Dear Agency Representatives:

You have been recommended by your agency head to participate with the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet in working with us to achieve the goals that we have identified as being critical to the well being of Florida’s children. The members of The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet recently held our annual retreat in order to develop a coordinated focused program going into this new legislative year.

As you know, the Cabinet was created by the Florida Legislature in 2007. The intent of the legislation creating the Cabinet was (and still is) to have all agencies that work with families and children to work collaboratively to:

* + invest in the education and skills of our children and youth
  + develop a cohesive vision
  + align public resources to support healthy growth and development
  + promote increased efficiency and improved service delivery

Keeping in mind the goals of the Cabinet, our retreat objective was to have Cabinet members define three issues to work on during the next 18 months, using data from a variety of sources. The three problems are to be related to the vision of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet which is: *All children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential.*

After a full day of reviewing data from several sources including the National KIDS COUNT Data, the Florida KIDS COUNT Data and the Long Range Performance Plans (LRPP) from the 8 Cabinet agencies, the retreat participants selected three challenging areas to tackle during the next 18 months (July 2017 through January 2019).

**The three focus areas were voted upon by the members present and are the following:**

1. **Continued focus on early childhood – including prenatal, infants, toddlers because of the importance of early brain development; and school readiness for our 3 -5 year olds.**
2. **Mental Health & Substance Abuse (safety and health) and this includes teens with significant behavioral/mental health issues; suicide rate**
3. **Children living in high poverty areas (safety, health & education) work in this area to produce positive outcomes requires; safe and affordable housing (and neighborhoods); access to quality education; access to health care, livable wages.**

The overriding concept for these three areas is that there must be a multi-generational approach to

addressing these issues, as well as continuing to examine the data in these three areas in terms of race, gender, and disability.

Each member left with a commitment to these three priorities and with the following homework:

1. Identify a person or persons in their agency assigned to work on these three priorities.
2. Invite the assigned staff person(s) to attend the next meeting of the Cabinet to assist with presenting solutions and actions their agencies will take to address the three priorities. This may result in the creation of a multi agency group or tasking an existing multi agency group with this priority work.
3. The agenda for subsequent Cabinet meetings will focus on collective work around these areas with the agencies reporting out and monitoring by the Cabinet as well as developing methods to measure the outcomes/effectiveness of our collective work.

Prior to the next Cabinet meeting on November 13th, the Policy Impact Committee intends to conduct a series of working meetings beginning in October with you and your colleagues to identify what your agency and all other agencies are doing to address these three priority areas of concern. We will use these meetings to develop a comprehensive inventory of all campaigns and legislative initiatives on the three priorities and begin to address a coordinated approach.

Our first meeting will be held on **Thursday, October 5th** from **1:00 to 4:00pm**. Please contact Lindsey Zander at [lindsey.zander@myflfamilies.com](mailto:lindsey.zander@myflfamilies.com) to let us know if you can attend and Ms. Zander will provide you with additional meeting information (location, agenda, materials).

Thanking you in advance for your commitment and cooperation.

Sincerely,



Wansley Walters

Chair, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet