



2021
Annual Report
Florida Children and Youth Cabinet





The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

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To the people of Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis, and members of the Florida Legislature:

Florida's children and youth have long been a priority for the First Lady, and she has led the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet with great distinction. It is an honor to fill the First Lady's shoes and serve as the new Chair. The Cabinet members and I have worked to ensure the First Lady's priorities continue to set the direction of the Cabinet's efforts.

As Chair of the Cabinet and on behalf of our membership, I formally submit the 2021 Annual Report. As outlined in section 402.56, Florida Statutes, the Cabinet is charged with ensuring public policy of the state for children and youth is best aligned to promote greater collaboration between state agencies with local stakeholders and families.

The enclosed report provides an update on the activities undertaken by the Cabinet throughout 2021. In 2021, the Cabinet set forth with the mission to address several key issues that impact the children and youth in our state, including:

- Suicide and mental health,
- Substance abuse, and
- Tobacco use prevention.

The Cabinet recognized the importance of supporting and engaging in statewide initiatives that can affect the lives and prosperity of children and youth, such as:

- The First Lady's Hope Florida — A Pathway to Prosperity initiative, which utilizes 'Care Navigators' to guide Floridians on individualized paths to prosperity.
- The Department of Juvenile Justice's "It's No Joke" campaign, which uses social media to educate students and their parents on the consequences of making school threats.
- The First Lady's "The Facts. Your Future." initiative, which directly engages youth in Florida to improve their understanding of the life-altering effects of drug abuse and empowers teens to reach their full potential.

The Cabinet members and I remain committed to collaborating among state agencies to provide all of Florida's children and youth with the tools and resources they need to thrive and prosper throughout their lives.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD
State Surgeon General
Chair, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

FLORIDA CHILDREN AND YOUTH CABINET



In 2007, the Florida Legislature directed all state agencies and programs that touch the lives of children and youth to work in collaboration, emphasizing on providing a continuum of services that benefit children from prenatal to their transition into adulthood. To meet this request, Florida created and signed into the law the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet). The Cabinet is codified in section 402.56, Florida Statutes, and charged with ensuring the public policy of the state relating to children and youth is best aligned for promoting interdepartmental collaboration in program implementation. This collaboration helps to ensure that services designed for children and youth are planned, managed, and delivered in a holistic and integrated manner to improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life of children across Florida.

Administrative Support and Service

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is tasked with providing administrative support and services to the Cabinet, as identified in section 402.56, Florida Statutes, and provides staff to serve as the Cabinet’s liaison. The Executive Director reports directly to DCF’s Communications Director in the Office of the Secretary and the Cabinet Chair.

The Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection staff provide administrative and fiscal support to the Executive Director by noticing Cabinet and committee meetings and coordinating travel requests and approvals.

INSIDE

- 7 FIRST MEETING
- 9 SECOND MEETING
- 11 THIRD MEETING
- 13 FOURTH MEETING



Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Members

As set forth in section 402.56, Florida Statutes, the Cabinet consists of the following members as of December 2021.



Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD
Surgeon General
Department of Health



Dennis W. Moore
Executive Director
Guardian Ad Litem



Judge Jessica Costello
13th Judicial Circuit Court
Governor Appointee



Richard Corcoran
Education Commissioner
Department of Education



Jason Barrett
President and CEO
Flagler Health



Senator Lauren Book
Senator
Florida Senate



Carlos de la Cruz, Jr.
Chairman
Everglades Foundation



Rene Garcia
Commissioner
Miami-Dade County
District 13



Matthew Mears
Chancellor
Florida Division of
Early Learning

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Members



Corey Simon
Chief Executive Officer
Volunteer Florida



Shevaun Harris
Secretary
Department of Children and Families



Sandra Himmel
Superintendent
Citrus County Schools



Forough Hosseini
Vice President
ICI Homes



Simone Marsteller
Secretary
Agency for Health Care Administration



Barbara Palmer
Director
Agency for Persons with Disabilities



Belinda Keiser
Vice Chancellor
Keiser University



Dr. Eric Hall
Secretary
Department of Juvenile Justice



Patricia Williams
Representative
Florida House of Representatives

FIRST MEETING

July 27, 2021



It was an honor to lead a meeting of the Florida Children & Youth Cabinet this morning to discuss continued collaboration across state, local and nongovernment partners. I am grateful for the entire Cabinet's hard work on behalf of Florida's young people.

