



# Office of Adoption and Child Protection

## Executive Office of the Governor

### Executive Summary

#### ***Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*** **2012 Biennial Revision**

Florida Statute 39.001(9) (b) stipulates that the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, other agencies and organizations listed in 39.001(8) (a) are required to review the statewide strategic plan biennially to update any changing needs or program evaluation results. Therefore, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor chose to review the state and local five-year plans, assess the progress thus far, and document mid-course changes. Every state objective lead and local planning team had an opportunity to revise their action plans for the 2012 biennial revision. During the course of the evaluation two new objectives were added and the *Five Protective Factors* were changed to the *Protective Factors* due to a sixth protective factor being added.

The central focus of the *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* 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. In accordance with the State law (§39.001, Florida Statutes), this five-year prevention and permanency plan biennial revision provides for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promotion of adoption; and for the support of adoptive families. Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet adopted the six prevention strategies and their twenty-five objectives as their plan for the Child Abuse and Neglect Headline Indicator. The entire prevention and permanency plan will support the work of all four of the Cabinet's headline indicators. The vision, mission, overarching goal and desired results of the plan are:

#### ***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.

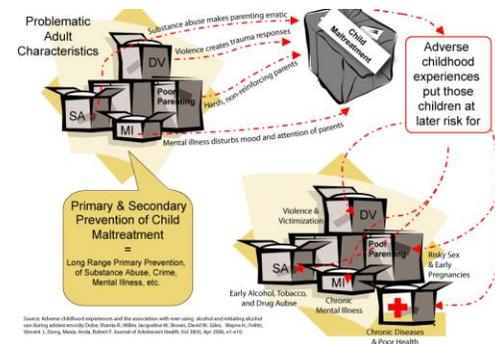
#### ***Desired Population-Level Results of Plan Implementation***

- 1. Child Maltreatment Prevention** – By June 30, 2015, the verified findings of child abuse rate will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 statewide rate of 10.94 per 1,000 children.
- 2. Promotion of Adoption** – By June 30, 2015, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 66.4 percent.
- 3. Promotion of Adoption** – By June 30, 2015, 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 State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 53.19 percent.
- 4. Support of Adoptive Families** – By June 30, 2015, the annual number of adopted children who are returned to foster care (regardless of when the adoption was finalized) will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 number of 98.

Recent research has identified the physical and mental conditions increasingly being associated with adverse childhood experiences, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Neurologic imaging and traumatology studies have delineated the chronic physiologic and structural changes that occur after chronic stress and abuse (De Bellis, 2005; Eluvathingal et al., 2006). Chronic stress and abuse are also associated with specific disease processes and poor mental health outcomes in adults. These adverse childhood experiences (ACES) have been associated with increased rates of teen pregnancy, promiscuity, depression, hallucinations, substance abuse, liver disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, coronary artery disease, and identifiable permanent changes in brain structure and stress hormone function (Anda et al., 2002; Dube et al., 2003; Felitti et al., 1998; Middlebrooks et al., 2008). The National Research Council (1993) and others studied clinical conditions associated with abuse and neglect, including depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and conduct disorders, all of which compound any direct physical injuries inflicted on individual children. Associated trauma and increased risk of low academic achievement, drug use, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminology were also noted. Although treatment after the fact can improve mental and physical health and prolong life and productivity, the direct and indirect costs of child maltreatment for both children and adults in lost health, pain, and suffering themselves warrant our taking action to prevent child abuse and neglect.

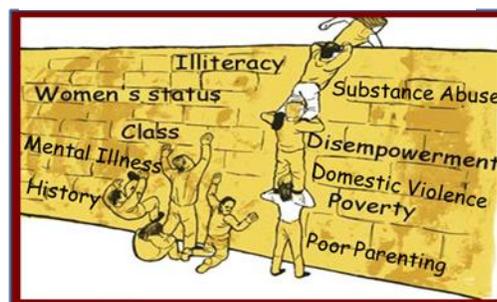
We as a nation, state, and communities are confronted with the problems of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The Centers for Disease Control have declared child maltreatment to be the largest public health threat that we face today. Early adverse experiences put children at risk. Problematic adult characteristics may result in child maltreatment and these adverse experiences put those children at risk for poor child well-being which in turn predisposes them to engage in the very problematic adult characteristics that will put their own children at risk. The underlying causes are complex. They include such things as poor health, social isolation, poor academic performance, mental health issues, history of abuse or neglect, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, homelessness, poor parenting, and on and on. The federal government, state government, local governments and communities invest millions in response to these problems which, being complex and slow to eradicate will be with our communities, families and children for some time to come.

