

**Executive Office of the Governor**



**2019 Annual Progress Report**

**Office of Adoption & Child Protection**

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*This annual progress report from the Office of Adoption and Child Protection is submitted to:*

*The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor, State of Florida*

*The Honorable José Oliva, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives*

*The Honorable William Galvano, President, Florida Senate*

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# Section 1: Summary of Office Activities

## Background

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection (Office) was created in Section 39.001, Florida Statutes (§39.001, F.S.) for the purpose of establishing, implementing, and monitoring a cross-agency comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families and prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The Office is also represented on the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (§402.56, F.S.) and provides leadership and administrative support to the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council (§14.31, F.S.). *Figure 1* provides a perspective of the intersection between each responsibility of the Office.

*Figure 1: Intersection Between the Responsibilities of the Office*

### Children & Youth Cabinet

The Governor's Cabinet ensures the public policy relating to children and youth is developed to **promote interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation** in order that **services are planned, managed and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health and quality of life.**



CHILDREN

FAMILIES



COMMUNITIES



### Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan

- Supported by 20 Circuit Taskforces, works to **implement strategies and initiatives that address state and local priorities** for the promotion of adoption, support for adoptive families and prevention of child maltreatment.
- The central focus of the state plan is to **build resilience in all of Florida's families and communities in order to equip them to better care for and nurture their children.**

### Faith-based & Community-based Advisory Council

- Serves as a formal advisory board to the Governor and Legislature; to **enlist, equip, enable, empower and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer and community-based organizations to work with government to deliver services more effectively.**
- The mission of the Council is to **facilitate connections to strengthen communities and families.**

## Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan

The 2015-2020 Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency (CAPP) Plan completed its fourth year of a five-year, statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support for adoptive families and prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect (maltreatment). State level efforts continue to build on the previous state plan by:

- Developing relationships and strategic partnerships.
- Engaging state and local stakeholders to identify needs/risks and strategies to build protective factors for all families.
- Providing education, training, and technical assistance at the state and local levels.
- Highlighting innovative and best practice approaches.

### Vision

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

### Mission

To serve as a blueprint that will be implemented to provide for the care, safety, and protection of all of Florida's children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.

### Overarching Goal

All families and communities ensure that children are safe and nurtured and live in stable environments that promote well-being.

The Office continued to participate in various state-level committee/workgroup meetings in order to maximize interagency/inter-departmental efforts that improve the health, safety and well-being of Florida's children and families. These efforts directly support the Office's purpose and enables it to gain valuable insights and perspectives from various stakeholders. These stakeholders mirror the membership of the CAPP Advisory Council as they represent various sectors or systems of care within Florida. Their input and activities advance progress towards the desired population-level results of the CAPP Plan that are identified on the next page.

## **Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan**

**July 2015 – June 2020**

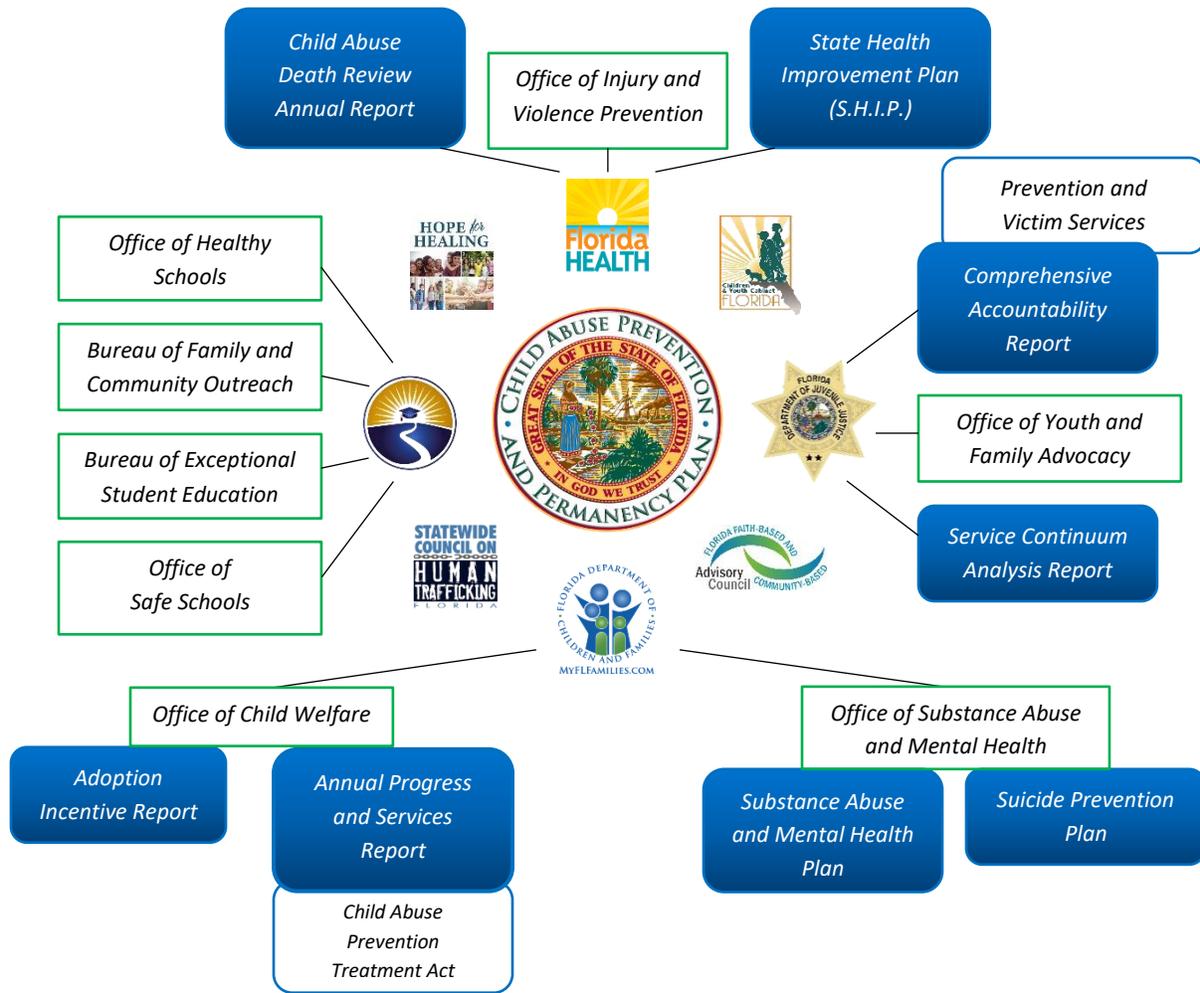
### **Desired Population-Level Results**

- **Child Maltreatment Prevention:** By June 30, 2020, the verified rate of child maltreatment will be reduced from the SFY 2014-2015 statewide rate of 10.84 per 1,000 children.
- **Child Maltreatment Death Prevention:** By June 30, 2020, the verified rate of child maltreatment death will be reduced from the SFY 2012-2013 statewide rate of 3.21 per 100,000 children.
- **Promotion of Adoption:** By June 30, 2020, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will be increased from the SFY 2013-2014 statewide rate of 73.4 percent.
- **Promotion of Adoption:** By June 30, 2020, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights for more than 12 months will be decreased from the SFY 2013-2014 statewide rate of 26.6 percent.
- **Support for Adoptive Families:** By June 30, 2020, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the average of SFYs 2010-2015 number of 65 children.

To ensure the CAPP Plan supports and aligns with the efforts of state agencies, the Office has identified plans, reports, and program offices by state agencies that align with the CAPP Plan, as well as state initiatives. These collective efforts work to raise awareness of key topics/issues and identify protective factors to off-set the risks associated with each respective topic/issue. These efforts also work to advance progress towards the desired population-level results of the CAPP Plan. *Figure 2* on the next page provides an initial perspective of this alignment.

The Office will work with state agencies to implement the vision of the Governor and First Lady to develop the next five-year plan (SFYs 2020-2025) for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child maltreatment. A key focus of the Office will be to build on existing state plans and integrate efforts so progress attained by the CAPP Plan will also reflect progress within these state plans.

*Figure 2: Alignment between the CAPP Plan and State Initiatives/Plans/Reports/Program Offices*



## Child Maltreatment Prevention

The Office continues to support the Department of Children and Families (DCF) efforts to promote positive parenting, healthy family functioning, and family self-sufficiency. It also supports the three levels of violence prevention: primary, secondary and tertiary, with a focus on primary and secondary efforts to:

- Provide education and information on resources and services to empower families to take action for their health, safety and well-being.
- Promote safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments to enable all children to reach their full potential.
- Prevent involvement in state systems (i.e., child welfare, juvenile justice, and corrections).

To advance these efforts, the Office facilitated and/or participated in the following activities throughout SFY 2018-2019:

## Monthly Conference Calls/Webinars

The Office facilitated statewide conference calls/webinars with Circuit Taskforces and local stakeholders to share information and updates on state and local initiatives and Office activities. Presenters were invited to share information on innovative approaches to promote healthy child development and prevent child maltreatment. Standing agenda items included updates from the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council, upcoming public awareness topics, and training opportunities.



## Public Awareness Topics

The Office worked with state agencies and the Governor's Office of Citizen Services to assist in the development, review, and dissemination of proclamations focusing on children's health, safety, and education topics. To support local efforts in raising awareness of these topics, the Office:

- Provided copies of the Governor's proclamation to be read at local events.
- Encouraged use of proclamations to recognize individuals/organizations for their support and contributions to the respective topic.
- Encourage collaboration with city and county leaders to issue local proclamations.



*Presenting the Governor's proclamation to Mr. Dan Lauer, Assistant GM of the Lakeland Flying Tigers, with Ms. Kathie Southern (left) and Ms. Terri Saunders (right) with Heartland for Children*

The Office attended the Governor's press conference with agency and legislative leaders, and special guests, to celebrate April 2019 as Child Abuse Prevention Month and announce the appointment of First Lady Casey DeSantis as Chair of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.



*Photo Credit: The Governor's Press Office*

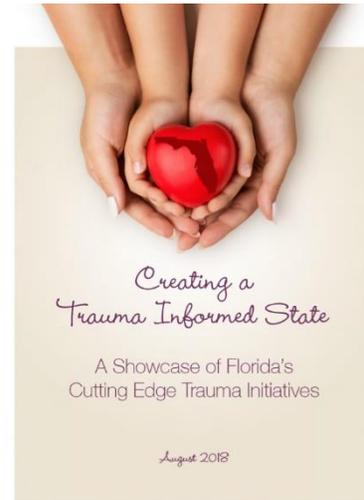


## Trauma Informed Care

### ***Creating a Trauma Informed State***

The Office worked with Dr. Mimi Graham at the FSU Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy to plan a statewide gathering in August 2018 to begin *Creating a Trauma Informed State*. This effort built upon increasing awareness of trauma informed practices and interventions being implemented across various sectors/systems of care in Florida.

Dr. Vince Felitti, co-investigator of the ACEs study, served as the keynote speaker and presented information on *The Repressed Role of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Adult Well-being, Disease and Premature Death*. A compilation of trauma initiatives from across the state was provided to attendees and small group discussions were held to identify strategies and next steps to continue implementing trauma informed approaches for the following sectors/systems of care: judiciary, law enforcement, healthcare, child welfare, juvenile justice, and education (early learning and K-12).



At the conclusion of the event, the Office spoke with leaders from Circuit 12 (DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota Counties) who went back to their communities and implemented a trauma informed initiative called Peace4Manasota.

### ***Creating a Resilient Community: From Trauma to Healing***

An event flyer for "Creating a Resilient Community: From Trauma to Healing". The title is at the top in white text on a blue background. Below the title, it says "KEYNOTE SPEAKER" and "Dr. Vincent Felitti" with a small photo of him. The date "April 3" and time "9 am - 4 pm" are listed. The location is "Florida Hotel &amp; Conference Center, 1500 Sand Lake Rd., Orlando, FL 32809". A "TO REGISTER CLICK HERE" link is provided: "https://bit.ly/2Nub0sH". It also mentions "LIMITED SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE" and provides contact information: "For more information contact us: peaceandjustice@valenciacollege.edu 407-382-2291". At the bottom, there are logos for Florida Health Foundation, Central Florida Foundation, Peace and Justice Institute, and Valencia College.

Through the collaboration with the Department of Health in Orange County, the Office was introduced to Ms. Rachel Allen, Director of the Peace and Justice Institute at Valencia College, to assist in their planning to host a Central Florida event focused on *Creating a Resilient Community: From Trauma to Healing*. The Office provided information and insights from the *Creating a Trauma Informed State* event.

Dr. Vince Felitti served as the keynote speaker and small group discussions were held to identify strategies and next steps to continue providing ACEs education and implementing trauma informed approaches across sectors in Central Florida.

The Office worked with the Center for Child Welfare to film Dr. Felitti's keynote address and presentation, who made the video available to share statewide and for use in future professional development sessions.

### ***National Healing Neen Trauma Informed Care Conference***

To continue building momentum and awareness of trauma informed care, the Office worked with Ms. Tonier “Neen” Cain, a trauma survivor and advocate with the National Center for Trauma Informed Care, to bring her annual conference to Florida. The Office also enlisted the support of the Statewide Trauma Informed Care Workgroup and the SEDNET Project Director to assist in planning and promoting the event scheduled for November 2019.

### ***Handle with Care***

In February 2019, the Office was contacted by representatives from the Manatee County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (Drug Free Manatee) to discuss opportunities to promote *Handle with Care* across Florida. The *Handle with Care* initiative is a local communication and intervention strategy between law enforcement and schools that was developed by the State of West Virginia in response to their opioid crisis.