— First Lady Casey DeSantis

Chair of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet), First Lady Casey DeSantis, reiterated the charge of the Cabinet is to address the issues facing Florida's children and youth. The Cabinet has made suicide prevention a key focus due to the alarming trends prior to and throughout the pandemic. First Lady DeSantis added that the Cabinet must ensure that they are looking at all aspects of Florida's future. The First Lady further emphasized recent programs and cabinet workgroups that were created to strengthen children's emotional wellbeing and resiliency.

The Cabinet heard a presentation from the Mental Health and Social Stigma in Minority Communities Workgroup, chaired by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Secretary Simone Marstiller. The workgroup presented findings related to minority mental health in Florida, which concluded that there is a need for efforts surrounding education about mental illness, especially on how to communicate within families about mental illness.

The workgroup presented several short- and long-term recommendations to effectively normalize the experience of seeking mental health treatment for minority communications. Recommendations included actions such as

implementing a statewide media campaign, and improving mental health training for professionals, as well as engaging with state universities, licensing boards, and professional associations to provide outreach to minority communities.

Jacob Oliva, Florida Department of Education (DOE) Chancellor of K-12 Public Education, announced the vision for Florida schools to have a system of care for every student, resulting in every student having access to friends and adults who care about them and can recognize signs and symptoms of emotional distress. Chancellor Oliva stressed that schools play a big part in the system of care. With 2.9 million students coming back to campuses on August 10, 2021 Chancellor Oliva highlighted some of DOE's initiatives to support students' mental wellbeing, which involve defining access to mental health support and developing high quality mental health education through programming, funding, and partnerships.

Chancellor Oliva also gave an update on CPALMS, sharing that DOE created 12 different

topics on mental health and character education, housed within a Resiliency Toolkit at cpalms.org. The resources are available for teachers, parents, and students and contain lessons for every subject and standard. DOE welcomes any resources from other agencies to build and expand on the toolkit.

Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Shevaun Harris provided an update on MyFloridaMyFamily.com, a website that was launched in August 2020 under the Governor and First Lady's leadership. The website contains a robust resource hub for families in need, as well as connection points for faith institutions and community organizations to provide help to Florida's families. Since the launch, there have been 47 million searches for assistance, with top searches being for food assistance, housing assistance, utility assistance, and job placement. Secretary Harris also shared that over 990 children in the state have been served through the Department's faith-based partner, CarePortal, thanks to the website.

Secretary Harris provided an update on Florida's Foster Information Center, an effort that was launched in September 2020 by DCF to recruit foster parents. The phone line is staffed entirely by current or former foster parents who provide information to families interested in fostering. Since its launch, the Foster Information Center has received 4,400 calls or web inquiries from prospective foster parents. Over 50 percent of them were connected to local licensing agents to begin next steps in becoming a foster parent.

Department of Health (DOH) State Surgeon General Scott Rivkees discussed areas of importance for Florida children, noting that being healthy is vital for children to succeed, thrive, and reach their full potential. Surgeon General Rivkees went on to discuss the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, which provides services to pregnant and nursing mothers and children under age 5. All 67 county health departments are required to work with local partners to integrate physical activity and nutrition standards into early care and education.

State Surgeon General Rivkees discussed maternal and infant mortality as priorities for the Department. The Healthy Start program lowers risk factors that lead to poor pregnancy outcomes. DOH has a five-year federal grant to train mental health professionals to address mental health and substance abuse during pregnancy and the postnatal period. The Overdose Data to Action grant addresses substance abuse overall. Early Steps is an early intervention system that offers services from birth to 36 months of age for individuals at risk for developmental disabilities and delays.

Executive Director Barbara Palmer of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) provided an update that the agency was given \$95 million to take people off the waiting list for services, providing at least 2,000 individuals with the services they need. Director Palmer also promoted fostering children with developmental disabilities, a need she has partnered with DCF to fill.

Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Interim Secretary Josie Tamayo spoke about prevention and intervention, two primary goals for DJJ. The Department is partnering with Volunteer Florida and forming a dedicated mentoring unit for individuals to share stories, show where they were, and what they have done with their lives. Their message to kids is, "where their journey begins is not where their journey ends." The Department intends to honor 12 families every quarter and to let them tell their stories of resiliency, such as how they have overcome deaths in the family, suicide, bullying, and other struggles.

Interim Secretary Tamayo discussed the "It's No Joke" campaign, which targets threats over social media and provides an education tool for kids and parents. The Department will continue to work and investigate programs that are evidence-based and data-driven so that the services they provide will guide individuals who leave DJJ to be educated and fruitful members of the community.