**Diagram 1. Early Experiences Put Children at Risk**



The means for building family resilience was developed through research and application efforts of the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The Center developed a research effort based upon the *Positive Deviance Premise* that in every community there are certain individuals whose uncommon practices and behaviors enable them to find better solutions to problems than their neighbors who have access to the same resources. As discussed in the peer reviewed *British Medical Journal* (Marsh et al., 2004), although most problems like these have complex, interlinked underlying causes, the presence of Positive Deviants demonstrates that it is possible to find successful solutions today before all the underlying causes are addressed.

**Diagram 2. Positive Deviance**



Research conducted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy found that there *Protective Factors* that make a difference for families. When families experience the stressors that are highly correlated with child maltreatment, some families maltreat their children and others do not. The Center found that in the homes that do not maltreat their children, although they are experiencing the same stressors, the difference in these homes is the presence of *Protective Factors*. These *Protective Factors* reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect by providing parents with what they need in order to parent effectively, even under stress. By building relationships with families, programs can recognize signs of stress and build families' protective factors with timely, effective help. Working to strengthen families and empower communities will also help to build a more stable workforce. Additionally, these efforts will help parents raise a new generation; ready, willing and able to be productive and dependable employees.

Strengthening Families – the intentional incorporation of the *Protective Factors* to prevent child maltreatment – has widespread support from social science researchers, state child welfare officials, early childhood practitioners, and policy experts. Currently, the Strengthening Families approach is being applied in at least 36 states. This strategy for dealing with child abuse and neglect shows great promise because:

- The *Protective Factors* have been demonstrated to work and are informed by extensive, rigorous research.
- Activities that build the *Protective Factors* can be built into programs and systems that already exist in every state, such as early childhood education and child welfare, at little cost.

### ***The Protective Factors***

The *Protective Factors* are:

- **Nurturing and Attachment** – How caregivers respond to children's emotional expression profoundly influences how they learn to process, understand, and cope with such feelings as anger, happiness, and sadness. Promoting positive behavior and responses in children could strengthen parent-child relationships.
- **Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development** – Extensive research links healthy child development to effective parenting. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve.
- **Parental Resilience** – Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well.
- **Social Connections** – Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Research has shown that parents, who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.
- **Concrete Supports for Parents** – Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Providing concrete supports may help prevent unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children** – Parents and caregivers grow more responsive to children's needs and less likely to feel stressed or frustrated as children learn to tell parents what they need and how parental actions make them feel, rather than "acting out" difficult feelings.

## Overview of the *Florida Prevention of Child Abuse, Abandonment and Neglect Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

