Florida’s State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect July 2009 through June 2010

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Florida Interprogram Task Force’s (Task Force) implementation activities developed and the actions taken across the state and local levels to address Florida’s child abuse, abandonment, and neglect problems. The goals of the Task Force’s activities and accomplishments are organized into five implementation areas: education and child care, community and family safety, child and maternal health, prevention funding and accountability, and the prevention continuum. This Progress Report provides information on the implementation efforts developed and the actions taken at both the state and local levels. For fiscal year 2004-2005, the Department of Children and Families established the Florida Interprogram Task Force to identify, analyze, and recommend strategies to improve the effectiveness of state and local efforts to prevent child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. To that end, the Task Force was charged with identifying strategies to improve Florida’s prevention efforts at both the state and local levels as well as strategies that could be implemented on a statewide basis, including: (a) evaluation and outcome measures and (b) coordination with local planning and implementation teams. Initially, Florida’s prevention efforts focused on coordination with local planning and implementation teams.

The Implementation Context

Florida is currently concentrating on the prevention of child abuse and neglect in response to the following:

• 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).
• Ongoing increases in child abuse and re-abuse rates are an immediate concern. Communities and service providers need to use proven and innovative strategies to intervene and have an impact on rates. Therefore, it is essential to develop and implement strategies that will prevent child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.
• The rate of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect rates will be an incremental process. Initially, Florida’s prevention efforts focused on coordination with local planning and implementation teams. During fiscal year 2004-2005, the Task Force’s major accomplishments included:
  • Development of detailed strategic plans by subject matter experts at the state and local levels.
  • Evaluation of the implementation effectiveness on a statewide and a local level.
  • Identification of implementation barriers and success stories.
  • Evaluation of the implementation strategies developed and the actions taken at both the state and local levels. This Progress Report provides information on the implementation efforts both on a statewide and a local level.

Objectives

The Objectives of the Task Force for the fiscal year 2004-2005 included:

• Developing a vision of the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.
• Developing detailed strategies to implement the objectives.
• Developing a comprehensive, statewide, and local implementation plan that is evidence-based.
• Establishing evaluation and accountability measures to ensure that objectives are met.
• Establishing an implementation strategy and methodology to implement the objectives.
• Determining success measures to determine if the objectives are met.
• Establishing a monitoring and evaluation plan to determine if the objectives are met.

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Goals and Objectives

Desired Outcomes

By June 30, 2010:

• The child abuse rate will be reduced from the fiscal year 2003-2004 statewide rate of 31.4/1,000 to no more than 15.0/1,000 children.
• The re-abuse rate will be reduced from the six-month rate of 29.4/1,000 to no more than 15.0/1,000 children.
• The prevention continuum is designed to ensure that children and families will be better supported and that re-abuse rates will be reduced.
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Florida’s State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect: July 2005 through June 2010 (June 2005), referred to as “The Plan,” has reached the end of the second year of planning. This Progress Report provides information on the implementation strategies developed and the actions taken at both the state and local levels. This report highlights notable accomplishments and most significant challenges encountered during fiscal year 2005-2006. The details supporting this progress report, including specific strategies and action plans for all objectives and information on coordination with local planning activities, can be found at [www.teamfla.org/taskforce.html](http://www.teamfla.org/taskforce.html). The Florida Interprogram Task Force is committed to the principle that the best way to prevent child abuse, abandonment, and neglect is to ensure that all Florida’s children are raised in healthy, safe, stable, and nurturing families. Therefore, The Plan’s goals and objectives focus on enhancing protective factors, conditions ordinarily associated with low levels of abuse, and reducing risk factors, conditions which, when present, are associated with increased likelihood of abuse. Reducing child abuse and neglect rates will be an incremental process. Initially, Florida’s prevention efforts will improve the health, education, and well-being of our children before we see a dramatic impact on abuse and re-abuse rates.