SECOND MEETING

October 28, 2021



In early October, Governor DeSantis appointed Florida's new State Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo as Chair of the Cabinet, in place of First Lady DeSantis who stepped back due to her breast cancer diagnosis. At his first meeting, State Surgeon General Ladapo introduced himself to the Cabinet, noting that he will continue to ensure that First Lady DeSantis' priorities are kept in the forefront of the Cabinet's efforts.

State Surgeon General Ladapo also introduced new member Chancellor Matthew Mears, who oversees the Division of Early Learning at DOE and is committed to improving the quality of early education programs in Florida. Additionally, Corey Simon was introduced to the committee by Chairman Ladapo. Corey Simon is the CEO of Volunteer Florida and President of Big Bend Pop Warner Little Scholars. Mr. Simon is committed to mentoring and supporting youth and underserved youth populations in Florida.

DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris provided updates on an initiative that was launched in September at the Department's annual Child Protection Summit and spearheaded by First Lady DeSantis, Hope Florida — A Pathway to Prosperity. This new initiative utilizes 'Care Navigators' to guide Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity by focusing on community collaboration between the private sector, faith-based community, nonprofits and

government entities to break down traditional community silos, in an effort to maximize resources and uncover opportunities.

Secretary Harris began by playing a video about the initiative for the Cabinet that featured individuals who had been helped through the program in the Jacksonville area as well as the Care Navigators that helped them on their journey. The Care Navigators are essential in helping individuals identify their unique and immediate barriers to prosperity, develop long term-goals, mapping out a strategic plan, and work to ensure all sectors of the community have a seat at the table and are part of the solution. They take a "whole person" approach when working with clients who have come to DCF, focusing in on their long-term goals and determining what barriers exist in their individual pathway to prosperity.

The initiative was piloted in August 2020 in six counties, and it went statewide in September 2021. The program continues to serve public assistance benefit clients and has expanded to serve specialized populations like pregnant women contending with substance abuse, and parents and families needing assistance through the Hope Line, a number that anyone can call if they need assistance, at (850) 300-HOPE. The Hope Line is staffed Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Secretary Harris reported that, since launching, the Hope Line has received over 300 calls, averaging about 70 calls a week. Since expanding to the program to children aging out of the foster system, they have served over 3,000 people since September. Almost 70 percent of people who call into the Hope Line to get a short-term need met are interested in working on a long-term perspective with a Care Navigator. Some of the needs being addressed are stable housing and employment, childcare and transportation. The Department's faith-based partner, CarePortal, is being utilized to get faith-based organizations involved. Hope Florida — A Pathway to Prosperity also has identified several partners in the private sector, who include employment and training opportunities for those in need. Care Navigators also work with CareerSource Florida, Inc. in helping to find stable employment for participants.

Chairman Ladapo tasked the Cabinet to find ways to come together to further support and strengthen the effort. Interim DJJ Secretary Tamayo noted they work collaboratively with DCF on various issues, and this is another opportunity to help kids at-risk for being in the Juvenile Justice program. Chancellor Oliva shared that the Cabinet should work on bringing awareness to agencies, communities, and teachers about the services of the Care Navigators, Hope Line, and additional resources.

Secretary Harris also provided an update on a collaborative initiative that is a result of an incident that happened in Volusia County in May 2020 involving two minor children who intended to engage in a shootout with deputies. Secretary Harris had questioned what could be done to better support children who have severe behavioral challenges,

particularly those with repeated Baker Acts or repeated engagements with law enforcement. As a result, the Department has been working closely with the Volusia County Sheriff's Office to find where there is a breakdown, and how to help serve this population. DJJ, the University of South Florida, and other stakeholders have been working in partnership to find entry points into the system and to identify gaps and opportunities to address issues upstream.

One item implemented from this partnership is a dedicated Care Coordinator for the Sheriff's Office. In less than 20 days, there have been 31 referrals to services made, helping to work



Corey Simon is the CEO of Volunteer Florida.

THIRD MEETING

November 30, 2021



At the third meeting of the Children and Youth Cabinet, State Surgeon General Ladapo introduced the newest cabinet member, Dr. Eric Hall, who was appointed as the Secretary of DJJ.

Members highlighted Adoption Month, shared agency updates, and discussed service project ideas. The Cabinet meeting room was decorated with art provided by Heart Gallery Big Bend, a local non-profit working to increase awareness of Foster children in the community awaiting adoption.

DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris opened by sharing that Governor DeSantis signed a proclamation recognizing November as Adoption Month in Florida. This recognition celebrated the thousands of children adopted from foster care and brought awareness to the many children who are still waiting to find a forever home. DCF has put great emphasis on strengthening biological families with robust

supports, but there are approximately 4,500 children in need or going through adoption now, with 800 without an identified a potential family yet.

State Surgeon General Ladapo then introduced Gina Rogers, President-Elect for the Heart Gallery Big Bend, to discuss their mission in increasing awareness of children in the community available for adoption. Through photographs and fun photoshoots, the Heart Gallery captures the individuality in each child and allows each child to feel special and celebrated while they await adoption. The program is completely volunteer-based and connects children and pre-adoptive families with one another through photography. Gina Rogers shared the many events the non-profit had lined up for the year and invited all to visit the Heart Gallery Big Bend for volunteering and donations.

Following her remarks, State Surgeon General Ladapo recognized Courtney Smith from the DCF's Office of Child Welfare to present information on the State of Florida Adoption and Qualified Applicants Benefit Program. It is a service program for state employees who adopt a child from the foster care system. Since 2015, over 1,400 children and over 1,000 families have been served. To qualify, one must be a state employee or qualified individual as named in Florida statute. In the last 2 years, veterans and service members in the state of Florida were also included. There are two options: \$10,000 per child to families who adopt a special needs child and \$5,000 per child to families who adopt a non-special needs child.

Ms. Smith explained that Open Enrollment will begin on the first business day of January and ends on the last business day of March. Applications are online and are verified by DCF's Office of Child Welfare. If applicants are unable

to get the benefit in the year of their application due to lack of funding, they are the first in line to receive the benefit next year without reapplying.

Lastly, Dr. Ursula Weiss from DOH was introduced to present. Dr. Weiss shared the 2022–2026 State Health Improvement Plan. The plan is the state's mechanism to identify and address public health priorities that impact Floridians and visitors. The plan has several priorities that include supporting Alzheimer's disease and dementias, mental well-being and substance abuse prevention, chronic diseases and conditions, transmissible and emerging diseases, injury safety/violence, maternal and child health, and social and economic conditions impacting health.



FOURTH MEETING

December 14, 2021



At the final Cabinet meeting of the year, State Surgeon General and Cabinet Chairman Joseph Ladapo gave an overview of the Tobacco Free Florida program and current data on tobacco use among youth in Florida. The program was created after Florida voters passed an amendment that established a comprehensive tobacco use, cessation, and prevention program in 2006. Tobacco Free Florida is funded by a small percentage of the money received through the 1997 legal settlement with the major tobacco companies. In 2021, cigarette use among youth in Florida reached its lowest recorded level, 1.1 percent. However, in that same year, about 18.3 percent of high schoolers and 8 percent of middle schoolers in Florida reported using an electronic vaping device. Chairman Ladapo then invited Laura Corbin, Bureau Chief for Tobacco Free Florida, to talk more about the program.

According to Ms. Corbin, Tobacco Free Florida follows the CDC's Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs. Given that 9 out of 10 adult smokers started smoking as minors, one of the program's goals is to prevent youth and young adults from initiating tobacco use. Other goals include eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke, promoting quitting, and strengthening the infrastructure of Tobacco Free Florida through increased partnerships and outreach. Ms. Corbin highlighted how Tobacco Free Florida addresses youth tobacco use prevention and

how the program partners with and engages stakeholders statewide.

Additionally, data show that youth perceive smoking and vaping as two distinct behaviors. Specifically, youth do not consider cigarette and vaping addiction to be related, even though nicotine is the source of addiction for both. Tobacco Free Florida uses these data to inform messaging that will resonate with youth.

Ms. Corbin went on to explain the high prevalence of electronic vaping use, which can be attributed to flavored products, product innovation, and aggressive marketing by the tobacco industry.

Tobacco Free Florida initiatives include:

- Tobacco Free Florida works with the Florida Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools to promote and build online training that is free to educators, guidance counselors, and school nurses statewide.
- Last year, Tobacco Free Florida asked the Palm Beach School District to develop an online student citation course, because school administrators lacked standardized corrective actions for students who were found to be in possession of electronic vaping devices. The student citation course provides an educational opportunity to students rather than an in-school suspension.