| Strategy  | Objective  | Lead(s)   | Workgroups   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Prevention Strategy 1: Infuse the <i>Protective Factors</i> into Florida Systems that Serve Parents and Children.</b> By June 30, 2015, Florida-based programs, supports and services will have intentionally incorporated the <i>Protective Factors</i> as a foundation for their work.</p>  | CAN 1.1 <b>Early Education and Care</b>                                  | Florida's Office of Early Learning  |  |
|   | CAN 1.2 <b>Home Visiting Programs</b>                                    | Healthy Families Florida  | Home Visiting Protective Factors Workgroup   |
|   | CAN 1.3 <b>Head Start Programs</b>                                       | FL Head Start Collaboration Office and Florida Head Start Association   | Head Start Protective Factors Workgroup  |
|   | CAN 1.4 <b>Medicaid Child Health Check-Up Program</b>                    | Agency for Health Care Administration   | Child Health Check-Up Protective Factors Workgroup   |
|   | CAN 1.5 <b>Technical Assistance to Circuits</b>                          | Department of Children and Families   | Local Plan Family Strengthening Initiative Team  |
|   | CAN 1.6 <b>Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts</b>                   | Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor   | Faith-Based and Community-Based Workgroup  |
| <p><b>Prevention Strategy 2: Strengthen Florida Systems to Better Serve the Needs of Florida Families.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have supported and built the capacity of Florida-based parenting and support programs and services to incorporate the <i>Protective Factors</i> as a foundation for their work and provide sustainable, accessible quality services for Florida families.</p>  | CAN 2.1 <b>Whole Child</b>   | Lawton Chiles Foundation  | Whole Child Leadership Team  |
|   | CAN 2.2 <b>Healthy Families Florida</b>                                  | Department of Children and Families and Healthy Families Florida  | Healthy Families Florida Advisory Committee  |
|   | CAN 2.3 <b>Healthy Start</b>   | Department of Health and Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions  | Healthy Start Protective Factors Workgroup<br>Healthy Start Parent Education Workgroup<br>FIMR Workgroup |
|   | CAN 2.4 <b>Education Services for Parents/ Caregivers of Newborns</b>    | Department of Health and Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions  | Education Services for Parents/ Caregivers of Newborns Leadership Team                                   |
| <p><b>Prevention Strategy 3: Provide Information on Ways to Ensure that Children are Safe and Nurtured and Live in Stable Environments that Promote Well-being.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented statewide, public awareness and education campaigns that provided information to the general population on child development, positive parenting practices, community action that promotes and supports each of the <i>Protective Factors</i>, and ways to prevent child deaths.</p> | CAN 3.1 <b>Public Awareness and Education</b>                            | Prevent Child Abuse Florida   |  |
|   | CAN 3.2 <b>Evidence-Based Parenting Programs</b>                         | Department of Children and Families   | Evidence-Based Parenting Programs Workgroup  |
|   | CAN 3.3 <b>Child Death Review</b>  | Child Abuse Death Review Team and Department of Children and Families   | Child Abuse Death Review Team  |
|   | CAN 3.4 <b>Human Trafficking</b>   | Department of Children and Families and Department of Juvenile Justice  | Human Trafficking Workgroup, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet  |
|   | CAN 3.5 <b>Child Protection Transformation</b>                           | Department of Children and Families   |  |
| <p><b>Prevention Strategy 4: Inform and Instruct Education Communities – <i>The Florida Cooperative Education Child Abuse Prevention Plan.</i></b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have collaboratively worked through Florida's educational communities to prevent and respond appropriately to child abuse, abandonment and neglect.</p>  | CAN 4.1 <b>Professional Development for School Personnel</b>             | Department of Education and Cooperative Education Planning Team   | Cooperative Education Planning Team  |
|   | CAN 4.2 <b>Resources for Parents of School Children</b>                  |   |  |
|   | CAN 4.3 <b>Resource Awareness</b>  |   |  |
|   | CAN 4.4 <b>Multidisciplinary Curricula</b>                               | Cooperative Education Planning Team and Monique Burr Foundation   |  |
| <p><b>Prevention Strategy 5: Inform and Instruct Law Enforcement Communities – <i>The Florida Cooperative Law Enforcement Child Abuse Prevention Plan.</i></b> By June 30, 2015, the <i>Cross Agency Memorandum of Understanding on Training</i> with the embedded core learning objectives will be viable and working to promote cross agency prevention training in the law enforcement community.</p>  | CAN 5.1 <b>Law Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding Review Design</b> | Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor and Cooperative Law Enforcement Planning Team | Cooperative Law Enforcement Planning Team  |
|   | CAN 5.2 <b>Law Enforcement Annual Reviews and Updates</b>                | Cooperative Law Enforcement Planning Team   |  |
|   | CAN 5.3 <b>Law Enforcement Future Plans</b>                              |   |  |
| <p><b>Prevention Strategy 6: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.</b> By June 30, 2015, leadership of plan implementation will have monitored and annually assessed the progress and effectiveness the plan-based initiatives.</p>   | CAN 6.1 <b>Instrumentation and Procedures Design</b>                     | Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor   | Evaluation Design Team and Prevention Learning Community   |
|   | CAN 6.2 <b>Progress Monitoring</b>                                       |   |  |
|   | CAN 6.3 <b>Annual Review and Assessment</b>                              |   |  |