During fiscal year 2005-2006, the Task Force’s major accomplishments included:

- Development of detailed implementation plans by subject matter experts at the state and local levels.
- Evaluation of the implementation efforts both on a statewide and a local level.
- Enhancement of collaboration among statewide agencies and organizations and with local planning and implementation teams.

**The Implementation Context**

Florida is currently concentrating on the prevention of child abuse and neglect in response to several factors:

- 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. Communities and service providers need to use proven and innovative strategies to intervene and have an impact on these rates.
- The short-term effects of child abuse and neglect include the physical and emotional harm abuse causes for the child; the disruption to family life and cohesion; and the strain on scarce community resources resulting from the response to reports of abuse.
- Long-term consequences are the most costly in both human and monetary terms. Children who are abused are more likely to abuse their own children; experience lifelong chronic health and medical problems (e.g. obesity, drug abuse, heart disease); form broken and dysfunctional families; and draw on community resources for law enforcement, unemployment, social services, and health care.
Florida's State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect: July 2005 through June 2010

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

Goals and Objectives
Desired Outcomes
By June 30, 2010:
• The child abuse rate will be reduced from the final year 2003-2004 statewide rate of 21.1 to 11.0 per 1,000 children.
• The financial resource accountability system ensures the prevention plan is fully implemented.
• The prevention continuum's accountability system ensures the prevention plan is fully implemented.
• The prevention continuum's accountability system ensures the prevention plan is fully implemented.

Objectives
During the planning phase, objectives are developed that are goal related. In the Florida Prevention Task Force has developed objectives, or benchmarks, or targets, or standards that are used to measure progress. The objectives describe key action plans or strategies that are described in the prevention plan that are used to measure progress. The objectives are:
Florida’s State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect July 2005 through June 2010

Progress Report

June 2005

Developed by The Florida Interprogram Task Force

Florida’s State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect July 2005 through June 2010

The Implementation Context
Florida is currently concentrating on the prevention of child abuse and neglect in response to several factors:
• Planning for prevention of child abuse and neglect is required both by state law (1357.15); 1357.15(4)(a) and (b) and by Florida’s State Plan for the Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment, and Neglect (the Plan), which adopted several of its elements.
• Florida’s child abuse and neglect rates are rising. Community and state concerns about the well-being of Florida’s children led to the development of the state plan for the reasons noted.
• The state and federal efforts to address child abuse and neglect include the physical and sexual and emotional abuse themes. This plan is designed to address family and non-family abuse, and to support the community mechanisms of intervention.
• Long-range consequences of the child neglect are both human and economic terms. Children who are neglected and abused are more likely to become dropping school, health related problems, and emotional issues. A number of research studies have been done on the outcomes for the prevention of childhood abuse and neglect.
Plan Implementation

The Florida Interprogram Task Force (The Task Force) was established in 2000 by Governor Jeb Bush with a singular, unifying purpose: to coordinate state and local efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. The members of the Task Force are representatives of the Department of Children and Families and other state agencies whose efforts are essential in creating healthy environments for our children. Other non-governmental organizations and representatives of local planning teams, along with educators, traditional service providers and agencies, are also represented on the Task Force. The Task Force meets quarterly and is charged with coordinating and collaborating with state and local agencies to ensure effective planning and implementation of prevention activities.

Milestones

Local planning teams were a focus to help individuals in the community understand the roles they can play in promoting child well-being. A variety of strategies were developed to achieve this goal, including workshops, annual planning meetings, and local community training sessions. The Task Force offers technical assistance to local planning teams and subcommittees.

While Florida overall child abuse rates have remained high and re-abuse rates have increased, early prevention efforts have yielded positive effects on indicators of child well-being.

As a result of participation in implementation of The Plan, participating state agencies have an increased commitment to and awareness of how their programs contribute to child well-being. The Task Force, through subcommittee quarterly reports, a quarterly report summary, and a detailed annual progress report, monitors the implementation of The Plan and provides an overview of the status of implementation and for task requirements. A bimonthly meeting of Local planning team members and Task Force members addressed The Plan and reported on the progress made to date.