When law enforcement responds on scene due to incidents that may include substance misuse, domestic violence, or homicide, and recognizes children are present and may have been exposed to violence or trauma, they provide notification to the school, **before the start of the next school day**, by stating the child’s name and “Handle with Care”. No additional information is provided. The school communicates the Handle with Care notice with counselors and teachers so they can monitor the child and be pro-active in responding to the child’s needs.

Recognizing how the initiative 1) is a mechanism to put policies associated with interagency communication and collaboration into action and 2) enables school personnel to provide trauma informed interventions and referrals for additional support as needed, the Office shared information with key stakeholders and worked to identify other locations within Florida that have implemented, or are in the process of implementing, the Handle with Care initiative. Through its research, the Office was informed of a similar initiative in Volusia County called Daytona H.E.L.P. (Helping Empower Local People) that utilizes victim advocates to assist law enforcement make notifications.

The Office will continue monitoring implementation of the Handle with Care initiative, assess performance outcomes of children who are identified as Handle with Care, and provide connections and information to school districts/law enforcement agencies who are interested in implementing the initiative.

### **Child Abuse Prevention Month**



The annual Pinwheels for Prevention campaign is one of the largest efforts supported by multiple state agencies and partners throughout Florida to focus on the importance of healthy child development and the role each person can play to support children.

In collaboration with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), Prevent Child Abuse Florida (PCA FL), Community Based Care Lead Agencies, and various state and local stakeholders, the Office worked to coordinate activities and develop partnerships to expand support for child abuse prevention month in April. Highlights of the Pinwheels for Prevention campaign include:

- Supported PCA FL with dissemination of and education on the campaign toolkit.
- Coordinated with PCA FL to maximize representation at pinwheel planting events throughout Florida:
  - Attended pinwheel planting events at state agency headquarter offices.
  - Hosted a *Pinwheels at the Capitol* event in front of the Old Capitol that was attended by Lieutenant Governor Nunez.
- Collaborated with the Florida League of Cities to develop local proclamations in support of Child Abuse Prevention month.
- Supported the partnership between PCA FL and Florida Public Media and attended the *Be My Neighbor Day* event in Tallahassee.
- Increased the number of pinwheels purchased and Positive Parenting Guides distributed.

*Lt. Governor  
Jeanette Núñez (right)  
planting pinwheels at  
the Old Capitol*



*With the Department of Management Services*



*Be My Neighbor Day – Tallahassee*



*Pinwheels at the Capitol group photo*

## Child Abuse Death Prevention

The Director of the Office continued to serve as a member of the State Child Abuse Death Review (CADR) Committee to advance state and local efforts to eliminate preventable child deaths due to abuse and neglect. These efforts include:



- Presented the findings and prevention recommendations from the CADR Annual Report to DCF Community Development Administrators and local stakeholders to encourage communication and collaboration with their local CADR committee.
- Highlighted opportunities for collaboration to address safe sleep practices and water safety.
- Provided copies of the Governor’s proclamation for Safe Sleep Month (October) and Water Safety (June).
- Facilitated connections to the DOH Epidemiologist to provide maps of unsafe sleep and drowning incidents by zip code.
- Promoted greater collaboration and coordination of messaging between the state and local CADR committees, WaterSmart Florida, Safe Kids Coalitions, and DCF.
- Promoted video clips focusing on Water Safety Tips, being a “Water Watcher”, and Safe Sleep Practices that were produced by Prevent Child Abuse Florida.
- Promoted dissemination of Floor Talkers on the ABC’s of Safe Sleep.
- Disseminated information from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and DCF on “Look Before You Lock” to prevent child deaths due to heat exposure.

Throughout 2019, the local CADR committees conducted case reviews on over 325 child fatalities which occurred in 2018. Analyses of 2018 case review data reveal that regardless of verification status, **children under five had the highest risk for all forms of death**. Additional findings identify three primary preventable causes of child deaths, which remain consistent with findings from previous years.

- **Sleep-related Infant Death**- often the result of unsafe sleep practices, accounting for 40.3% of all preventable child fatalities called into the Florida Abuse Hotline.
- **Drowning**- is the second leading cause of preventable child deaths among children in Florida, primarily affecting children under the age of five.
- **Inflicted Trauma**- is the third most frequent cause of preventable child deaths, includes abuse to a child by way of bodily force, such as primarily the use of bodily force (e.g., fists and feet) or firearms to inflict harm, also ranks in the top three causes of preventable child deaths.

Of cases reviewed by Local CADR Committees, children under the age of five account for 86.8% of preventable child death. The most vulnerable children are less than one year of age, representing 58.2% of cases reviewed. Children under the age of five, and to a greater extent, children under the age of one, are in need of developmentally appropriate supervision, care and support to ensure their safety.

## Promotion of Adoption



To advance state efforts to promote adoption, the Office continued its collaboration with the DCF Adoptions Unit, Adoption Information Center, One Church One Child, CBC Lead Agencies, Florida Heart Galleries, Forever Family and Family Match. Every child deserves to be with a family who will love and support them, including the more than 800 children available for adoption in Florida without an identified family. A key focus of adoption promotion efforts includes teens, large sibling groups and medically fragile children who are searching for a forever family.

Additionally, the Office networked with government entities, faith and community organizations, and other non-traditional groups to present information on adoption and opportunities to support adoption that include:

- Praying for children to find a forever family,
- Hosting a heart gallery photo to raise awareness of children in the community with no family,
- Providing gifts to children on birthdays and special holidays,
- Providing financial or in-kind supports to the organizations working to find permanent families for children available for adoption,
- Becoming a mentor and/or positive connection for a child in need,
- Speaking with adoptive parents to learn more about the adoption process and available supports,
- Attending adoption orientation/training to become an adoptive parent.

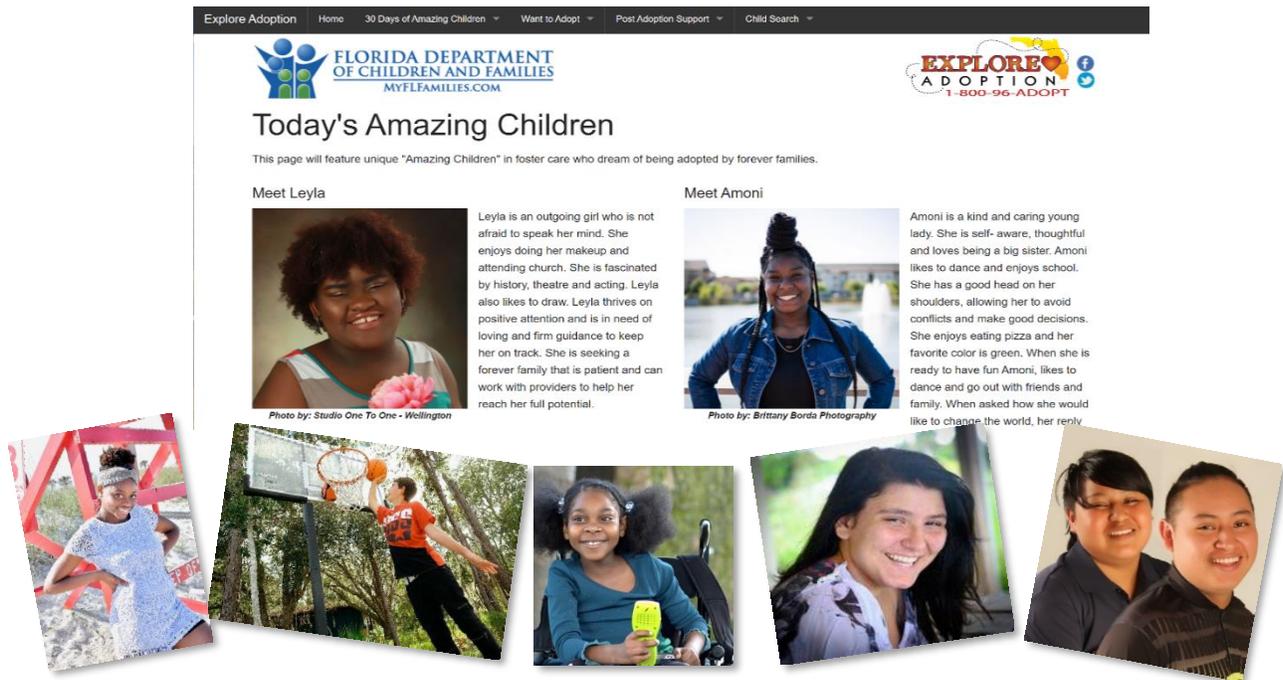
The following highlights additional activities of the Office to promote adoption:

- Based on where public meetings of the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council are being held, the Office connected with the local Heart Gallery organization to provide photos and information on the adoption process.
- Promoted the Adoption Benefits for State Employees Program where qualifying state employees and other eligible applicants who adopt a child from Florida's child welfare system can receive a one-time lump sum of \$10,000 for a special needs child and \$5,000 for a non-special needs child.
- Continued to serve as a board member of the Heart Gallery Big Bend to:
  - Inventory photos at partner sites to update the status of a child (i.e., matched or finalized).
  - Identify strategies to generate revenue to support costs associated with picture frames, marketing materials and activities with youth.



## National Adoption Month

The Office collaborated with the DCF Adoptions Unit and Communications Office to plan and coordinate activities for National Adoption Month in November 2018. This included implementation of the signature *30 Days of Amazing Children: Explore Adoption* campaign on the state's Explore Adoption website (<http://adoptflorida.org/>). The Office offered support to capture local adoption events (e.g., court finalizations, celebrations, picnics, etc.) and submission of photos and videos of children available for adoption to be featured each day during the months of November and December. Copies of the Governor's proclamation for Florida Adoption Month were disseminated statewide to be read and presented at local adoption events.



The Office participated in the Adoption Day events in Tallahassee and Daytona Beach to read the Governor's Proclamation and celebrate with the children and their forever families.



Adoption Day in Tallahassee



Adoption Day in Daytona Beach

## Support for Adoptive Families

The Office worked to support adoptive families by:

- Fielding calls from prospective and adoptive families seeking assistance and facilitating connections to support their needs.
- Attending foster and adoptive parent association meetings to meet with families to learn of challenges and successes since adopting their children.
- Working closely with the DCF Children’s Ombudsman to assist in addressing unique needs of adoptive families.
- Serving as the Master of Ceremonies for the 2018 Our Kids Adoption & Fostering Summit held at Miami-Dade College – Wolfson Campus.
- Promoting TBRI (Trust-Based Relational Intervention) training for adoptive parents to assist in the transition of having a new family member(s). TBRI was developed by the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University. It is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children.
- Encouraging faith communities to identify members who are adoptive parents and work to provide help and support to those families.

The Office will continue to work with the DCF Adoptions Unit to identify strategies and opportunities to improve post-adoption supports for families who have adopted children from Florida’s child welfare system. This is of high importance to prevent future dissolutions of adoption.

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## Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

The Florida Legislature finds that all state agencies and programs that touch the lives of children and youth must work in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion, with an emphasis on providing a continuum of services that benefit children from prenatal care through programs supporting successful transition to self-sufficient adulthood.

The Children's Cabinet serves as a coordinating council<sup>2</sup> which is defined as an interdepartmental advisory body created by law to coordinate programs and activities for which one department has primary responsibility but in which one or more other departments have an interest.



### Vision

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

### Mission

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

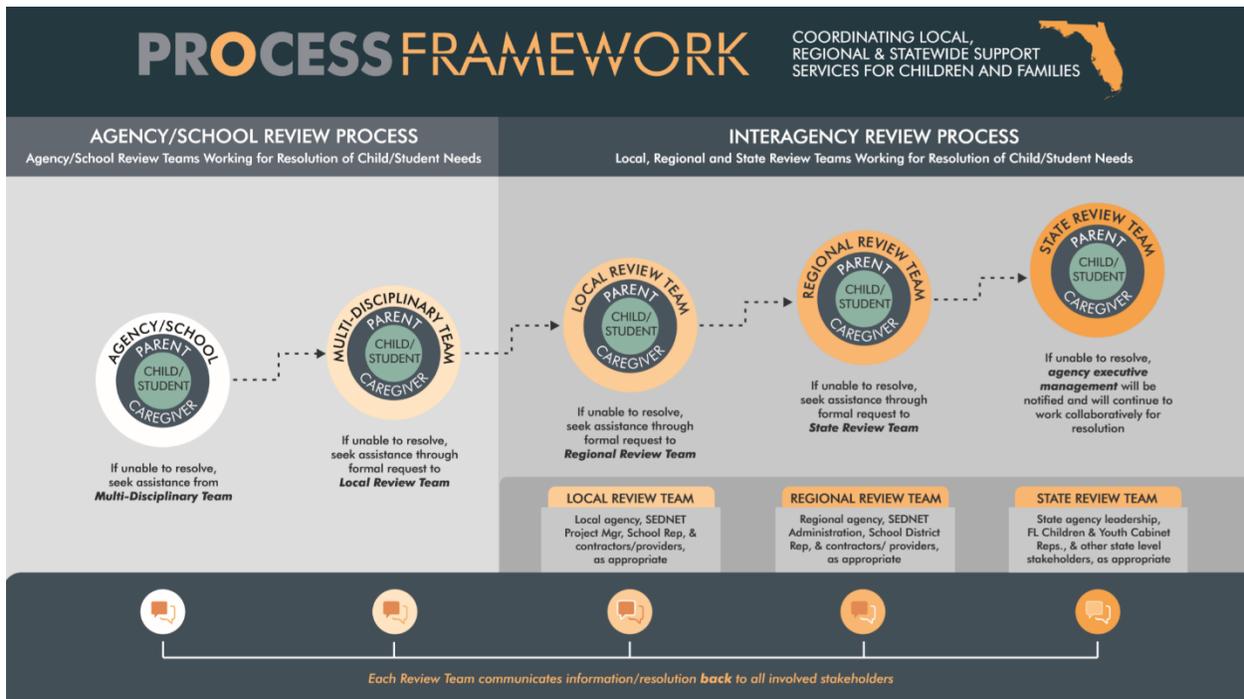
Throughout SFY 2018-2019, the Office continued to serve as a member of the State Review Team to advance the Cabinet's Interagency Agreement to Coordinate Services for Children Served by More Than One Agency (Cabinet Agreement) by:

- Providing technical assistance to Local and Regional Review Team on data collection and reporting.
- Promoting the development of Circuit *Quick Reference Guides* to identify key points of contact to address unique needs of children referred to a Local Review Team. Encouraged the *Quick Reference Guides* to be shared with participating agencies to support awareness and relationship development between agencies/organizations who may not work together on a regular basis.
- Reviewing data collected and Circuit participation to prepare information for a future presentation to the Children's Cabinet.
- Proposing strategies to refine, improve and strengthen the Cabinet Agreement to address the needs of children referred to a Local Review Team, including children who are involved in one or more systems and children who are at-risk of entering state systems.