- State and community interventions consist of funding tobacco prevention resources, including staff positions, in each of Florida's 67 counties. These county providers are tasked with establishing tobacco-free partnerships, protecting kids from tobacco, and strengthening local policies. Providers also maintain a local chapter of the youth anti-tobacco advocacy organization, Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT).
- SWAT has a chapter in every county in Florida. The chapters are comprised of members in the school or community clubs who advocate for tobacco-free norms and policies. SWAT members work with local staff to learn the policy process, including the importance of collecting data; educating peers, parents, and teachers; learning media advocacy; and advocating for tobacco-free campuses within their own school boards.
- The SWAT Youth Advocacy Board (YAB) is comprised of 16 SWAT members who work to support the organization's mission. Notably, SWAT members launched their own peer awareness campaign called "Not a Lab Rat" to combat and correct misinformation about electronic vaping devices. The campaign communicates that because the long-term impact of vaping is unknown, current users are "lab rats" for the industry. This campaign launched in 2018, and SWAT was recognized by the World Health Organization with a 2019 World No Tobacco Day award for this campaign. "Not A Lab Rat Day" is now held every 3rd Wednesday of October. Additionally, members have individually received several Youth Advocate of the Year, National Youth Ambassadors for Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and Truth Initiative awards.
- "The Facts Now" is Tobacco Free Florida's youth prevention media campaign. In October 2020, they launched a new ad

campaign specifically about youth vaping, presenting 5 different stories about the real impact of vaping. There is high recognition of "The Facts Now" brand and high traffic on "The Facts Now" website. Tobacco Free Florida also supports youth and young adults who are ready to quit with "Live Vape Free," a text-based program that provides teens (ages 13-17) with text support, interactive content, and one-on-one coaching to help them quit electronic vaping devices.

The Cabinet then heard a presentation on "The Facts. Your Future." which was launched in October by First Lady Casey DeSantis to provide resources for students to prevent substance misuse. It was inspired by Tobacco Free Florida, which the Cabinet sees as a dynamic program, and is designed to evolve over time. Substance misuse is so prevalent that everyone's life has intersected with it in some way. First Lady DeSantis describes the program as not only helping children and adolescents understand that they shouldn't use substances, but why they shouldn't through the medium of conversation. The Cabinet was played a video about "The Facts. Your Future."

Assistant Secretary Alice Sims from DJJ discussed DJJ's Angel Tree Book Drive. The theme of the book drive is "Donate A Book, Change a Life". Many of the children that DJJ serves are unable to read or reading one or more years below their grade level. The books represent hope, opportunities, and success for these children. Last year, the Angel Tree Book Drive received over 3,000 books and almost \$5,000 in cash donated to the DJJ Foundation for the purchase of additional books. Donations came from all around the state, from DJJ staff, educators, faith and community-based partners and many more. Last year's success led to the creation of a new afterschool reading program at the Alachua Regional Juvenile Detention Center.

Looking Ahead



As the final meeting of 2021 wrapped up Cabinet Chair Ladapo posed a question to members about what the next year would look like. He asked members to think about what initiatives and priorities they should focus on in the next year.

Proposed topics the Cabinet will focus on in 2022:

- Initiatives like The Facts. Your Future., Hope Florida — A Pathway to Prosperity, mentoring programs, and reading proficiency efforts.
- Data-driven initiatives and data sharing amongst agencies and groups, reviewing metrics and targets .
- Working in collaboration to make the biggest impact to Florida’s children.
- Resources for children as they continue to build resiliency, character, and hope.
- Transforming the approaches to child welfare, by thinking of it more as child and family well-being .



The Facts. Your Future. is a program that directly engages youth in Florida to improve their understanding of the life-altering effects of drug abuse and empowers teens to reach their full potential.

HOPE FLORIDA

A PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

Spearheaded by First Lady Casey DeSantis and implemented by the Florida Department of Children and Families, **Hope Florida — A Pathway to Prosperity**, utilizes 'Care Navigators' to guide Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity by focusing on community collaboration between the private sector, faith-based community, nonprofits and government entities to break down traditional community silos, in an effort to maximize resources and uncover opportunities.

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:

1. The Secretary of Children and Families;
 2. The Secretary of Juvenile Justice;
 3. The director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities;
 4. A representative from the Division 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. A representative 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.
- (a) 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.
- (b) The Governor or the Governor's designee shall serve as the chair of the cabinet.
- (c) 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 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; s. 70, ch. 2019-3; s. 11, ch. 2019-142.

Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection
Florida Statute 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. Post-adoptive 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; s. 1, ch. 2016-127; s. 82, ch. 2016-241; s. 28, ch. 2018-111; s. 10, ch. 2019-3; s. 1, ch. 2019-128.

Note.—As amended by s. 82, ch. 2016-241. The amendment by s. 1, ch. 2016-127, uses the reference “s. 394.47892” instead of the reference “chapter 394.”

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