In the first six years of the Plan's implementation, 2000-2004, 1,000 youth receiving delinquency prevention services were crime free for one year.

For information, contact the Florida Interprogram Task Force.

Looking Ahead

The Task Force continues to maintain an open process, with stakeholders continuing to engage in the process and provide input as opportunities arise. The Task Force recognizes that the child abuse prevention system is dynamic, ever changing, and requires ongoing evaluation and commitment.

The Task Force will continue to monitor the implementation of The Plan and the state's progress toward reducing the rate of child abuse. The Task Force will be in a position to better inform vibrant communities in support of their efforts.

New legislative proposals will be developed based on needs identified by local planning teams and subject-matter experts participating as Task Force subcommittee members.

As a result of reviews, most of the child well-being indicators will be incorporated into local planning team reports. The Task Force will continue to identify trends and new data sources.

Florida is one of the leading child abuse states among the forty states that compile these statistics. The state's overall child abuse rate is consistently above the national average. Child abuse and neglect are a significant problem.

To date, the Florida Office of Family Safety has compiled more than 15 years of data on child abuse and neglect, including the specific data that is the basis for this report. The data is compiled from reports submitted to the Department of Children and Families.

The child abuse report rate in Florida is higher than the national average. The rate for Florida is 9.5 per 1,000 children under 18 compared to 7.8 per 1,000 nationally. The Florida rate has increased steadily since 2001 and is currently at a rate of 10.8 per 1,000 children under 18.

Today's data are timely and accurate. The Department of Children and Families is committed to reporting child abuse and neglect in a timely and accurate manner.

For information, contact the Florida Interprogram Task Force.

Prevention Planning Infrastructure

Florida's communities are at different points in embracing child well-being. The Plan is seeking better outcomes on a statewide level; however, the Task Force recognizes that statewide changes are needed. The Task Force is working in partnership with the Children's Services Councils, community health coalitions, and the communities themselves to support the implementation of The Plan.

The Plan is a collaborative, cross-sector, non-regulatory effort. It is designed to be implemented at the state and local level.

The Task Force offers technical assistance to local planning teams and subcommittees.

Looking Ahead

In the future, the Task Force will continue to monitor the implementation of The Plan and the state's progress toward reducing the rate of child abuse.

For information, contact the Florida Interprogram Task Force.
The multidisciplinary, interagency nature of effective child abuse prevention efforts, 2004-2010

Plan Implementation

The Task Force, through subcommittee quarterly reports, quarterly progress reporting, and a detailed annual progress report, regularly reviews progress in actions taken to implement The Plan. The Task Force evaluates both the process and the values of indicators for major outcomes and for each objective. The Task Force will continue to measure system outcomes, so there will be an ongoing challenge to maintain the balance between the primary strategies for some indicators of child well-being. For instance:

- While Florida overall child abuse rates have remained high and have reached new levels, early prevention efforts have yielded positive effects on other indicators of child well-being.

Relevant Services

- Increased awareness and commitment to and awareness of how their programs contribute to child well-being.
- Development of documentation of the types of prevention programs that exist regionally.
- Improved local and statewide coordination and communication.
- Increased rate of committee attendance.

Remaining Challenges

- Increase the number of child abuse and neglect reports. The rate of child abuse and neglect may be a temporary outcome in the short run and abate in some areas due to increased awareness and resources, but may not be sustained if these efforts are not sustained in the long run.
- Increase the number of indicators of child well-being. Some indicators of child well-being, such as school attendance and economic well-being, are strongly linked to outcomes such as abuse prevention.

Local Planning Teams

- Local planning teams serve as a forum for help individuals in the community understand the roles they play in implementing The Plan. The local planning teams are made up of representatives from local agencies and organizations that are involved in developing, funding, and implementing prevention services that improve family functioning.