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<sup>2</sup> [Section 20.03, F.S.](#)

Figure 3: Process Framework Infographic



The Cabinet Agreement directly supports the mission of the Cabinet and establishes an expectation for agencies, contractors and providers to work together to meet the complex needs of children.

- A presentation on *Florida’s Response to the Needs of Dual Status-Crossover Youth*, which included information on the Cabinet Agreement, was selected by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice for their annual conference in Washington, D.C.
- A presentation on the Cabinet Agreement was selected by the Department of Children and Families for their Annual Child Protection Summit in Orlando, FL. This presentation will occur in October 2019.

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## Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council

The Office continued to provide logistical, operational and administrative support to the FBCB Council to conduct four meetings during SFY 2018-2019. The Office also facilitated the development of the Council's annual report and provided information to the DCF as the Council serves as a Citizens Review Panel to assist their efforts to refine, improve and strengthen the child welfare system. Duties include:



- Working with the Council to develop agenda items
- Identifying and securing meeting space, site visits, speakers, presenters, and exhibitors
- Noticing meetings and coordinating travel requests and approvals
- Developing meeting materials and summaries
- Updating and maintaining the Council's website (<http://www.flgov.com/fbcb>)

### Vision

To maximize the collaboration between faith-based and community organizations and State agencies to help strengthen individuals and families.

### Mission

The Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council exists to facilitate connections to strengthen communities and families in the state of Florida.

### Statutory Charge

To advise the Governor and the Legislature on policies, priorities and objectives for the state's comprehensive efforts to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full

- During public meetings of the Council, included presentations from CBC Lead Agencies and partners on foster care and adoption initiatives, displayed Heart Gallery photos to raise awareness of children in need of permanent families, and promoted public awareness topics.
- Council members disseminated information on public awareness topics and planted pinwheels to support Child Abuse Prevention Month.



*Council members and guests participating in Pinwheels at the Capitol*

## Section 2: Status of Child Maltreatment, Child Maltreatment Deaths, and Adoptions in Florida

Section 2 of this annual report is governed by Subsections 39.001(9)(c)(5) b-d, Florida Statutes (§39.001(9)(c)(5) b-d, F.S.) which calls for:

- b. A summary of the adoption data collected and reported to the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.*
- c. A summary of the child abuse prevention data collected and reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.*
- d. A summary detailing the timeliness of the adoption process for children adopted from within the child welfare system.*

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the reporting agency for child maltreatment and adoptions and provided data and available information included in Section 2 of this report. Information from the Child Abuse Death Review Annual Report and the DCF Annual Adoption Incentive Report are included as part of this report.

### Summary of Child Maltreatment

Child maltreatment is an all-inclusive term for child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. Data was provided by the Department of Children and Families to the Executive Office of the Governor in December 2019 for State Fiscal Year 2018-2019 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019). These data and information have been aggregated in order to describe the status of child maltreatment in Florida. The data are based on the official published per capita rate for Florida to provide for more in-depth reporting and analysis. Therefore, the numbers may differ slightly because when querying a live data system, used for both case management and reporting, the time lag between different run dates allows for additional data entry and correction.

### Status of Child Maltreatment in Florida

**State Plan Desired Result 1 – Child Maltreatment Prevention:** By June 30, 2020, the verified rate of child abuse will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2014 – 2015 statewide rate of 10.84 per 1,000 children.

The targeted desired result was established by identifying the lowest rate of child maltreatment during the *2010-2015 CAPP Plan*. It should be noted that interaction effects among the items below and other potential contributing factors may drive performance in directions that, if the factors were changing in isolation, might seem counter-intuitive. External influences that may contribute to a change since the baseline include:

- A tightening of definitions in the allegation matrix.
- Screening hotline calls to divert those that do not meet statutory criteria for investigation toward other Departmental services, increasing the proportion of those that will result in verified findings among those hotline calls that are accepted for investigation.
- Effectiveness of the primary and secondary prevention programs in place.
- Foreseeable stressors:
  - Changes in family living arrangements.
  - Economic losses / unemployment.
  - Increase in adoptions without sufficient post adoption supports.
  - Teen pregnancies and births.
  - Natural and environmental disasters (e.g., oil spill, hurricanes, etc.).

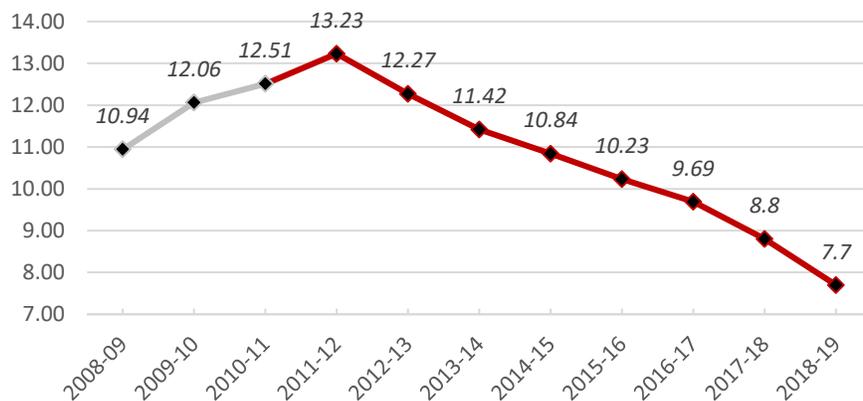
The incidence of child maltreatment is the *estimated number* of maltreated children in Florida, regardless of the number of children reported as abused. It would be expected that reporting and investigation rates would be low, conservative estimates of the actual abuse incident rates in Florida. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), child protective services reports may underestimate the true occurrence of abuse and neglect. It is estimated that 1 in 4 children (25%) experience some form of child maltreatment in their lifetimes.

### **Verified Maltreatment**

***The rate of children with verified maltreatment during SFY 2018-19 was 7.70.*** This represents a reduction of 1.1 per 1,000 children since SFY 2017-18, and a reduction of 5.53 per 1,000 children since SFY 2011-2012, the highest verified maltreatment rate during the *2010-2015 CAPP Plan* period.

On the chart below, the state rate of verified maltreatment per 1,000 children are presented since SFY 2008-2009. On the following pages, rates of verified maltreatment per 1,000 children are presented with infographics at both the regional and judicial circuit levels.

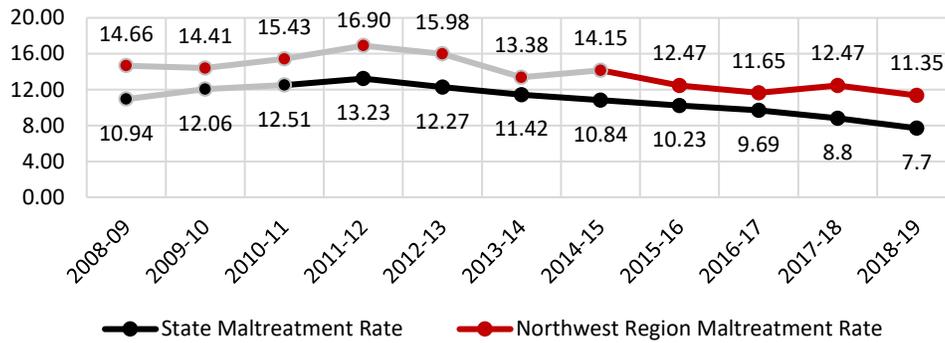
**[Chart 1: Florida’s Child Maltreatment Rate per 1,000 Children](#)**



*Infographic 1: Rate of Verified Maltreatment in Northwest Region and Circuits*



**Northwest Region Maltreatment Rate per 1,000 Children**



Note: The Regional Rate was calculated by dividing the total number of verified cases in the region by the combine child populations within each circuit of the region.



**Circuit 1 Maltreatment Rate**

- 2008-09: 16.21
- 2009-10: 15.91
- 2010-11: 17.88
- 2011-12: 20.26
- 2012-13: 19.09
- 2013-14: 15.37
- 2014-15: 17.59
- 2015-16: 14.68
- 2016-17: 14.04
- 2017-18: 14.54
- 2018-19: 14.68**

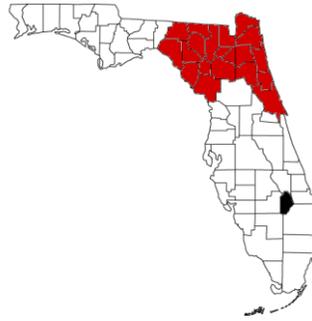
**Circuit 14 Maltreatment Rate**

- 2008-09: 14.56
- 2009-10: 14.79
- 2010-11: 11.81
- 2011-12: 13.75
- 2012-13: 15.26
- 2013-14: 12.57
- 2014-15: 11.06
- 2015-16: 13.39
- 2016-17: 10.57
- 2017-18: 12.1
- 2018-19: 7.65**

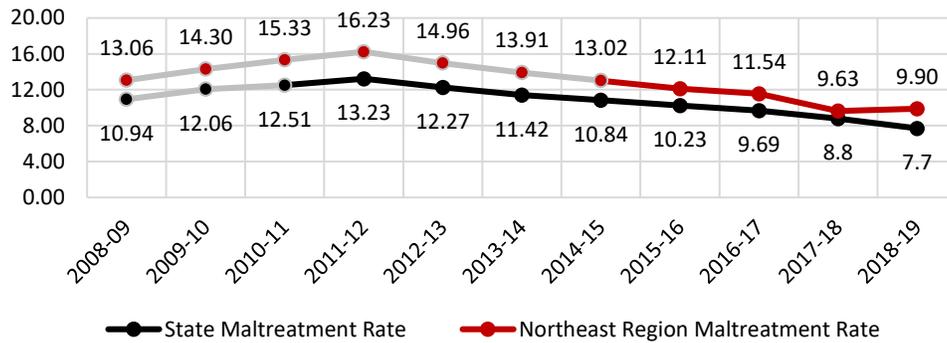
**Circuit 2 Maltreatment Rate**

- 2008-09: 11.61
- 2009-10: 11.11
- 2010-11: 13.33
- 2011-12: 12.81
- 2012-13: 10.45
- 2013-14: 10.02
- 2014-15: 9.73
- 2015-16: 7.35
- 2016-17: 7.72
- 2017-18: 8.36
- 2018-19: 7.41**

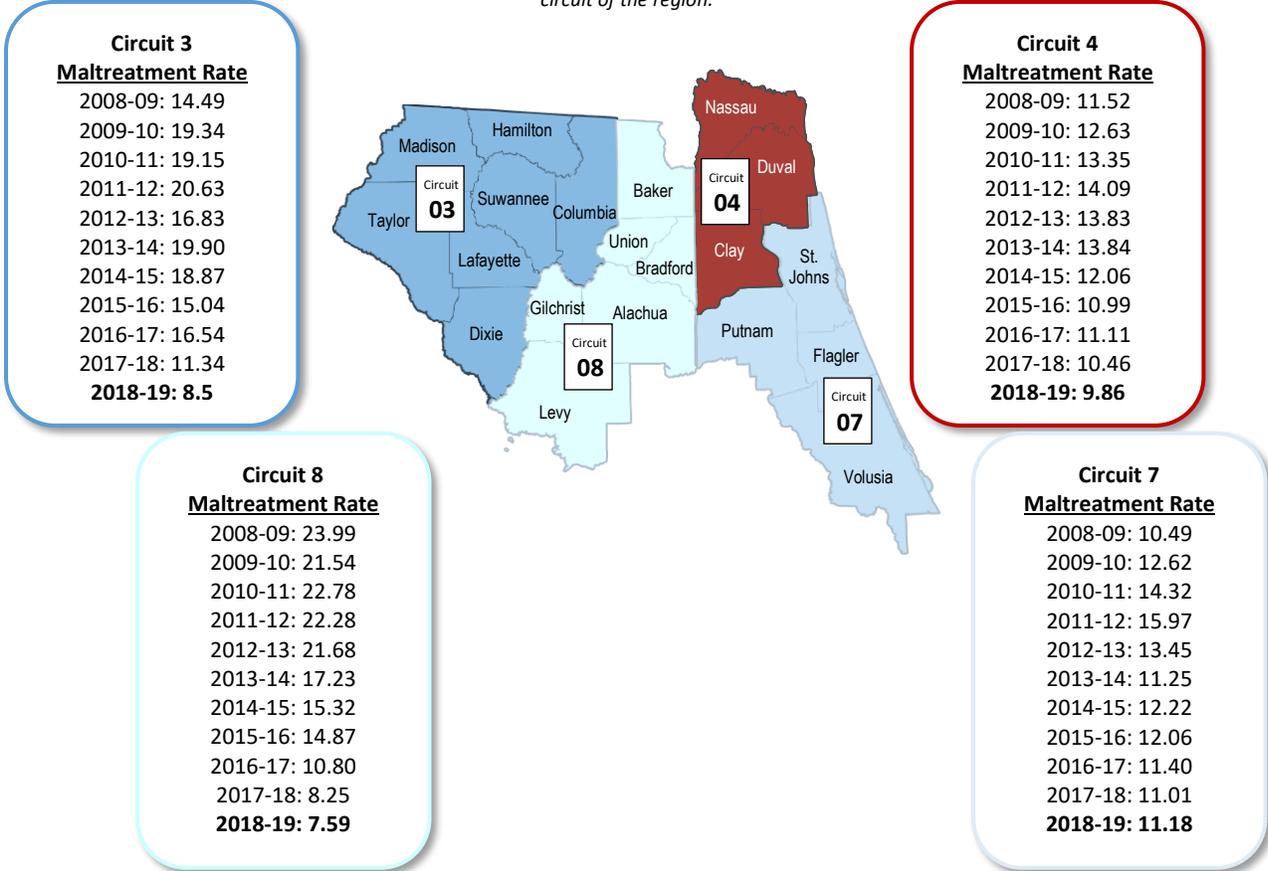
*Infographic 2: Rate of Verified Maltreatment in Northeast Region and Circuits*



