June 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will provide training and technical assistance to lead agencies to recruit quality foster families to meet the needs of children in care. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 10)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Achieved.** As part of the “Quality Parenting Initiative,” a series of events related to foster parent supports and recruiting, or “branding” were held. These events are available online at the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice.
- By March 31, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will issue a memorandum regarding local plans to implement or expand the 24 hour availability of supports for foster parents, relatives, and other caregivers to avoid disruptions in placement and expectations on normalcy for licensed caregivers. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy D, Action Step 11)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Achieved.** A memorandum was issued that directed local areas to review and revise as necessary the appropriate local plan to ensure the inclusion of availability and access to 24 hour supports for caregivers.

5. Improving Appropriateness of Permanency Planning Goals

Additional efforts and discussion can be found in the following sections:

- Foster Care and Other Permanent Living Arrangements

- Foster and Adoptive Parents Recruitment
 - Timely Home Studies - Reporting and Data
 - Adoptions
 - Title IV-E Waiver
 - SACWIS
- By June 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will gather and disseminate best practices relating to permanency and concurrent planning for local use. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy E, Action Step 2)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- The Department of Children and Families' web portal (Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice) is the primary mechanism for sharing practice information statewide (and indeed, nationally). The Evidence-Based and Best Practices page includes several items on permanency and concurrent planning from state and national sources.
- By September 30, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will develop and implement a process for direct access into the Child Support information system to assist with diligent search activities. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy E, Action Step 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Achieved.** The child welfare program worked with the Child Support Enforcement agency (Department of Revenue) to provide field staff with access to the screens in the automated public benefits system (FLORIDA). A memo describing this effort and access/training detail was distributed to the field December 18, 2008 with job aids.

- By September 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will develop and share best practice guidelines for identifying and locating parents and relatives for use by frontline staff, attorneys and the court. (QIP, Goal 1, Strategy E, Action Step 4)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **Complete.** The Department of Children and Families' web portal (Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice) has a long list of resources about diligent search and other parent/relative location. A memo to the field on use of these and other resources was issued on October 29, 2010.
- By 2012, the Department of Children and Families will define a process that helps families plan to successfully and safely reunify, and ensures case managers establish with the family those post-reunification supports necessary for success.

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- Florida statute requires a minimum of six months protective supervision post-reunification case management services. Through ongoing case management services children and families will continue to be assessed and case plans modified accordingly. Additionally, Florida's Title IV-E Waiver provides flexible use of available funding to provide in-home services post-reunification.
 - During 2010, in order to highlight family preservation and to strengthen Florida's Family Centered Practice perspective, Florida completed a series of "Reunification Day" celebrations statewide. The "Reunification Day" celebrations included local media involvement to highlight the issue and convey the implicit policy message.

- Ongoing, the Department of Children and Families will work to improve resources, processes, techniques enhancing diligent search, identification, and linkage with all potential relatives, especially non-custodial parent (father, mother, incarcerated). This includes adding knowledge and skill to pre- and in-service training. (Strategic Direction 2009 – 2011)

APSR FFY 2009

- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- The Department of Children and Families implemented a Relative Search Pilot Project using Aspirant software as a technological support for locating multiple relatives in 2008. The six month pilot commenced on June 1, 2008, and concluded on November 30, 2008. The initial pilot area was the Northeast Region (both Department of Children and Families Child Protective Investigations personnel as well as Community-Based Care Lead Agency/CMO Case Management staff). Subsequently, the pilot was expanded to include local Department of Children and Families Child Protective Investigations staff in Circuit 2. Lessons learned from the Relative Search Pilot Project processes were included in statewide Regional Trainings. Diligent search is included in pre-service curricula and resources are available via the Center's webpage.

Goal 3

Improve Service Array

Additional efforts and discussion can be found in the following sections:

- Title IV-E Waiver
- SACWIS

The Department of Children and Families has set the following objectives for this goal:

Objective 1: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a target to improve needs and services of the

child, parents, and foster parents. By June 30, 2011, the State's objective is to reach the statewide target on the needs and services of the child, parents, and foster parents. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 17)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida's QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.