Milestones

- Local planning teams have served as a forum for help individuals in the community understand the roles they play in implementing The Plan. The local planning teams are made up of representatives from local agencies and organizations that are involved in developing, funding, and implementing prevention services that improve family functioning.
- The Task Force expanded documentation of the types of prevention programs that exist regionally.
- Florida's youth to seek training in these areas and create incentives for people to enter and remain employed in these disciplines.
- The Task Force and local planning teams developed a reporting and feedback system that promotes increased self-assessment and commitment to and awareness of how their programs contribute to child well-being.
- While Florida overall child abuse rates have remained high and have reached new levels, early prevention efforts have yielded positive effects on other indicators of child well-being.

Looking Ahead

- The Task Force encourages parents, caregivers, teachers, and other individuals in the community to take steps to help prevent child abuse and neglect. The Task Force encourages parents, caregivers, teachers, and other individuals in the community to take steps to help prevent child abuse and neglect.
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Plan Objective Trends

- Florida overall child abuse rates have remained high and have reached new levels, early prevention efforts have yielded positive effects on indicators of child well-being.
**Plan Implementation**

The multidisciplinary, interagency nature of effective child abuse prevention efforts is illustrated by The Plan: A Florida Blueprint for Prevention. The Task Force offers technical assistance to local planning teams and subcommittees. This process and the responsibility to address specific issues and concerns are distributed among state agencies and local governing bodies to ensure effective prevention efforts.

**Milestones**

- Local planning teams serve as a forum to help individuals in the community understand the roles they can play in preventing child abuse and neglect.
- Improvement activities of local planning teams are aligned with statewide objectives.
- Statewide organizations involved in ensuring child well-being also have representatives on the Florida Interprogram Task Force. During fiscal year 2005-2006, the full Task Force met four times.
- Local planning groups report their progress quarterly to the Task Force. As a result of participation in implementation of The Plan, participating state agencies have an increased understanding of evidenced-based practices and areas for improvement.
- The Task Force has made sustained efforts to actively engage all players in the prevention conversations.
- Florida communities are at different positions in preventing child and family abuse and neglect.
- Florida’s child abuse prevention system is founded on parallel changes at the local level. To support the interdisciplinary state and local collaborative aspects of The Plan, the Task Force is systematically identifying funding gaps for evidence-based practices.

**Looking Ahead**

- Re avaliação of children and families is handicapped by a lack of reliability in state reporting systems.
- Florida’s child abuse and neglect rates may be too temporary in the state and neglect rates and rates of reoccurrence due to Florida’s process are significantly under reported.
- Florida’s child abuse prevention system is founded on parallel changes at the local level.
- Notable additions include objectives addressing:
  - School-based.
  - Reengineering family/child needs after presenting mental health and substance abuse needs.
  - Immunization programs will expand.
  - Community health assessment resource tool (CHATs).
  - Children’s access to health and mental health services in schools.

**Plan Objectives**

- The Plan is seeking better outcomes on a statewide level; however, the Task Force recognizes that statewide changes are a result of increased awareness of child abuse and neglect.
- The Florida Children’s Access to Health and Mental Health Services in Schools.
- Improvements in transportation availability.
- Recognizing family/child needs when meeting parent’s mental health or substance abuse needs.
- Infant mental health.
- The Future of Florida’s Families Committee of the House of Representatives completed an interim project on child abuse prevention. Its report emphasized the importance of preventing abuse and neglect before they occur. HB 7173 passed, requiring all schools to report cases of suspected abuse to the Department of Children and Families instead of only being referred to the Department of Children and Families central abuse hotline even if the suspected perpetrator is a school employee (Objective 2.16). HB 7173 passed, requiring all schools to report cases of suspected abuse to the Department of Children and Families instead of only being referred to the Department of Children and Families central abuse hotline even if the suspected perpetrator is a school employee (Objective 2.16).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Children Receiving Delinquency Prevention Services</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>18.0</td>
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- **Children’s well-being:**
  - Florida’s child abuse and neglect rates have remained stable.
  - Florida’s child abuse and neglect rates have decreased more than 50% since 1998.
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- **Re-assessment of children and families:**
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- **Looking Ahead:**
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**Remaining Challenges**

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- Florida communities are at different positions in preventing child and family abuse and neglect.
- Florida’s child abuse prevention system is founded on parallel changes at the local level.
Plan Implementation

The Florida Interagency Task Force on Child Abuse Prevention is the state-level advisory body charged with leading the implementation of DCF’s strategic plan through the support and implementation of comprehensive, coordinated prevention efforts. In the process of identifying, assessing, and implementing strategies, the Task Force and stakeholders will work to develop a comprehensive plan and associated budgetary priorities to ensure effective plan implementation.

Milestones

- Local planning teams serve as a front line for early identification and intervention and build capacity for implementing evidence-based interventions at the local level.
- Local planning teams incorporate a variety of perspectives into the design of the local plan.
- The Task Force and stakeholders evaluate the annual update of the statewide plan for 2006-2007.
- The Task Force and stakeholders assess the annual report on implementation of The Plan.
- The Task Force and stakeholders implement evidence-based and evidence-informed strategies, including strategies to improve access to health and mental health services for children.
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Looking Ahead

- The Task Force will continue to expand and strengthen its partnership with stakeholders and communities to ensure the continued success of The Plan.
- The Task Force will continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of The Plan and the effectiveness of strategies.
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Local/District Accomplishments

- All districts have a local Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Prevention Plan. As of April 21, 2006, objectives in local plans are related to 86% of the objectives in the statewide plan.
- The Department of Children and Families continues to implement the Road to Independence Act. The department has promulgated revised rules for the Independent Living program and will be working to further implement statutory changes passed in the 2006 legislative session.
- The percentage of children living in poverty has decreased in Florida since 2004.
- The High School graduation rate has increased.
- Local funding is being utilized in some areas of the State to place Health professionals in public schools.
- The Family Team Conferencing model is used to strengthen families and meet their needs before they enter the child welfare system.
- Child Protection Teams (DOH, CMS) provide medical, psychological, and psychosocial assessments that assist investigators in plans for initial safety, and in the identification of long term risk factors and the development of case plans.
- Programs like drop-out prevention programs, tutoring, and after school education programs in targeted neighborhoods meet needs of students facing academic challenges.
- Local methamphetamine task forces, among other activities, train community social service professionals.
- The needs of Children with SED are being addressed using an integrated care system that provides wraparound services involving the Department of Children and Families, Mental Health Services, and SEDNET.
- Life Skills programs are offered in some communities.
**NOTICE OF FILING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting Agency:</th>
<th>Department of Children and Families</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recipient Agency:</td>
<td>GOVERNOR, SENATE PRESIDENT, HOUSE SPEAKER,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Prevention Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Due Date:</td>
<td>June 30, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Requirement:</td>
<td>s. 39.001(8)(b), F.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract:**

This report provides information for calendar year 2005/2006 on:

1. The progress report for the state and local prevention plan.

2. The progress report of the roll-up of the state and local prevention plans.

Copies of this report may be obtained by contacting:

Dept. of Children and Families  
Family Safety Program Office  
1317 Winewood Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700  
Attn: Sherri Michel-Singer, 850-413-0354

Copies of this report is also available on the Team Florida website at www.teamfla.org/taskforce.html.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPORT TITLE</th>
<th>STATUTORY REFERENCE</th>
<th>SPECIFICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Prevention</td>
<td>39.001 (8) (b), F.S.</td>
<td>The department at the state and district levels and the other agencies listed in paragraph (7) (a) shall readdress the plan and make necessary revisions every 5 years, at a minimum. Such revisions shall be submitted to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate no later than June 30 of each year divisible by 5. An annual progress report shall be submitted to update the plan in the years between the 5 year intervals.</td>
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