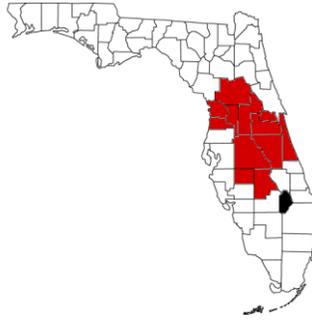
**Northeast Region Maltreatment Rate per 1,000 Children**



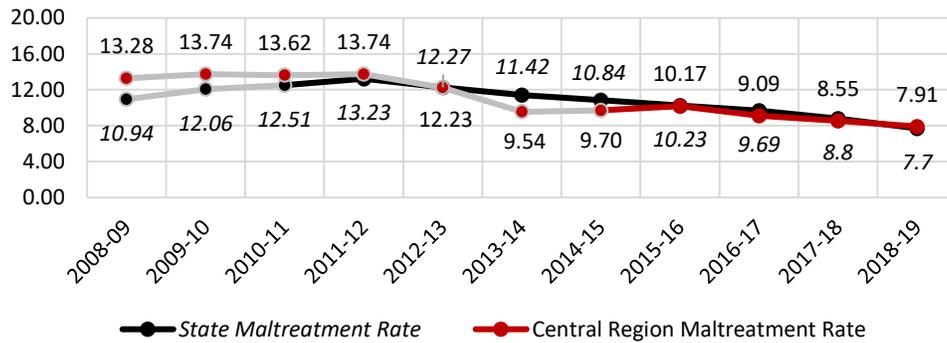
*Note: The Regional Rate was calculated by dividing the total number of verified cases in the region by the combine child populations within each circuit of the region.*



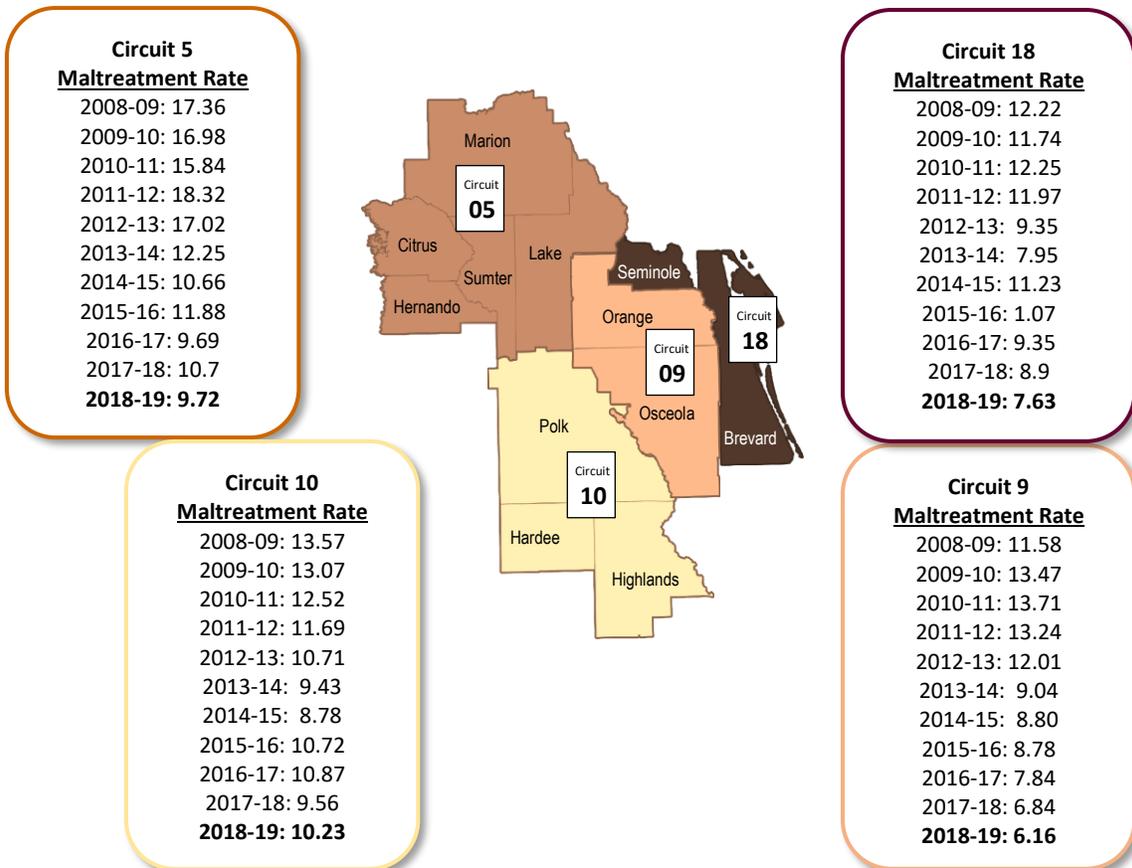
Infographic 3: Rate of Verified Maltreatment in Central Region and Circuits



**Central Region Maltreatment Rate per 1,000 Children**



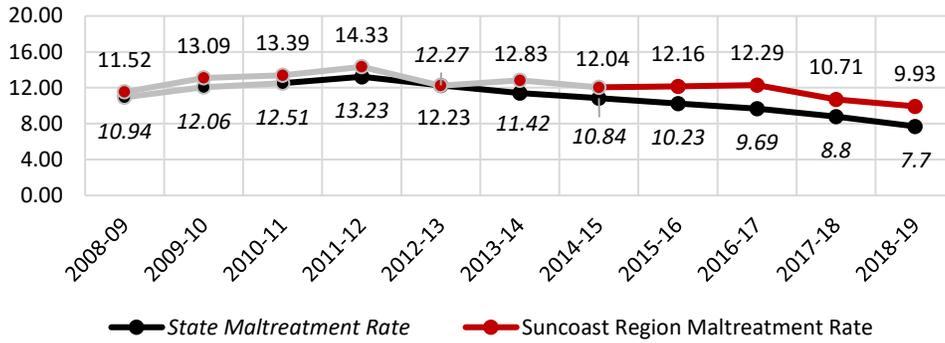
Note: The Regional Rate was calculated by dividing the total number of verified cases in the region by the combine child populations within each circuit of the region.



Infographic 4: Rate of Verified Maltreatment in Suncoast Region and Circuits

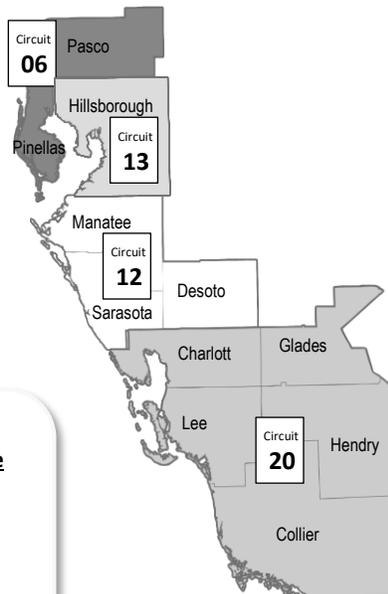


**Suncoast Region Maltreatment Rate per 1,000 Children**



Note: The Regional Rate was calculated by dividing the total number of verified cases in the region by the combine child populations within each circuit of the region.

**Circuit 6**  
**Maltreatment Rate**  
 2008-09: 15.25  
 2009-10: 18.64  
 2010-11: 19.29  
 2011-12: 20.31  
 2012-13: 18.77  
 2013-14: 17.92  
 2014-15: 16.02  
 2015-16: 14.66  
 2016-17: 15.63  
 2017-18: 14.26  
**2018-19: 12.94**

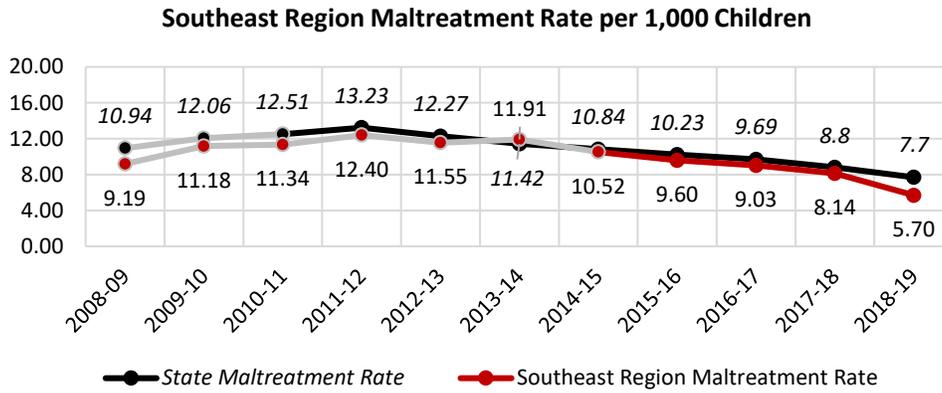
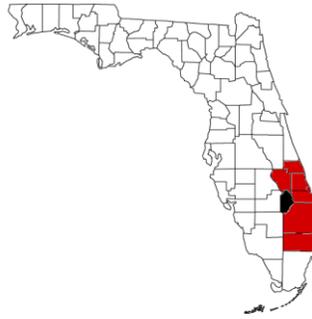


**Circuit 13**  
**Maltreatment Rate**  
 2008-09: 9.83  
 2009-10: 10.58  
 2010-11: 10.12  
 2011-12: 10.86  
 2012-13: 10.49  
 2013-14: 10.03  
 2014-15: 9.83  
 2015-16: 10.37  
 2016-17: 9.97  
 2017-18: 8.58  
**2018-19: 7.72**

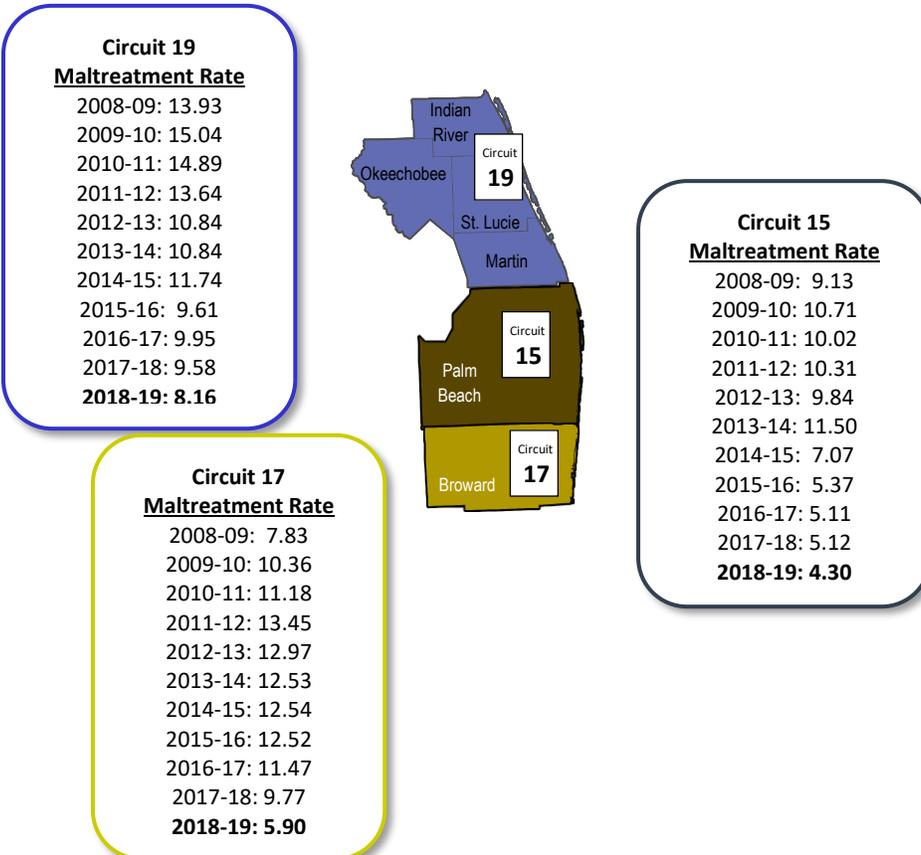
**Circuit 12**  
**Maltreatment Rate**  
 2008-09: 14.77  
 2009-10: 15.03  
 2010-11: 16.92  
 2011-12: 16.32  
 2012-13: 14.10  
 2013-14: 13.70  
 2014-15: 15.11  
 2015-16: 15.78  
 2016-17: 14.14  
 2017-18: 10.51  
**2018-19: 11.14**

