

Executive Summary

Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: January 2009 through June 2010

Developed pursuant to §39.001, Florida Statutes



Together we can ensure that Florida's children are raised in healthy, safe, stable and nurturing family environments.

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.

Desired Results of Plan Implementation

1. ***Child Maltreatment Prevention*** – By 30 June 2010, the child abuse rate will be reduced from the fiscal year 2007-08 statewide rate of 28.8 to 27.5 per 1,000 children.
2. ***Adoption Promotion*** – By 30 June 2010, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the 2007-2008 rate of 68.3 percent to 70.0 percent.
3. ***Adoption Promotion*** – By 30 June 2010, 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 reduced from the June 2008 rate of 51.4 percent to 46.0 percent.
4. ***Adoption Support*** – By 30 June 2010, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the June 2008 number of 155 to less than 120.

Parts 4, 5 and 6 of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: January 2009 – June 2010* articulate the goals and action steps that address specific prevention and permanency needs of families, children, teachers, school personnel, and law enforcement personnel. Primarily, these goals serve to guide the 18-month planning efforts in identifying and developing strategies to move Florida forward. This is especially important as Florida faces the downturn in the economy. The goals of this plan are:

Prevention of Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect

Prevention Goal 1 – Family Strengthening Initiative. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have explored the feasibility, and if appropriate, have a blueprint for a family strengthening initiative (i.e., Strengthening Families + multi-media materials and supports) in Florida over the five-year period from July 2010 through June 2015.

Prevention Goal 2 – Whole Child Connection. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have determined the feasibility of implementing the Whole Child Connection in selected areas of Florida or statewide. And, if found to be feasible, the State of Florida will have a proposal for making this happen in Florida over the five-year period from July 2010 through June 2015.

Prevention Goal 3 – Faith-based Prevention Initiative. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have explored the feasibility, and if appropriate, have a blueprint for a faith-based prevention initiative to promote protective factors in families for implementation over the five-year period from July 2010 through June 2015.

Prevention Goal 4 – Positive Parenting Program. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have explored the feasibility, and if appropriate, have a plan for the adoption and diffusion of the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P[®]) within systems and programs that contribute to preventing child maltreatment (e.g., Substance Abuse Programs, Mental Health facilities, and Domestic Violence Shelters, Head Start Centers and others as appropriate) over the five-year period from July 2010 through June 2015.

Prevention Goal 5 – Healthy Families Florida. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have continued its level of support for Healthy Families Florida and developed a plan for increasing its availability and capacity to provide home visitation for families at high risk of abuse or neglect and in need of parenting education and support over the five-year period from July 2010 through June 2015.

Prevention Goal 6 – Short-term Home Visiting. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have explored the feasibility, and if appropriate, develop a plan for providing short-term, voluntary, time-limited post-partum home visiting services for families that improve the health and developmental outcomes of babies over the five-year period from July 2010 through June 2015.

Permanency – Adoption Promotion and Support

Permanency Goal 1 – Explore Adoption Campaign. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have in place sustainable efforts to continue the *Explore Adoption* public awareness campaign through June 2015.

Permanency Goal 2 – Faith-based Adoption Initiative. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have explored the feasibility, and if appropriate, have a blueprint for a faith-based adoption initiative to promote adoption of foster children and to support adoptive families for implementation over the five-year period from July 2010 through June 2015.

Permanency Goal 3 – Florida Association of Heart Galleries. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have an operational statewide association of heart galleries.

Permanency Goal 4 – Customer Service Protocol. By 30 June 2010, the State of Florida will have a customer service protocol in place for the assistance and retention of prospective adoptive families.

Funding – Direct Support Organization

Funding Goal 1 – DSO. By 30 June 2010, the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection will have a blueprint for creating and funding a direct-support organization (DSO) and will have completed the steps for the DSO’s establishment and ongoing administration. The DSO will be created to assist the state in carrying out its purposes and responsibilities regarding the prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect; promotion of adoption; and support of adoptive families by raising money; submitting requests for and receiving grants from the Federal Government, the state or its political subdivisions, private foundations, and individuals; and making expenditures to or for the benefit of the office.

The 18-month *Education Cooperative Plan* was developed by the Education Cooperative Planning Team and its membership agency and organization staff members with the assistance of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection. *Part 5* of this plan contains four (4) education cooperative plan goals:

Education Cooperative Plan Goal 1. By 30 June 2010, the Florida Department of Children and Families in collaboration with the Office of Adoption and Child Protection will:

- Propose amending §39.001(8)(b)2, FS to include "prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect".
- Propose amending §39.001 (8)(b)5. FS to include Early Childhood Education.
- Propose amending §39.001 (8)(b)5. FS to reflect the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.
- Propose amending § 39.0015 (2), F.S., to add "other appropriate school personnel" as training recipients.
- Investigate the feasibility of amending §1003.428, FS to reinstate the one half credit in Life Management Skills (stand alone Health Education course) as a graduation requirement for all high school students.
- Investigate the feasibility of amending the Florida Statutes to require a stand alone course in Health Education in either 7th or 8th grade.