APSR FFY 2010

- Various phases of negotiation occurred, with the concurrence to all required baselines and standards documented by the Children's Bureau in its letters dated 9/16/2010, 12/1/2010, and 2/28/2011.

Objective 2: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children's Bureau will determine a baseline and a target to improve child and family involvement in case planning. By June 30, 2011, the State's objective is to reach the statewide target on child and family involvement in case planning. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 18)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children's Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida's QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.
- Please refer to Chapter 1: Foster Care and Another Permanent Living Arrangements (APPLA)

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 2 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau negotiated and concurred on the baseline and improvement target for child and family involvement in case planning. The negotiated baseline is 60.3% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 62.4% and Florida exceeded this goal in June 2009 (66.5%).

- Please refer to Chapter 1: Foster Care and Another Permanent Living Arrangements (APPLA)

Objective 3: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children’s Bureau will determine a baseline and a target to improve caseworker visits with child. By June 30, 2011, the State’s objective is to reach the statewide target on caseworker visits with child. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 19)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children’s Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida’s QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children’s Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.
- Please refer to Chapter 1: Monthly Caseworker Visits.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 3 was achieved.** Florida and the Children’s Bureau negotiated and concurred on the baseline and improvement target for caseworker visits with child. The negotiated baseline is 53.4% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 55.5% and Florida exceeded this goal in June 2009 (56.2%).
- Please refer to Chapter 1: Monthly Caseworker Visits, and Goal 2, Objective 5.

Objective 4: By September 30, 2009, the state in concert with the Children’s Bureau will determine a baseline and a target to improve caseworker visits with parents. By June 30, 2011, the State’s objective is to reach the statewide target on caseworker visits with parents. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, CFSR Item 20)

APSR FFY 2009

- Florida and the Children’s Bureau continue to negotiate the baselines and improvement levels. Florida’s QIP was approved in June 2009 with the understanding that baselines and measures will be negotiated during the second quarter of the QIP implementation period. The

measurement proposal was submitted in December 2009 to the Children's Bureau. Negotiations started in January 2010.

- Please refer to Chapter 1: Monthly Caseworker Visits.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Objective 4 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau negotiated and concurred on the baseline and improvement target for caseworker visits with parents. The negotiated baseline is 35.6% from July - December 2008; the improvement goal is 38.1% and Florida exceeded this goal in June 2009 (41.5%).
- Please refer to Chapter 1: Monthly Caseworker Visits, and Goal 2, Objective 6.

Objective 5: By the end of the five year period covered in this plan, the Department of Children and Families will build upon the interim progress toward meeting or exceeding any national standards or targets set in the Long Range Program Plan.

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- Florida and the Children's Bureau reached consensus on the state's level of improvement specific to the national standards. At the time of the second round CFSR, Florida did not meet the two national standards for safety, or two of the four permanency composites. Since then, Florida has met the improvement goals for one of the two safety standards and the two permanency standards. The remaining national standard for safety is on recurrence of maltreatment. Florida subsequently achieved the level of improvement for this standard as indicated in the Florida Data Profile- 2009, issued March 23, 2010.

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- **Objective 5 was achieved.** Florida and the Children's Bureau reached consensus on the national standards. At the time of the second round CFSR, Florida did not meet the two national standards for safety, or for two of the four permanency composites. Prior to approval of the Program Improvement Plan, Florida's data profile indicated the expected level of achievement on all national standards except Absence of Maltreatment in Foster Care. The expected level of achievement on this final national standard was met in March 2010 (see Goal 1, Objective 1).