**Circuit 20**  
**Maltreatment Rate**  
 2008-09: 7.61  
 2009-10: 8.92  
 2010-11: 8.86  
 2011-12: 10.80  
 2012-13: 10.26  
 2013-14: 10.29  
 2014-15: 8.70  
 2015-16: 9.66  
 2016-17: 10.57  
 2017-18: 9.78  
**2018-19: 8.89**

*Infographic 5: Rate of Verified Maltreatment in Southeast Region and Circuits*



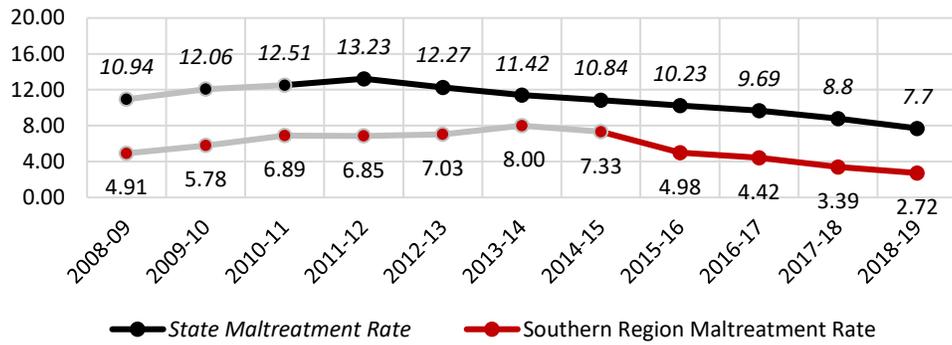
*Note: The Regional Rate was calculated by dividing the total number of verified cases in the region by the combine child populations within each circuit of the region.*



Infographic 6: Rate of Verified Maltreatment in Southern Region and Circuits



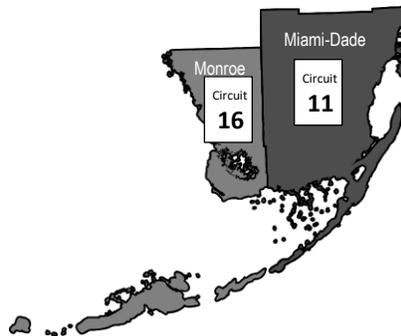
**Southern Region Maltreatment Rate per 1,000 Children**



Note: The Regional Rate was calculated by dividing the total number of verified cases in the region by the combine child populations within each circuit of the region.

**Circuit 16**  
**Maltreatment Rate**

- 2008-09: 16.82
- 2009-10: 16.68
- 2010-11: 15.57
- 2011-12: 15.46
- 2012-13: 16.82
- 2013-14: 23.02
- 2014-15: 21.17
- 2015-16: 14.39
- 2016-17: 10.92
- 2017-18: 10.08
- 2018-19: 8.44**



**Circuit 11**  
**Maltreatment Rate**

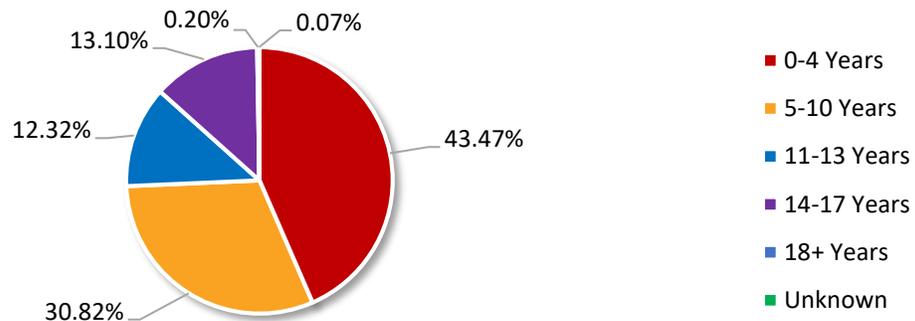
- 2008-09: 4.64
- 2009-10: 5.54
- 2010-11: 6.70
- 2011-12: 6.68
- 2012-13: 6.83
- 2013-14: 7.71
- 2014-15: 7.06
- 2015-16: 4.80
- 2016-17: 4.29
- 2017-18: 3.26
- 2018-19: 2.61**

### Age Ranges with Verified Maltreatment

As shown in Chart 2 and Table 1 below, the younger the child, the more vulnerable the child is to be maltreated.

- The highest percentage of children with verified maltreatment was in the birth to four-year-old range.
- This was followed by elementary school aged children (5 – 10 years).
- **These two age groups make up 24,792 of 33,369 verifications, over 74.30% of total verifications.**
- It should be noted that there is a very small percentage difference between middle school children and high school children with verified maltreatment during SFY 2018 – 2019 (12.32% vs. 13.10%).

*Chart 2: Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of Verified Abuse by Age Range, SFY 2018-2019 Statewide*



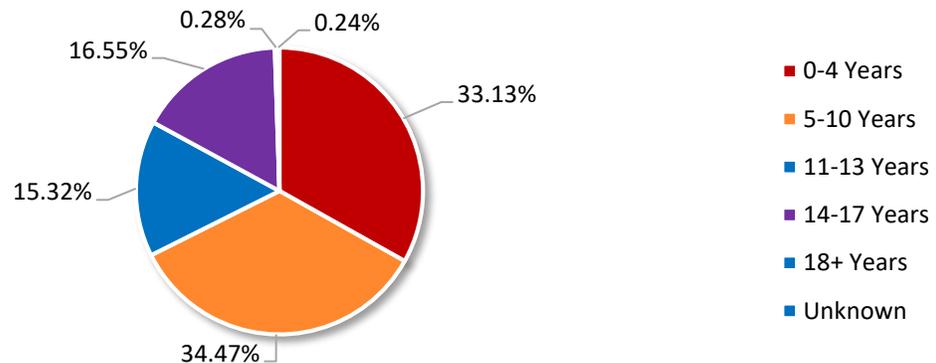
*Table 1. Unduplicated Counts of Children with Most Serious Finding of Verified Abuse by Age Range*

Circuit	Age of Child						Totals
	0-4 Years	5-10 Years	11-13 Years	14-17 Years	18+ Years	Unknown	
1	1005	784	330	315	2	5	2441
2	295	144	69	85	3	0	596
3	164	106	44	29	0	0	343
4	1428	852	288	320	2	2	2892
5	881	557	239	264	4	0	1945
6	1580	1130	411	365	4	2	3492
7	918	613	286	265	2	1	2085
8	260	169	61	71	2	0	563
9	1007	787	335	392	9	0	2530
10	754	562	241	279	6	0	1842
11	569	467	218	237	3	7	1501
12	686	489	209	228	2	0	1614
13	1140	830	209	301	5	0	2585
14	200	151	54	82	3	1	491
15	550	373	123	161	2	0	1209
16	34	31	18	10	0	1	94
17	1079	725	276	295	7	4	2386
18	669	485	204	238	2	0	1598
19	422	333	114	149	5	0	1023
20	867	696	283	288	3	2	2139
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>14,508</b>	<b>10,284</b>	<b>4,112</b>	<b>4,374</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33,369</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>43.47%</b>	<b>30.82%</b>	<b>12.321%</b>	<b>13.10%</b>	<b>.19%</b>	<b>0.07%</b>	<b>100%</b>

As shown in Chart 3 and Tables 2 below, the largest range of allegations is for children between the ages of birth and four years old and children between 5 and 10 years old (highlighted in orange). The middle school (11-13) and high school (14-17) ranges are also similar.

- The 0-4 and 5-10 age groups include 155,330 children who were alleged victims of maltreatment or 68.56% of all children who were alleged victims.

*Chart 3: Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated)*



*Table 2: Age Ranges for Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated)*

Circuit	Age of Child						Total
	0-4 Years	5-10 Years	11-13 Years	14-17 Years	18+ Years	Unknown	
1	3879	3975	1779	1791	19	40	12,246
2	1813	1537	659	760	21	19	4,786
3	1235	1221	573	546	6	15	3,259
4	5893	5960	2549	2704	43	43	17,647
5	5318	5363	2421	2693	39	35	15,976
6	6137	5869	2517	2637	68	46	17,781
7	3946	3935	1854	1994	26	22	12,033
8	1998	2087	929	943	17	16	6,108
9	5761	6822	3069	3239	61	48	19,480
10	4245	4471	1967	2140	28	17	12,649
11	4574	5052	2331	2643	47	63	15,475
12	2715	2788	1227	1299	20	16	8,437
13	5163	5316	2174	2313	38	17	15,379
14	1336	1524	630	691	8	10	5,248
15	3698	3786	1721	1969	50	13	11,415
16	167	198	121	106	2	2	582
17	4723	4793	2188	2450	57	32	15,236
18	3952	4295	1932	2132	25	17	12,764
19	2092	2245	1028	1147	21	17	6,908
20	4307	4658	2072	2252	29	47	13,146
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>72,952</b>	<b>75,895</b>	<b>33,741</b>	<b>36,449</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>220,197</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>33.13%</b>	<b>34.47%</b>	<b>15.32%</b>	<b>16.26%</b>	<b>0.28%</b>	<b>0.24%</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Table 3, the highlighted cells in orange show the highest numbers of race, ethnicity, and gender per circuit as well as statewide.

- The largest percentage of children and youth who were alleged victims of maltreatment were white (54.52%), from eighteen circuits.
- For ethnicity, the largest portion was Other (non – Hispanic) (82.12%) from every circuit in Florida.
- Investigations were conducted for nearly equal numbers of boys and girls.

*Table 3: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Children who were Alleged Victims of Maltreatment (Unduplicated), SFY 2018–2019, Statewide*

Circuit	White	Black	Multiracial	Other	Hispanic	Other	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
1	6,831	2,680	630	1,342	609	11,704	5,578	5,707	198	11,483
2	1,767	2,349	115	578	144	4,604	2,351	2,326	132	4,809
3	2,357	720	169	350	212	3,071	1,792	1,745	59	3,596
4	7,694	6,919	602	1,978	1,148	16,568	8,521	8,457	214	17,193
5	11,050	2,572	493	1,761	1,913	14,143	7,700	7,919	250	15,876
6	10,788	3,864	991	1,623	1,690	15,984	8,383	8,739	152	17,266
7	7,209	2,652	393	1,518	1,010	11,002	5,881	5,727	169	11,772
8	3,155	1,943	315	578	363	5,808	2,972	2,910	108	5,991
9	8,881	6,370	532	3,229	5,764	13,638	9,212	9,427	361	19,012
10	7,883	3,042	433	1,499	2,738	10,021	6,393	6,241	234	12,857
11	6,146	5,604	147	2,805	6,140	8,771	7,276	7,160	274	14,702
12	5,107	1,714	419	822	1,595	6,735	3,957	4,022	86	8,062
13	8,114	5,385	566	966	3,806	11,806	7,544	7,417	60	15,031
14	2,890	652	202	454	166	5,042	2,159	1,982	58	4,198
15	4,812	4,423	221	1,775	2,362	8,911	5,615	5,440	182	11,231
16	419	51	29	97	158	406	291	291	14	596
17	4,776	6,934	365	2,181	2,906	12,274	7,099	6,963	181	14,256
18	7,659	2,942	696	1,044	2,069	10,762	6,092	6,175	86	12,341
19	3,761	1,718	308	762	1,024	5,835	3,216	3,253	81	6,549
20	8,758	2,082	431	2,105	3,547	10,002	6,687	6,485	193	13,376
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>120,057</b>	<b>64,616</b>	<b>8,057</b>	<b>27,467</b>	<b>39,363</b>	<b>180,833</b>	<b>108,719</b>	<b>108,383</b>	<b>3,092</b>	<b>220,197</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>54.52%</b>	<b>29.34%</b>	<b>3.66%</b>	<b>12.47</b>	<b>17.88%</b>	<b>82.12%</b>	<b>49.37%</b>	<b>49.22%</b>	<b>1.40%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4, on the next page, shows the number of allegations and verifications, in duplicated counts. The three highest values in each category are highlighted in orange. A child might have been the alleged victim with more than a single allegation attributed to the same incident.

- For these children, there were 56,863 verified allegations of child maltreatment (duplicated child count).
- The highest numbers of allegations were for household violence threatens child, inadequate supervision, and physical injury.

- It should be noted that the top three most reported allegations (household violence, inadequate supervision, and physical injury) have fairly low verification rates (15.03%, 11.69%, and 5.31%, respectively).

*Table 4: Allegations and Verifications of Abuse (Duplicated Child Counts), SFY 2018-2019, Statewide*

Type of Abuse Allegation	Allegations	Verified	Percent of Allegations Verified
Abandonment	2,755	810	29.40%
Asphyxiation	1,993	83	4.16%
Bizarre Punishment	2,023	179	8.45%
Bone Fracture	827	180	21.77%
Burns	1,020	83	8.10%
Death	374	97	25.90%
Environmental Hazards	47,841	4201	8.79%
Failure to Protect	4,117	1928	46.83%
Failure to Thrive/Malnutrition/Dehydration	526	222	42.21%
Family Violence Threatens Child	7	N/A	0%
Household Violence Threatens Child	81,791	12,290	15.03%
Human Trafficking	1	0	0%
Human Trafficking CSEC	1,855	534	28.79%
Human Trafficking Labor	140	21	15.00%
Inadequate Supervision	73,819	8,630	11.69%
Internal Injuries	96	43	44.79%
Intimate Partner Violence Threatens	7,973	1,263	15.84%
Medical Neglect	6,608	1,359	20.57%
Mental Injury	11,679	303	2.59%
Physical Injury	54,768	2,907	5.31%
Sexual Abuse – Sexual Battery	4,103	1,092	26.61%
Sexual Abuse – Sexual Exploitation by Parent/Legal Guardian	1,098	209	19.03%
Sexual Abuse – Sexual Molestation	9,851	1,537	15.60%
Substance Exposed Newborn	5,952	1,638	27.52%
Substance Misuse	5,352	526	9.89%
Substance Misuse – Alcohol	27,743	3,842	13.78%
Substance Misuse – Illicit Drugs	50,170	8,342	16.62%
Substance Misuse – Prescription Drugs	9,132	1,538	16.84%
Threatened Harm	4,846	3,026	62.44%
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>418,428</b>	<b>56,863</b>	<b>13.59%</b>

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## Reasons for Removal

The Department of Children and Families' *Florida Safe Families Network* (FSFN) data system recorded the primary reasons for removal of the children entering into foster care. If a child was removed more than once during the year, all sets of reasons are included in this analysis. Of the children entering foster care in the twelve month span from July 2018 – June 2019, the reasons for removal were divided into twenty-two categories, shown in Table 5 below. A child may have more than one reason for removal noted, thus the counts in this chart will represent duplicated child counts.

- Highlighted in orange, the highest percentage of removals (26.93%) was due to Parental Drug Abuse.
- The second most cited service reason for a removal (13.39%) was due to Domestic Violence.
- The least cited reason for a child removal was Adoption Dissolution (0.01%), followed by Labor Trafficking (0.01%).

*Table 5: Reasons for Removal Reported (Duplicated Child Counts), SFY 2018-2019, Statewide*

Removal Reason	Number of Children	Percent
Parental Drug Abuse	8,174	26.93%
Domestic Violence	4,066	13.39%
Inadequate Supervision	3,588	11.82%
Caretaker's Inability to Cope	3,042	10.02%
Physical Abuse	2,144	7.06%
Inadequate Housing	2,115	6.96%
Incarceration of Parents	1,509	4.97%
Abandonment	1,428	4.71%
Parental Alcohol Abuse	1,173	3.89%
Medical Neglect	669	2.20%
Physical Neglect	622	2.05%
Sexual Abuse	591	1.94%
Child's Behavioral Problem	411	1.35%
Death of Parent(s)	281	0.92%
Child Drug Abuse	241	0.79%
Relinquishment	126	0.42%
Child's Disability	53	0.17%
Child Alcohol Abuse	42	0.14%
Sexual Abuse-Sexual Exploitation	34	0.11%
Comm. Sexual Exploitation of Child	13	0.01%
Labor Trafficking	3	0.01%
Adoption Dissolution	3	0.01%

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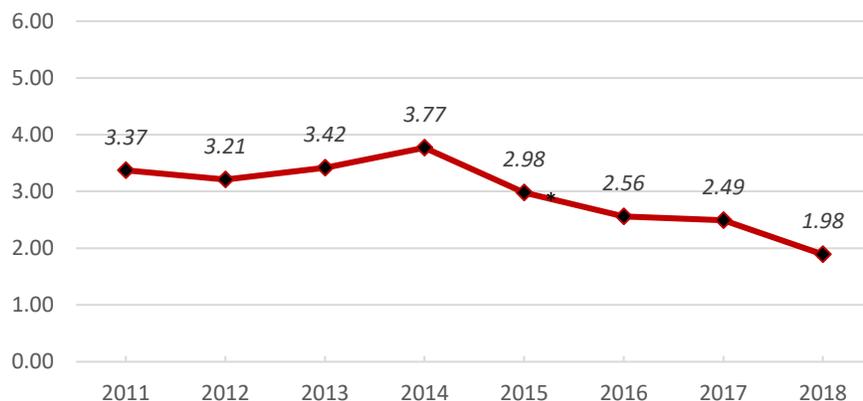
## Summary of Child Maltreatment Deaths

**State Plan Desired Result 2 – Child Maltreatment Death Prevention.** By June 30, 2020, the verified rate of child maltreatment death will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2012-2013 statewide rate of 3.21 per 100,000 children.

Section 383.402, F.S., has been expanded over the years and currently requires local and state Child Abuse Death Review (CADR) committees to review all child deaths reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline. The three primary preventable causes of child deaths, which have remained consistent with findings from previous years, include Sleep-related Infant Death, Drowning, and Inflicted Trauma (e.g., fists, hands and feet or use of weapons and firearms).

**The rate of child maltreatment death rate in 2018 was 1.98\* per 100,000 children.** Chart 4 below should be considered tentative and an underestimate as there are cases that are still open at DCF and not yet transferred to local CADR committees for which verification status has been determined. Trends for child maltreatment deaths are provided for the period of 2011-2018 by the CADR 2019 Annual Report.

Chart 4: Florida's Child Maltreatment Death Rate per 100,000 Children



*\* The number of verified child maltreatment cases for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 are not complete given the number of cases still open and not yet transferred to local CADR Committees for review. Past year figures may have changed as cases were closed following the submission of past CADR reports.*

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The following prevention recommendations developed by the State CADR Committee provide an overview of strategies and approaches intended to address preventable child fatalities in Florida.

- Continue Efforts to Relay Timely Information to Caregivers Regarding the Safety of Children.
- Develop strategies to ensure consistent and coordinated prevention-related messaging across local and state agencies.
- Expand efforts to collect data related to co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders.
- Explore efforts to collect data related to near fatalities in cases of near-drowning, near-fatal incidents of inflicted trauma and near-fatal sleep-related asphyxia.
- Increase messaging around appropriate supervision and barriers of protection as primary factors in drowning prevention, in addition to establishing age appropriate expectations related to young children and swimming capabilities consistent with recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Continue to support programs and practices that enhance parenting skills and coordinate services provided to expectant mothers and partners.
- Encourage the consistent use of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Reporting Forms and doll reenactments by death scene investigators for all sleep-related infant death investigations.
- Continue to support and encourage the development and evaluation of pilot projects and initiatives focused on local and regional community-based child fatality prevention.

#### **Child Abuse Death Review Annual Report**

As authorized by §39.001(11)(b), F.S., the Office has merged this section of its report with the Child Abuse Death Review Annual Report to avoid duplication of efforts. A copy of the most recent Child Abuse Death Review Annual Report will be made available on the Office's public website at [www.flgov.com/child\\_advocacy](http://www.flgov.com/child_advocacy).

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## Summary of Adoption and Support for Adoptive Families

During SFY 2018 – 2019, Florida finalized 4,541 adoptions throughout the state. This is due to the diligent efforts of Community Based Care Lead Agencies, Florida Association of Heart Galleries, the Department of Children and Families, Guardian ad Litem, the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection, and many others.

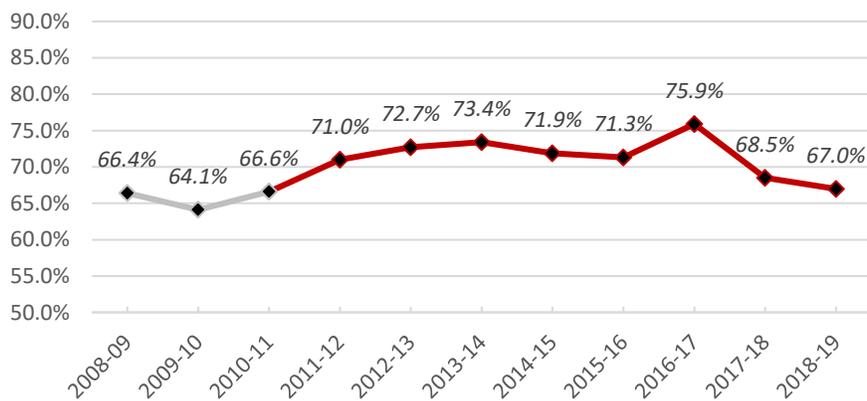
### Timeliness of Adoption

The 2015-2020 CAPP Plan has two desired population results for the promotion of adoption. Both speak to the timeliness of adoption – increasing the adoptions that occur within 12 months of Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) and decreasing the length of time for children that have been waiting for adoption for more than 12 months since TPR.

**State Plan Desired Result 3 – Promotion of Adoption** – By June 30, 2020, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will be increased from the State Fiscal Year 2013 – 2014 rate of 73.4 %.

**The percentage of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption during SFY 2018 – 2019 was 67.0%.** The table below reflects the state’s performance since SFY 2008 – 2009 as provided by the Department of Children and Families.

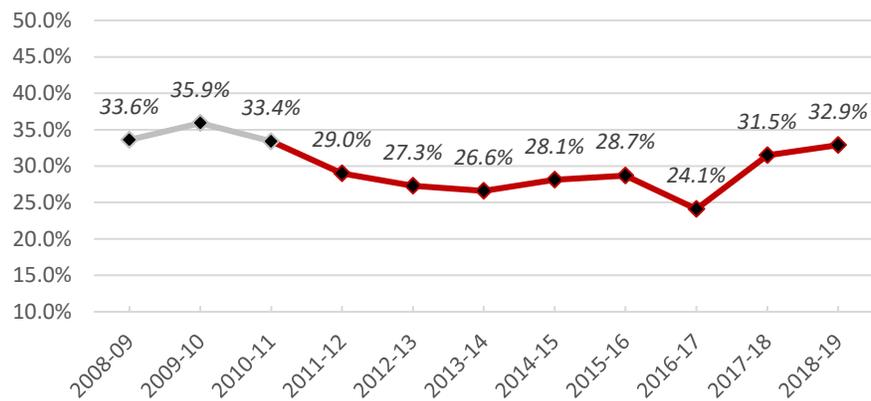
Chart 4: Percentage of Children Adopted Within 12 months of becoming Legally Free for Adoption



**State Plan Desired Result 4 – Promotion of Adoption** – By June 30, 2020, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights (TPR) for more than 12 months will be decreased from the State Fiscal Year 2013 – 2014 rate of 26.6%.

**The percentage of children adopted more than 12 months from becoming legally free for adoption during SFY 2018 – 2019 was 32.9%.** The table on the next page reflects the state’s performance since SFY 2008 – 2009 as provided by the Department of Children and Families.

Chart 5: Percentage of Children Adopted More Than 12 months from becoming Legally Free for Adoption



### Adoption Dissolutions

**The number of adoption dissolutions has continued to decrease from 105 in SFY 2014-2015 to 40 in SFY 2017-2018.** Section 65C-16.001(12), Florida Administrative Code, defines dissolutions as the return of a child to out-of-home care and the subsequent termination of the parental rights of the adoptive parents.

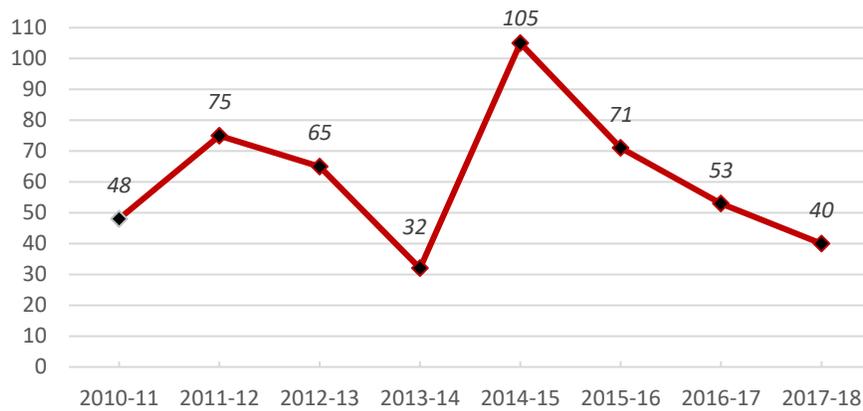
Dissolutions continue to be tracked manually by the CBC Lead Agencies and the DCF Statewide Adoption Program Specialist. Dissolutions are less likely to occur within the first year, so this information is reported for the prior fiscal year. CBC Lead Agencies reported that often adoptions that occurred years ago when the child was at a young age are the population of children who are now having dissolutions. This subset of children are now adolescents, and their adoptive parents are unable to manage their behaviors. CBC Lead Agencies continue to expand post adoption services to better support families in areas to prevent dissolutions.

**State Plan Desired Result 5 – Support for Adoptive Families** – By June 30, 2020, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the average of SFYs 2010-2015 number of 65 children.

*Note: The performance measure was adjusted due to incorrect fiscal years identified and inconsistencies in dissolution numbers prior to the submission of the DCF Adoption Incentive Annual Report. Adjustments made ensures alignment with all submitted Adoption Incentive Annual Reports since 2016.*

**The number of adopted children who were returned to foster care during SFY 2017 – 2018 was 40.** The table on the next page reflects the state’s performance since SFY 2010 – 2018 as provided by the Department of Children and Families.

Chart 6: Number of Adoption Dissolutions



**Adoption Incentive Annual Report**

As authorized by §39.001(11)(b), F.S., the Office has merged this section of its report with the Department of Children and Families' Adoption Incentive Annual Report to avoid duplication of efforts. A copy of the most recent Adoption Incentive Annual Report will be made available on the Office's public website at [www.flgov.com/child\\_advocacy](http://www.flgov.com/child_advocacy).

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## ***Section 3: Agency Recommendations and Requests***

The following is a summary of the policy and budget recommendations as submitted to the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection by the various affected state agencies for the further development of services and programs for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families and prevention of child abuse and neglect. This summary is by no means to be considered all-inclusive, by error or intent.

The agencies recommendations are listed in alphabetical order by agency name. This order does not reflect in any way the priorities of the Executive Office of the Governor, or the Office of Adoption and Child Protection. This summary of agency recommendations may or may not even reflect the priorities of an agency, but it does show their level of commitment to these particular issues. By identifying the different, and sometimes similar, recommendations among the various state agencies, a dialogue will be created, duplicity of effort will diminish and better cooperation and collaboration between the agencies will be the result.