Education Cooperative Plan Goal 2. By 30 June 2010, the Education Cooperative Planning Team will develop and be ready to implement a five-year plan for the identification and development of parent-education resource materials and information, strategies for the instruction of parents, and methodologies for annual updates and dissemination to districts and schools.

Education Cooperative Plan Goal 3. By 30 June 2010, the Education Cooperative Planning Team will develop and be ready to implement a five-year plan for the development and dissemination of resource materials, information, and training of appropriate school personnel in:

- detecting child abuse, abandonment, and neglect,
- taking proper action in a suspected case of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect,
- caring for a child's needs after a report has been made, and
- preventing child maltreatment before it occurs.

Education Cooperative Plan Goal 4. By 30 June 2010, the Cooperative Planning Team will identify model lessons, supplementary instructional materials, and examples of implementing content standards for instructional personnel to use in the classroom (appropriate for each grade, prekindergarten through grade 12) to educate students on child abuse prevention, identification and intervention and will develop and be ready to launch a five-year effort to encourage and assist districts, schools and teachers in the use of these materials.

The *18-month Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan* was developed by the Law Enforcement Cooperative Planning Team and its membership agency and organization staff members with the assistance of the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection. *Part 6* of this plan contains five (5) law enforcement cooperative plan goals:

Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan Goal 1. By June 2010, the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission will specify in rule (under §943.17291, 17295, FS), the certification requirements for inservice trainers, the minimum number of hours (i.e., four hours), and how often (i.e., every four years) child abuse training is required for those areas (e.g., drug cops, detectives and investigators) that work child abuse cases.

Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan Goal 2. By June 2010, the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission will ensure that the existing preservice training provided for basic recruits covers:

- The Role of the Department of Children & Families – Protective Investigations and Dependency vs. Criminal Investigations and the differences in the standards of proof
- Child Abuse Hotline – What should be reported/What should not be reported; What information should be provided when reporting; and How to report
- The Role of the Department of Health – Child Protection Teams

Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan Goal 3. By June 2010, the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission will incorporate specific training for undercover drug officers and those who respond to drug-related search warrants and arrests where children are present and the judiciary and those that respond to drug busts where children are present.

Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan Goal 4. By June 2010, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Health and the Department of Juvenile Justice will have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that provides for cross training of employees who work child abuse cases.

Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan Goal 5. By June 2010, the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission will provide to local law enforcement agencies encouragement and support for the designation and training of detectives and investigators to work crimes against children investigations.



Office of Adoption and Child Protection

Executive Office of the Governor

In accordance with state law (§39.001, Florida Statutes), this 18-month ***Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: January 2009 – June 2010*** provides plans of action for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promotion of adoption; and for the support of adoptive families. This plan reflects Florida's commitment to engage state agencies and local communities in a collaborative effort to prevent child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promote adoption; and support our adoptive families.

“Connecting our communities and empowering families will strengthen Florida with the goal of preventing our children from ever entering into foster care as a result of child abuse, abandonment and neglect,” said Jim Kallinger, Florida's Chief Child Advocate and Chairman of the Governor's Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. “Additionally, with a sense of urgency, Florida's foster children must be safely placed with permanent families, either through reunification with their biological families or by placing them into loving and nurturing adoptive families.”

The Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection convened the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council to embark on the development of Florida's 18-month statewide plan on prevention and permanency. This 32-member Advisory Council, along with input from 20 local planning teams comprised of almost 600 individuals from across Florida, diligently constructed a proposal that focuses on a selection of realistic prevention and permanency goals for our state coupled with an aggressive funding strategy. The office also convened two cooperative planning teams for education and law enforcement that included an additional 50 people. To ensure proper implementation of the plan, a monitoring component was created that delegates responsibility and tracks the progression of the goals and objectives. As required in statute, this 18-month statewide plan will be the precursor and launch point for an enhanced five-year plan on prevention and permanency.

Part 1 of this plan provides an overview of the orientation and philosophy used for the planning effort. *Part 2* describes the plan development process. *Part 3* provides status reports on child maltreatment and adoption in Florida. *Part 4 – State Plan of Action* encompasses an 18-month plan update for the **prevention** of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; an 18-month plan for **permanency** – the promotion of adoption and support of adoptive families; and an 18-month plan for **funding** and supporting the work of the Office and this plan of action. *Part 5* provides the ***Education Cooperative Plan***. *Part 6* provides the ***Law Enforcement Cooperative Plan***. *Part 7* provides an overview of the circuit plans for prevention and permanency that are included in Appendix D. *Part 8* provides an array of recommendations provided to the Office and the Advisory Council during the process of developing this plan.

This planning effort sought to create a statewide model for preventing abuse, abandonment and neglect; promoting adoption; and supporting adoptive families that can be embraced across branches of government, state agencies, and professional disciplines, thus providing state agency staff, state and local service providers, advocates, and the citizens of Florida with clearly articulated action steps for the realization of optimal child growth, development and well-being. A model of this nature required a multi-pronged approach ranging from individual interventions to professional development protocols, from agency standards of practice to population-based intervention mechanisms.

To promote environmental efficiency, electronic versions of this plan are available on the Governor's Web site at www.flgov.com/adoption_abuse_prevention and on CD by request.