Benchmarks:

1. Individualizing Services for Family Members to Meet Their Specific Needs and Enable Families to Nurture Their Children

Additional efforts and discussion can be found in the following sections:

- Title IV-E Waiver
 - The Task Force on Fostering Success
 - Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment
 - SACWIS
-
- By September 30, 2009, we will develop and disseminate a memorandum outlining leadership intent about reducing the use of shift care for all children and eliminating it for children 5 and under. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Step 1)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Completed.** The Secretary's Strategic Direction for 2009-2011 for child welfare included eliminating shift care for children under five. On March 3, 2009 a policy memo to the field defined the Department of Children and Families' priorities in this area. This memo also began an ongoing process for continual tracking and review of this type of placements until the use of shift care for the identified population is eliminated.
- By September 30, 2009, we will work to expand Operation Full Employment for youth in foster care, to support youth in their transition to independence. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Step 2)

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- **Achieved.** Beginning in 2008, a priority for the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families has been to support youth transitioning from foster care. Tools for the field were developed and posted online, and a February 25, 2009 memorandum detailed some of the successes and ongoing initiatives.
- Please refer to Chapter 1, Operation Full Employment.

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- Please refer to Chapter 1, Operation Full Employment.
- By December 31, 2009, we will develop and disseminate information outlining when a multidisciplinary team staffing occurs, and other requirements for analyzing family needs and linking families with appropriate services in a timely manner. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Step 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- **Achieved.** A memorandum providing requirements and directing the development of local protocols relating to multidisciplinary team staffings was issued the field on December 14, 2009.
- By June 30, 2010, we will identify and post best practices relating to service supports and placement stability. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Step 6)

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- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

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- The Department of Children and Families' web portal, Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice, is the primary mechanism for sharing practice information statewide (and indeed, nationally). The Evidence-Based and Best Practices page includes several items related to in-home service supports and placement stability. There are also topical resource pages, that focuses on services for physical, dental, and behavioral health.
- By December 31, 2009 and ongoing, we will negotiate and execute an Interagency Agreement among the Department of Children and Families, Agency for Workforce Innovation, and Department of Education that focuses on the respective responsibilities for furnishing educational and vocational services and supports for children served by Florida child welfare agencies. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy A, Action Step 7)

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- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

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- A groundbreaking interagency agreement was signed July 30, 2009. In addition to Department of Children and Families, Agency for Workforce Innovation, and Department of Education, it included the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, which are also involved in educational and vocational activities for some child welfare clients. Integration and coordination activities guided by this agreement continue.
- By December 31, 2011, we will integrate the service functions of Family Intervention Specialists and case managers to ensure a seamless delivery system for families involved in substance abuse, mental health, and child protection programs. (Strategic Direction 2009 – 2011)

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- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

APSR FFY 2010

- **Completed.** All Regions/Circuits were required to develop Diversion/Family Preservation Service Protocols that defined systemically how prevention/diversion services were being delivered at the local level by the Department of Children and Families and respective Community-Based Care Lead Agencies. Diversion/Family Preservation protocols integrated the role of the Family Intervention Specialists for specialized assessment of substance abuse issues and related referral for services. The Assistant Secretary for Operations regular circuit site visits include the review of Circuit prevention/diversion protocols.
- Ongoing, continue and strengthen state level and local coordination of educational services and sharing of information regarding education. (Strategic Direction 2009 – 2011)

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- Update will be provided in 2011 Annual Progress and Services Report

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- In an effort to ensure children served by Florida child welfare agencies receive educational and vocational services and supports, the Department of Children and Families, Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Agency for Persons with Disabilities and Agency for Workforce Innovation have entered into a five way Interagency Agreement. The coordination of services and supports across agencies is critical to positive educational and meaningful life outcomes for Florida's children. Such services require the coordinated flow of information across multiple child service agencies to ensure that policy, procedure, service delivery and resource development are provided in a manner that maximizes the likelihood of positive outcomes. The Department of Children and Families has also entered into agreements with 28 of the 60 county school boards and is continuing to seek agreements with the remaining counties.
- Department of Children and Families' new "Everybody's a Teacher" initiative is designed to encourage individuals and communities to become involved in the education of children and youth in foster care and address issues that often stand in the way of their doing well in school. The message the Department of Children and Families and others hope to convey: "Everybody's a Teacher".
- Many professionals in our local communities understand these issues, and our hope is to use this initiative to bring judges, guardians, care managers, advocates, teachers and school administrators, and others together to develop an action plan that will improve educational outcomes for children.