The state agencies below provided policy and budget recommendations related to the prevention of abuse, abandonment and neglect, the promotion of adoption, and the support of adoptive families. The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection appreciates the time, resources, and support that each of the agencies invested into creating their recommendations and submissions.

### **Agency for Health Care Administration**

Medicaid provides health insurance for adopted children, providing comprehensive coverage of medically necessary medical, behavioral health, and dental care services at no cost to the family. These services are provided under the federal Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment benefit.

The Agency for Health Care Administration has no further recommendations at this time.

### **Agency for Persons with Disabilities**

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) works closely with its 15 regional Family Care Councils (FCCs) to educate adoptive and foster parents about services and supports available for children with special needs. APD developed, and continues to use, an informational card to assist the FCCs with spreading the word about the rewards of caring for youth with developmental disabilities and to encourage families to consider becoming foster parents. The FCCs have agreed to provide peer support for foster families serving children with developmental disabilities.

Youth in the child welfare system are a high priority for waiver enrollment. The agency waiver enrolled 98 children at the time of adoption, entry into extended foster care, and family reunification, who were referred to APD for services by Community-Based Care organizations in fiscal year 2018-19.

### Department of Children and Families

The Department of Children and Families has no budget requests or recommendations at this time.

### Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections has no budget requests or recommendations at this time.

### Department of Education

In 2019, the department continued its participation in Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency (CAPP) efforts with support from all relevant bureaus and program areas; specifically, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, the Bureau of Standards and Instructional Support, the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, as well as the Bureau of Family and Community Outreach. The department's efforts have included securing federal grant funds that are used in part to combat trafficking of children, promoting child abuse prevention resources via training sessions and our agency website, and offering technical assistance to school district administrators on compliance with the current anti-bullying statute.

In September 2019, the State Board of Education adopted a new rule declaring that every school in Florida be a "Child Trafficking Free Zone" and requiring instruction in child trafficking prevention in grades K-12. The instruction must include, at a minimum:

- (a) Recognition of signs of human trafficking;
- (b) Awareness of resources, including national, state and local resources;
- (c) Prevention of the abuse of and addiction to alcohol, nicotine, and drugs;
- (d) Information on the prevalence, nature, and strategies to reduce the risk of human trafficking, techniques to set healthy boundaries, and how to safely seek assistance; and
- (e) Information on how social media and mobile device applications are used for human trafficking.

School district implementation plans are due each December 1 and an annual report is due each July 1.

The department has a State Foster Care Liaison who works closely with the Department of Children and Families to provide guidance and professional development on federal requirements for students in care to community-based care facilities and district foster care liaisons.

Florida offers a number of our K-12 scholarship programs are available to students in the foster system. Specifically there are provisions for foster students to utilize the McKay Scholarship Program for students with disabilities by choosing to attend either an approved private school or another public school. Additionally both the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship and Family Empowerment Scholarship programs for families with limited financial means have carved out eligibility provisions for students in the foster system. Lastly, the Hope Scholarship Program was created for public school students who have been subjected to an incident of bullying. Additional information on these programs can be found at <http://fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/>.

## **Department of Health**

The Department of Health has no budget requests or recommendations at this time.

## **Department of Juvenile Justice**

The department recognizes that proactive prevention and interventions can save taxpayer dollars, while saving the futures of youth and keeping communities safe. To that end, the department's FY 2020-21 legislative budget request includes items that will serve to increase services to at-risk youth.

\$1,070,983 is requested to provide recurring funding for prevention and early intervention initiatives. The request includes \$969,287 for evidence-based behavioral modification programs, which target young children with destructive behavioral problems. These programs teach children and their families strategies to improve emotional regulation, self-control and problem-solving skills. These programs also instruct caregivers in effective parenting strategies and connect them with other parents with similar challenges. This request also includes \$101,696 for emergency shelter services, which provide crisis centers for runaway youth and individual and group counseling to prevent juvenile delinquency and encourage positive choices and healthy family relationships.

In addition, the department has requested \$222,421 to fund the increased costs for comprehensive evaluations due to increased court orders for these evaluations. Pursuant to s. 985.18, F.S., a comprehensive evaluation for physical and mental health, substance abuse, academic, educational or vocational problems must be ordered for any child for whom a residential commitment is anticipated or recommended by a judge or the department. These evaluations are necessary to ensure proper placement for youth and provide valuable information for determining the treatment needs of youth served by the department. Judges are increasingly ordering comprehensive evaluations to better inform placement decisions. Evaluations and assessments can also provide the department with the data necessary to identify and prevent child abuse and neglect.

## **Department of Law Enforcement**

The Department of Law Enforcement has no budget requests or recommendations at this time.

## Guardian ad Litem

The Guardian ad Litem Program, as the entity representing abused, abandoned, and neglected children in dependency court, engages in numerous ongoing efforts to further permanency for children.

For the last three years, the Program championed legislation to improve communication and accountability among dependency court stakeholders in an effort to shorten the time for children to reach permanency. Those efforts resulted in the enactment of the Year is A Long Time in the Life of a Child Act, Chapter 2019-128 in the 2019 Legislative Session.

In the 2020 session, the GAL Program is working on legislation to expand adoption incentives to encourage more adoptions. Currently many employers provide employer-related adoption assistance in the form of financial assistance and parental leave. The State of Florida provides this benefit to state employees and employees of charter schools or the Florida Virtual School. That statute provides either \$5,000 or \$10,000 to employees if the employee adopts a child from Florida’s child welfare system. There are currently over 700 children waiting to be adopted according to the Department of Children and Families. Often these incentives are not being exhausted each year. The legislation proposes expanding this benefit to increase the number of children who are adopted to OPS employees of the state, as well as to veterans or servicemembers domiciled in Florida. This bill has been called the “Helping Children One Veteran at a Time Act.”

The Program is also supporting legislation to expand Early Childhood Courts in Florida. These courts, which are evidence-based “problem solving courts” use teams to focus case-specific resources and intensive oversight on very young children; they engage stakeholders and parents with frequent monitoring and assessment to prevent further maltreatment, reduce the time needed to permanency, and improve the child's well-being.

The GAL Program’s budgetary priorities include seeking a budgetary increase for additional representation of children. Florida Statutes require that a GAL must be appointed to every case. The GAL Program has no discretion when the judge appoints the Program to advocate for a child – even if there are insufficient resources. This request will focus on circuits where the need for representation is most acute.

## Office of Early Learning

The Office of Early Learning has no budget requests or recommendations at this time.

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# APPENDIX

**Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection**  
**Florida Statutes 39.001, Sections 8 – 12**

- (8) **LEGISLATIVE INTENT FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE, ABANDONMENT, AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN.**—The incidence of known child abuse, abandonment, and neglect has increased rapidly over the past 5 years. The impact that abuse, abandonment, or neglect has on the victimized child, siblings, family structure, and inevitably on all citizens of the state has caused the Legislature to determine that the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect shall be a priority of this state. To further this end, it is the intent of the Legislature that an Office of Adoption and Child Protection be established.
- (9) **OFFICE OF ADOPTION AND CHILD PROTECTION.**—
- (a) For purposes of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection is created within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Governor shall appoint a Chief Child Advocate for the office.
- (b) The Chief Child Advocate shall:
1. Assist in developing rules pertaining to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and implementation of child abuse prevention efforts.
  2. Act as the Governor’s liaison with state agencies, other state governments, and the public and private sectors on matters that relate to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention.
  3. Work to secure funding and other support for the state’s promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention efforts, including, but not limited to, establishing cooperative relationships among state and private agencies.
  4. Develop a strategic program and funding initiative that links the separate jurisdictional activities of state agencies with respect to promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention. The office may designate lead and contributing agencies to develop such initiatives.
  5. Advise the Governor and the Legislature on statistics related to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention trends in this state; the status of current adoption programs and services, current child abuse prevention programs and services, the funding of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention programs and services; and the status of the office with regard to the development and implementation of the state strategy for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention.
  6. Develop public awareness campaigns to be implemented throughout the state for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention.
- (c) The office is authorized and directed to:
1. Oversee the preparation and implementation of the state plan established under subsection (10) and revise and update the state plan as necessary.

2. Provide for or make available continuing professional education and training in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
3. Work to secure funding in the form of appropriations, gifts, and grants from the state, the Federal Government, and other public and private sources in order to ensure that sufficient funds are available for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and child abuse prevention efforts.
4. Make recommendations pertaining to agreements or contracts for the establishment and development of:
  - a. Programs and services for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.
  - b. Training programs for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.
  - c. Multidisciplinary and discipline-specific training programs for professionals with responsibilities affecting children, young adults, and families.
  - d. Efforts to promote adoption.
  - e. Postadoptive services to support adoptive families.
5. Monitor, evaluate, and review the development and quality of local and statewide services and programs for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse and neglect and shall publish and distribute an annual report of its findings on or before January 1 of each year to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, the head of each state agency affected by the report, and the appropriate substantive committees of the Legislature. The report shall include:
  - a. A summary of the activities of the office.
  - b. A summary of the adoption data collected and reported to the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.
  - c. A summary of the child abuse prevention data collected and reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the federal Administration for Children and Families.
  - d. A summary detailing the timeliness of the adoption process for children adopted from within the child welfare system.

- e. Recommendations, by state agency, for the further development and improvement of services and programs for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.
  - f. Budget requests, adoption promotion and support needs, and child abuse prevention program needs by state agency.
6. Work with the direct-support organization established under s. 39.0011 to receive financial assistance.

(10) PLAN FOR COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH.—

- (a) The office shall develop a state plan for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of abuse, abandonment, and neglect of children and shall submit the state plan to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Governor no later than December 31, 2008. The Department of Children and Families, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Law Enforcement, and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities shall participate and fully cooperate in the development of the state plan at both the state and local levels. Furthermore, appropriate local agencies and organizations shall be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of the state plan at the local level. Appropriate local groups and organizations shall include, but not be limited to, community mental health centers; guardian ad litem programs for children under the circuit court; the school boards of the local school districts; the Florida local advocacy councils; community-based care lead agencies; private or public organizations or programs with recognized expertise in working with child abuse prevention programs for children and families; private or public organizations or programs with recognized expertise in working with children who are sexually abused, physically abused, emotionally abused, abandoned, or neglected and with expertise in working with the families of such children; private or public programs or organizations with expertise in maternal and infant health care; multidisciplinary child protection teams; child day care centers; law enforcement agencies; and the circuit courts, when guardian ad litem programs are not available in the local area. The state plan to be provided to the Legislature and the Governor shall include, as a minimum, the information required of the various groups in paragraph (b).
- (b) The development of the state plan shall be accomplished in the following manner:
  - 1. The office shall establish a Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council composed of an adoptive parent who has adopted a child from within the child welfare system and representatives from each state agency and appropriate local agencies and organizations specified in paragraph (a). The advisory council shall serve as the research arm of the office and shall be responsible for:
    - a. Assisting in developing a plan of action for better coordination and integration of the goals, activities, and funding pertaining to the promotion and support of adoption and

the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect conducted by the office in order to maximize staff and resources at the state level. The plan of action shall be included in the state plan.

- b. Assisting in providing a basic format to be utilized by the districts in the preparation of local plans of action in order to provide for uniformity in the district plans and to provide for greater ease in compiling information for the state plan.
  - c. Providing the districts with technical assistance in the development of local plans of action, if requested.
  - d. Assisting in examining the local plans to determine if all the requirements of the local plans have been met and, if they have not, informing the districts of the deficiencies and requesting the additional information needed.
  - e. Assisting in preparing the state plan for submission to the Legislature and the Governor. Such preparation shall include the incorporation into the state plan of information obtained from the local plans, the cooperative plans with the members of the advisory council, and the plan of action for coordination and integration of state departmental activities. The state plan shall include a section reflecting general conditions and needs, an analysis of variations based on population or geographic areas, identified problems, and recommendations for change. In essence, the state plan shall provide an analysis and summary of each element of the local plans to provide a statewide perspective. The state plan shall also include each separate local plan of action.
  - f. Conducting a feasibility study on the establishment of a Children's Cabinet.
  - g. Working with the specified state agency in fulfilling the requirements of subparagraphs 2., 3., 4., and 5.
2. The office, the department, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health shall work together in developing ways to inform and instruct parents of school children and appropriate district school personnel in all school districts in the detection of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect, and in caring for a child's needs after a report is made. The plan for accomplishing this end shall be included in the state plan.
  3. The office, the department, the Department of Law Enforcement, and the Department of Health shall work together in developing ways to inform and instruct appropriate local law enforcement personnel in the detection of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

4. Within existing appropriations, the office shall work with other appropriate public and private agencies to emphasize efforts to educate the general public about the problem of and ways to detect child abuse, abandonment, and neglect and in the proper action that should be taken in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. The plan for accomplishing this end shall be included in the state plan.
5. The office, the department, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health shall work together on the enhancement or adaptation of curriculum materials to assist instructional personnel in providing instruction through a multidisciplinary approach on the identification, intervention, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. The curriculum materials shall be geared toward a sequential program of instruction at the four progressional levels, K-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. Strategies for encouraging all school districts to utilize the curriculum are to be included in the state plan for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.
6. Each district of the department shall develop a plan for its specific geographical area. The plan developed at the district level shall be submitted to the advisory council for utilization in preparing the state plan. The district local plan of action shall be prepared with the involvement and assistance of the local agencies and organizations listed in this paragraph, as well as representatives from those departmental district offices participating in the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and treatment and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. In order to accomplish this, the office shall establish a task force on the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect. The office shall appoint the members of the task force in accordance with the membership requirements of this section. The office shall ensure that individuals from both urban and rural areas and an adoptive parent who has adopted a child from within the child welfare system are represented on the task force. The task force shall develop a written statement clearly identifying its operating procedures, purpose, overall responsibilities, and method of meeting responsibilities. The district plan of action to be prepared by the task force shall include, but shall not be limited to:
  - a. Documentation of the magnitude of the problems of child abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse, and child abandonment and neglect in its geographical area.
  - b. A description of programs currently serving abused, abandoned, and neglected children and their families and a description of programs for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect, including information on the impact, cost-effectiveness, and sources of funding of such programs.
  - c. Information concerning the number of children within the child welfare system available for adoption who need child-specific adoption promotion efforts.