### Overview of the *Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

| Strategy   | Objective   | Lead(s)  | Workgroups   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1: Infuse the <i>Protective Factors</i> into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents.</b><br>By June 30, 2015, Florida-based adoptive parent recruitment systems will have intentionally incorporated the <i>Protective Factors</i> as a part of the foundation for their work.                                  | PA 1.1 Local Recruitment Efforts                                | Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies | Protective Factors and Permanency Workgroup            |
|  | PA 1.2 Parent Preparation and Training                          | Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies |  |
| <b>Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2: Strengthen Florida Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption.</b><br>By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented systems and efforts to better target recruitment of families to meet the needs of children and youth awaiting public adoption. | PA 2.1 Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts                  | Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor  | Faith-Based and Community-Based Workgroup              |
|  | PA 2.2 Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment                  | Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies |  |
|  | PA 2.3 Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents |  | Customer Service Protocol Workgroup                    |
| <b>Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.</b> By June 30, 2015, leadership of plan implementation will have monitored and annually assessed the progress and effectiveness the plan-based initiatives.  | PA 3.1 Instrumentation and Procedures Design                    | Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor  | Evaluation Design Team and Adoption Learning Community |
|  | PA 3.2 Progress Monitoring                                      |  |  |
|  | PA 3.3 Annual Review and Assessment                             |  |  |

### Overview of the *Florida Support of Adoptive Families Plan: July 2010 – June 2015*

| Strategy  | Objective  | Lead(s)  | Workgroups   |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Support of Adoptive Families Strategy 1: Strengthen Florida Service Systems to Better Support Adoptive Families to Meet the Needs of Their Adopted Children and Youth.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented post adoption services that provide for mental health, emotional, physical and other needs of adoptive families. | SA 1.1 Information and Support for Adoptive Families | Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies | Customer Service Protocol Workgroup                    |
|   | SA 1.2 Adoption Competent Professionals              |  | Adoption Competency Advisory Committee                 |
|   | SA 1.3 Post Adoption Services Counselors             |  |  |
| <b>Support of Adoptive Families Strategy 2: Provide Information and Supports to Adoptive Families.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented post adoption services that provide for mental health, emotional, physical and other needs of adoptive families.  | SA 2.1 Adoption Support Groups                       | Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies | Adoption Support Advisory Committee                    |
|   | SA 2.2 Education Opportunities for Adoptive Parents  |  |  |
|   | SA 2.3 Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts       | Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor  | Faith-Based and Community-Based Workgroup              |
| <b>Support of Adoptive Families Strategy 3: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have provided information and supports to Florida adoptive families on ways to build competence in meeting the needs of their adopted children and youth.   | SA 3.1 Instrumentation and Procedures Design         | Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor  | Evaluation Design Team and Adoption Learning Community |
|   | SA 3.2 Progress Monitoring                           |  |  |
|   | SA 3.3 Annual Review and Assessment                  |  |  |



## Office of Adoption and Child Protection

### *Executive Office of the Governor*

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In accordance with state law (§39.001, Florida Statutes), the five-year Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan shall be reviewed by the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor biennially to make necessary revisions based on changing needs and program evaluation results. The *Florida Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* provides strategies and plans of action for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; promotion of adoption; and for the support of adoptive families. It also includes prevention and permanency plans for the 20 circuits. 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.

The Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor facilitated the 33-member Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council along with 17 statewide workgroups, including two cooperative planning teams for education and law enforcement. These groups represent 107 organizations and 166 planning partners that advised and lead the development of these plans for prevention and permanency. The Advisory Council and workgroups with input from 20 local planning teams, involving over 600 individuals from across Florida, diligently constructed proposals for the selection of realistic low- or no- cost prevention and permanency strategies for our state. To ensure proper implementation, a monitoring component involves all levels of the state.

The Quality CAPPP Monitoring System is being developed in the first portion of the plan implementation. It will allow each of the twenty statewide reporting entities to update the progress of their objective(s). This will happen minimally at the predetermined reporting schedule for the state five-year plan. The objective leads will have the opportunity to update this system as often as they would like, as it will be automated electronically and will include action steps, measures, and benchmarks. This will allow each reporter to see what was due for completion during the reporting period, as well as to see their work on a broader spectrum – partnerships, reach, “Story Behind the Baseline”, and next steps. The plan leadership will also have the ability to see the breadth, depth, and scope of each implementation level of the plan. The report from the prevention piece of the plan will serve as the report for the Turn the Curve exercise for the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.

This plan is based on the *positive deviance premise* that in every community there are certain individuals whose uncommon practices and behaviors enable them to find better solutions to problems than their neighbors who have access to the same resources ([www.positivedeviance.org](http://www.positivedeviance.org)). Using this premise, *Protective Factors* serve as a foundation for the plans' strategies and objectives. These *Protective Factors* (i.e., nurturing and attachment, knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development, parental resilience, social connections, concrete supports in times of need, and social and emotional competence of children) have been shown to make a difference for families and are correlates of lower child maltreatment and family resilience ([www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)).

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.