

January 13, 2009

TO: Florida Cabinet for Children and Youth

FROM: Ted Granger, Summit Workgroup Chairman

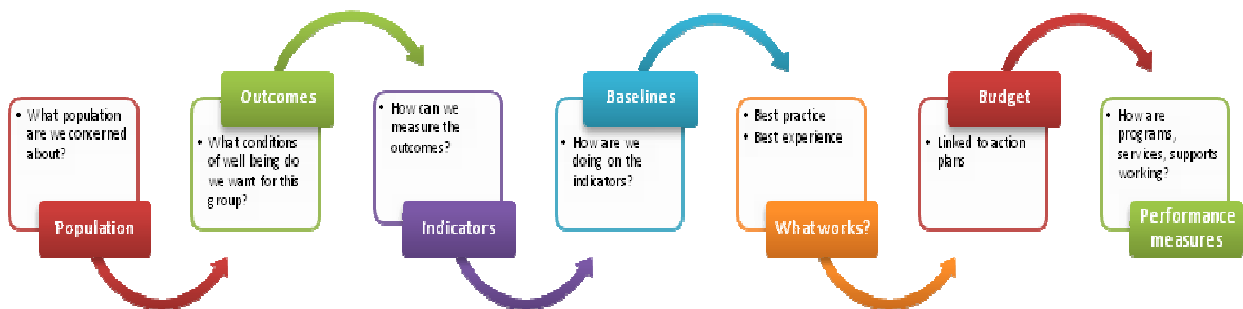
RE: State of Florida's Child Report and Child Screening Report

**State of Florida's Child:**

It has become clear over the past several months of work on this project that there are several processes ongoing that share approaches, although their purposes differ slightly. Each seeks to use indicators in meaningful ways to affect policy, direct spending, or promote a common vision. In all cases, the ultimate goal is accountability for outcomes, although this has not been directly addressed in every discussion to date.

The State of Florida's Child Report will provide an outcomes accountability foundation for future work by the Cabinet and by other committees and groups hoping to influence and inform programs and practices related to children. For example, Gay Lancaster chairs a budget committee for the Cabinet. In discussions with her and some who are working with her on this effort, there was clear indication that the committee's goal is to not just know where funding for children is in state budgets, but also to ultimately develop a process for linking funding to outcomes.

In order to provide an outcomes accountability foundation, the report will rely upon the respected work of Mark Friedman, who has worked with many state and local governmental entities, municipalities and others to articulate a results-based accountability framework (not to be confused with an early childhood framework). The report also will rely upon research on the use of child well being indicators and outcomes, so that report contents provide a sound and clear basis for linking existing data on outcomes to future work. The graphic that follows depicts the process:



The State of Florida's Child Report will move from Step 1 to Step 5, what works. It will let research guide Step 2, outcomes. However, it will be important for the Cabinet to agree that the outcomes are, indeed,

the ones they want for Florida's children. "Outcomes are essentially about values. That accounts for their power and also for the stake people have in them. These are what matter to people. And they are what ought to matter to government as well" (Hogan & Murphy, 2002, p 13). The report will tell how the Cabinet's strategic plan aligns with outcomes in the report.

Step 3, indicators, will use a rich base of information about child well being to articulate measurements that link to national data. Step 4 will display the indicators in four key goal areas: healthy children, ready to learn and succeed, stable and nurturing families, and safe and supportive communities. Finally, Step 5 will cover, in a "big picture" view, strategies shown by research and evidence-based practice to be useful and effective in meeting articulated goals and outcomes. This will be an opportunity moving forward for the Cabinet to examine best practice and best experience and make informed decisions for children and families.

Gay Lancaster's committee hopes to get the Cabinet to the budget step. State agencies (and others) logically should be involved in the important performance measures step. Suggestions for moving forward will be provided.

The report will be presented at the March 31, 2009 Cabinet meeting in Tallahassee.

#### **Child Screening Report:**

The Child Screening Report also will be presented at the March 30 Cabinet meeting. This report will build on an extensive statewide survey of screening practices and the review and input from child development screening experts in Florida. The report also will utilize current child screening research.

The Child Screening Report will describe a long-term vision for community strengths-based assessment that promotes the building of social capital and a short-term vision for coordinated child screening provided to all children. The discussion will include current practices, coordination efforts, considerations for best practice and exemplary programs and efforts. The report also will detail gaps in service provision and barriers to coordination, and provide short-term, intermediate and long-term recommendations.