- d. A description of programs currently promoting and supporting adoptive families, including information on the impact, cost-effectiveness, and sources of funding of such programs.
- e. A description of a comprehensive approach for providing postadoption services. The continuum of services shall include, but not be limited to, sufficient and accessible parent and teen support groups; case management, information, and referral services; and educational advocacy.
- f. A continuum of programs and services necessary for a comprehensive approach to the promotion of adoption and the prevention of all types of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect as well as a brief description of such programs and services.
- g. A description, documentation, and priority ranking of local needs related to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect based upon the continuum of programs and services.
- h. A plan for steps to be taken in meeting identified needs, including the coordination and integration of services to avoid unnecessary duplication and cost, and for alternative funding strategies for meeting needs through the reallocation of existing resources, utilization of volunteers, contracting with local universities for services, and local government or private agency funding.
- i. A description of barriers to the accomplishment of a comprehensive approach to the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.
- j. Recommendations for changes that can be accomplished only at the state program level or by legislative action.

(11) FUNDING AND SUBSEQUENT PLANS.—

- (a) All budget requests submitted by the office, the department, the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Corrections, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, or any other agency to the Legislature for funding of efforts for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect shall be based on the state plan developed pursuant to this section.
- (b) The office and the other agencies and organizations listed in paragraph (10)(a) shall readdress the state 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. At least biennially, the office shall review the state plan and make any necessary revisions based on changing needs and program evaluation results.

An annual progress report shall be submitted to update the state plan in the years between the 5-year intervals. In order to avoid duplication of effort, these required plans may be made a part of or merged with other plans required by either the state or Federal Government, so long as the portions of the other state or Federal Government plan that constitute the state plan for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect are clearly identified as such and are provided to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate as required under this section.

(12) **LIBERAL CONSTRUCTION.**—It is the intent of the Legislature that this chapter be liberally interpreted and construed in conformity with its declared purposes.

**History.**—s. 1, ch. 26880, 1951; s. 1, ch. 73-231; s. 1, ch. 78-414; s. 1, ch. 82-62; s. 62, ch. 85-81; s. 1, ch. 85-206; s. 10, ch. 85-248; s. 19, ch. 86-220; s. 1, ch. 90-53; ss. 1, 2, ch. 90-208; s. 2, ch. 90-306; s. 2, ch. 91-33; s. 68, ch. 91-45; s. 13, ch. 91-57; s. 5, ch. 93-156; s. 23, ch. 93-200; s. 19, ch. 93-230; s. 14, ch. 94-134; s. 14, ch. 94-135; ss. 9, 10, ch. 94-209; s. 1332, ch. 95-147; s. 7, ch. 95-152; s. 8, ch. 95-158; ss. 15, 30, ch. 95-228; s. 116, ch. 95-418; s. 1, ch. 96-268; ss. 128, 156, ch. 97-101; s. 69, ch. 97-103; s. 3, ch. 97-237; s. 119, ch. 97-238; s. 8, ch. 98-137; s. 18, ch. 98-403; s. 1, ch. 99-193; s. 13, ch. 2000-139; s. 5, ch. 2000-151; s. 5, ch. 2000-263; s. 34, ch. 2004-267; s. 2, ch. 2006-97; s. 1, ch. 2006-194; s. 2, ch. 2006-227; s. 1, ch. 2007-124; s. 3, ch. 2008-6; s. 1, ch. 2010-114; s. 42, ch. 2011-142; s. 2, ch. 2012-105; s. 19, ch. 2012-116; s. 4, ch. 2013-15; s. 9, ch. 2014-19; s. 2, ch. 2014-224.

**Note.**—Former s. 39.20; subsections (3), (5), and (6) former s. 39.002, s. 409.70, subsections (7)-(9) former s. 415.501.

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

- (1) **SHORT TITLE.** — This act may be cited as the “Children and Youth Cabinet Act.”
- (2) **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.** —
- (a) The Legislature finds that all state agencies and programs that touch the lives of children and youth must work in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion, with an emphasis on providing a continuum of services that benefit children from prenatal care through programs supporting successful transition to self-sufficient adulthood. The Legislature further finds that creating a Children and Youth Cabinet is the best method by which the state might achieve the visions and plans necessary to ensure that this state is the first place families think of when asked, “Where do you want to raise a child?”
  - (b) The Legislature, in collaboration with the Governor, intends to develop and implement a shared vision among the branches of government in order to improve child and family outcomes in this state. By working collaboratively, the Legislature intends to invest in the education and skills of our children and youth, develop a cohesive vision and plan that ensures a long-term commitment to children and youth issues, align public resources serving children and youth to support their healthy growth and development, and promote increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children, youth, and their families.
- (3) **ORGANIZATION.** — There is created the Children and Youth Cabinet, which is a coordinating council as defined in s. 20.03.
- (a) The cabinet shall ensure that the public policy of this state relating to children and youth is developed to promote interdepartmental collaboration and program implementation in order that services designed for children and youth are planned, managed, and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the children’s self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life.
  - (b) The cabinet is created in the Executive Office of the Governor, which shall provide administrative support and service to the cabinet.
  - (c) The cabinet shall meet at least four times each year, but no more than six times each year, in different regions of the state in order to solicit input from the public and any other individual offering testimony relevant to the issues considered. Each meeting must include a public comment session.
- (4) **MEMBERS.** — The cabinet shall consist of 16 members including the Governor and the following persons:

- (a)
  1. The Secretary of Children and Families;
  2. The Secretary of Juvenile Justice;
  3. The director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities;
  4. The director of the Office of Early Learning;
  5. The State Surgeon General;
  6. The Secretary of Health Care Administration;
  7. The Commissioner of Education;
  8. The director of the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office;
  9. The director of the Office of Adoption and Child Protection;
  10. A superintendent of schools, appointed by the Governor; and
  11. Five members who represent children and youth advocacy organizations, and who are not service providers, appointed by the Governor.
  
- (b) The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, and the Chief Financial Officer, or their appointed designees, shall serve as ex officio members of the cabinet.
  
- (c) The Governor or the Governor's designee shall serve as the chair of the cabinet.
  
- (d) Nongovernmental members of the cabinet shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to receive per diem and travel expenses in accordance with s. 112.061 while in performance of their duties.
  
- (5) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. — The Children and Youth Cabinet shall:
  - (a) Develop and implement a shared and cohesive vision using integrated services to improve child, youth, and family outcomes in this state.
  
  - (b) Develop, no later than December 31, 2007, a strategic plan to achieve the goals of the shared and cohesive vision. The plan shall be centered upon a long-term commitment to children and youth issues and align all public resources to serve children and youth and their families in a manner that supports the healthy growth and development of children. The plan shall prepare the children and youth to be responsible citizens and productive members of the workforce. The plan shall include a continuum of services that will benefit children from prenatal care through services for youth in transition to adulthood.
  
  - (c) Develop and implement measurable outcomes for each state department, agency, and program that are consistent with the strategic plan. The cabinet shall establish a baseline measurement for each outcome and regularly report on the progress made toward achieving the desired outcome.

- (d) Design and implement actions that will promote collaboration, creativity, increased efficiency, information sharing, and improved service delivery between and within state governmental organizations that provide services for children and youth and their families. In particular, the efforts shall include the long-range planning process mandated by s. 216.013.
  - (e) Foster public awareness of children and youth issues and develop new partners in the effort to serve children and youth.
  - (f) Create a children and youth impact statement for evaluating proposed legislation, requested appropriations, and programs. The impact statement shall be shared with the Legislature in their deliberative process.
  - (g) Identify existing and potential funding streams and resources for children’s services, including, but not limited to, public funding, foundation and organization grants, and other forms of private funding opportunities, including public-private partnerships.
  - (h) Develop a children-and-youth-based budget structure and nomenclature that includes all relevant departments, funding streams, and programs. The budget shall facilitate improved coordination and efficiency, explore options for and allow maximization of federal financial participation, and implement the state’s vision and strategic plan.
  - (i) Engage in other activities that will implement improved collaboration of agencies in order to create, manage, and promote coordinated policies, programs, and service delivery systems that support children and youth.
- (6) **ADVISORY BOARD.** — The Governor may appoint an advisory board to assist the cabinet in its tasks. The board shall include persons who can provide to the cabinet the best available technical and professional research and assistance. If an advisory board is created, it shall include representatives of children and youth advocacy organizations and youth, wherever practicable, who have been recipients of services and programs operated or funded by state agencies.
- (7) **ANNUAL REPORT.** — The Children and Youth Cabinet shall, by February 1 of each year, provide an annual report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the public concerning its activities and progress towards making this state the first place families think of when asked, “Where do they want to raise their children?” The annual report may include recommendations for needed legislation or rulemaking authority.

**History.**—s. 1, ch. 2007-151; s. 53, ch. 2008-6; s. 284, ch. 2011-142; s. 61, ch. 2012-96; s. 16, ch. 2012-178; s. 152, ch. 2014-19; s. 1, ch. 2016-19.

**Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council**  
**Florida Statute 14.31**

- (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds that:
- (a) Compassionate groups of individuals have selflessly aided this state in serving our most vulnerable residents and our most debilitated neighborhoods.
  - (b) Inspired by faith and civic commitment, these organizations have accomplished much in changing the lives of thousands and resurrecting neighborhoods torn by the strife of crime and poverty.
  - (c) It is essential that this state cooperate with these organizations in order to provide an opportunity to participate on an equal basis, regardless of each organization’s orientation, whether faith-based or secular.
- (2) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.—It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to recognize the contributions of these organizations and to encourage opportunities for faith-based and community-based organizations to work cooperatively with government entities in order to deliver services more effectively. The Legislature further intends that the purpose of the council is to advise the Governor and the Legislature on policies, priorities, and objectives for the state’s comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full extent permitted by law.
- (3) ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL.—
- (a) The Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council, an advisory council as defined in s. 20.03, is established and assigned to the Executive Office of the Governor. The council shall be administratively housed within the Executive Office of the Governor.
  - (b) The council shall consist of 25 members. Council members may include, but need not be limited to, representatives from various faiths, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, foundations, corporations, and municipalities.
  - (c) The council shall be composed of the following members:
    - 1. Seventeen members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor.
    - 2. Four members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the President of the Senate.
    - 3. Four members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
  - (d) Council members shall serve 4-year terms, except that the initial terms shall be staggered as follows:

1. The Governor shall appoint six members for a term of 3 years, six members for a term of 2 years, and five members for a term of 1 year.
  2. The President of the Senate shall appoint two members for a term of 3 years and two members for a term of 2 years.
  3. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members for a term of 3 years and two members for a term of 2 years.
- (e) A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the original appointing authority for the unexpired portion of the term.
- (4) MEETINGS; ORGANIZATION.—
- (a) The first meeting of the council shall be held no later than August 1, 2006. Thereafter, the council shall meet at least once per quarter per calendar year. Meetings may be held via teleconference or other electronic means.
  - (b) The council shall annually elect from its membership one member to serve as chair of the council and one member to serve as vice chair.
  - (c) Thirteen members of the council shall constitute a quorum.
  - (d) Members of the council shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for per diem and travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061.
- (5) SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES.—The council shall review and recommend in a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives:
- (a) How faith-based and community-based organizations can best compete with other organizations for the delivery of state services, regardless of an organization’s orientation, whether faith-based or secular.
  - (b) How best to develop and coordinate activities of faith-based and community-based programs and initiatives, enhance such efforts in communities, and seek such resources, legislation, and regulatory relief as may be necessary to accomplish these objectives.
  - (c) How best to ensure that state policy decisions take into account the capacity of faith-based and other community-based initiatives to assist in the achievement of state priorities.
  - (d) How best to identify and promote best practices across state government relating to the delivery of services by faith-based and other community-based organizations.
  - (e) How best to coordinate public awareness of faith-based and community nonprofit initiatives, such as demonstration pilot programs or projects, public-private partnerships, volunteerism, and special projects.

- (f) How best to encourage private charitable giving to support faith-based and community-based initiatives.
  - (g) How best to bring concerns, ideas, and policy options to the Governor and Legislature for assisting, strengthening, and replicating successful faith-based and other community-based programs.
  - (h) How best to develop and implement strategic initiatives to strengthen the institutions of families and communities in this state.
  - (i) How best to showcase and herald innovative grassroots nonprofit organizations and civic initiatives.
  - (j) How best to eliminate unnecessary legislative, regulatory, and other bureaucratic barriers that impede effective faith-based and other community-based efforts to address social problems.
  - (k) How best to monitor implementation of state policy affecting faith-based and other community-based organizations.
  - (l) How best to ensure that the efforts of faith-based and other community-based organizations meet objective criteria for performance and accountability.
- (6) **RESTRICTED ACTIVITIES.**—The council may not make any recommendation that conflicts with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or the public funding provision of s. 3, Art. I of the State Constitution.
- (7) **REPORT.**—By February 1 of each year, the council shall prepare a written report for the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives containing an accounting of its activities and recommended policies, priorities, and objectives for the state’s comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community-based organizations to the full extent permitted by law.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2006-9; s. 1, ch. 2011-155.







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