2. Improving Coordination of Physical Health Care, Dental Health Care, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services for Children in Out-of-Home Care

Additional efforts and discussion can be found in the following sections:

- Please refer to Chapter 2, Consultations with Physicians
- Please refer to Chapter 2, The Task Force on Fostering Success

Benchmarks:

- By December 31, 2009, the Department of Children and Families will develop and distribute a website address with names of providers for medical, dental, and behavioral health including Medicaid and Children's Medical Services providers. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy B, Action Step 1)

APSR FFY 2010

- **Achieved.** The Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice's website is the primary "knowledge base" for Florida's child welfare professionals and stakeholders. Resources for medical, dental and behavioral health are posted. The main page for these resources provides a wealth of links to items and other sites. For example, a map of behavioral health "prepaid program" contacts and a foster parent page with many resources, including a link to Children's Medical Services.
- By September 30, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will develop and disseminate guidelines for use by frontline staff, supervisors, managers, children's legal services, and judiciary on the timely delivery, continuity of care, and developmentally appropriate behavioral health care for children in out-of-home care. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy B, Action Step 3)

APSR FFY 2009

- Please refer to Chapter 2, Health Care Services.

APSR FFY 2010

- **Achieved.** The Family Safety and the Mental Health Program Offices have issued the first ever joint operating procedure relating to services for children in out-of-home placements with mental health and co-occurring disorders. This operating procedure (dated 9/13/2010) covers most aspects of behavioral health. Please refer to:
<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/publications/policies/175-40.pdf>
- Training webinars were held for all key stakeholders. The Department of Children and Families' web portal, Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice, is the primary mechanism for sharing practice information statewide (and indeed, nationally). The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Resources page provides many links to information, guidelines, and other resources.
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/mhsa/default.aspx>
- By March 31, 2011, we will develop and distribute materials for investigators, case managers, foster parents, caregivers, and judiciary on dental and physical health needs of children, to include identifying appropriate services. (QIP, Goal 3, Strategy B, Action Step 4)

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- Memo sent March 19, 2009 announcing Health, Dental, and Behavioral Please refer to website for additional information:
http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/mhsa/MHSA_Phys_Dent_Resources/Forms/AllItems.aspx
- Please refer to Chapter 2, Health Care Services.

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- A web page with an extensive list of health and dental resources and a flyer suitable for use with parents, caregivers, and professionals is available on the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice webpage. This link has been distributed to various target audiences for their use.
http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/mhsa/MHSA_Phys_Dent_Resources/Forms/AllItems.aspx
- Please refer to Chapter 2, Health Care Services.
- **Completed.** Information developed and distributed on April 19, 2011. Please see link below on the Center's webpage:
http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/mhsa/MHSA_Phys_Dent_Resources/Forms/AllItems.aspx
- Ongoing, continue implementation of the Interagency Agreement with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Health, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. This Interagency Agreement fully engages all agencies at the region, circuit, and county level to assure seamless casework solutions related to education, health, and other support services. (Strategic Direction 2009 – 2011).

APSR FFY 2009

- The Department of Children and Families, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Health, the Agency for Health Care Administration, and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities signed an Interagency Agreement to work together to improve services to jointly served children. These five state agencies serving children and youth are committed to reducing unnecessary delays in assistance and services. The agreement requires each of the participating agencies to align their policies and procedures for clients receiving services from multiple agencies. The agreement identifies “champions” within each agency to ensure the coordination of services and improved communication among all agencies involved in a child's care.

APSR FFY 2010

- In an effort to ensure children served by Florida child welfare agencies receive educational and vocational services and supports, the Department of Children and Families, Department of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Agency for Persons with Disabilities and Agency for Workforce Innovation have entered into a five way Interagency Agreement which is proven effective.