

# 2019 Annual Report

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet





# The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

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February 1, 2020



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

The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet is pleased to present its 2019 Annual Report. As outlined in Florida Statute 402.56, the Cabinet is charged with ensuring the 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 of the Cabinet's activities for 2019, including meetings, workgroups and initiatives undertaken throughout the year. Under my direction as Chair, the primary focus of the Cabinet included the mental health and substance abuse challenges facing our children and youth. These issues will continue to be an area of substantive discussion and analysis in 2020.

The results of the important work of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet is a tribute to the leadership and dedication of its Cabinet members, dedicated staff, and stakeholders who are committed to ensuring that the children of Florida have the opportunity to grow in a happy, healthy and safe environment.

As the future leaders of our state and country, our children are our greatest resource and I look forward to our continued efforts to help our children and families thrive and pursue the American Dream.

Sincerely,

Casey DeSantis

Chair, Florida Children and Youth Cabinet

# INSIDE

7

## FIRST QUARTERLY MEETING

- › Change in Leadership

9

## SECOND QUARTERLY MEETING

11

## THIRD QUARTERLY MEETING

13

## FOURTH QUARTERLY MEETING

- › Technology Workgroup
- › Strategies Workgroup
- › 2019 Cabinet Events and Special Announcements

# 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 2019.



**Alan Abramowitz**  
Executive Director  
Guardian ad Litem



**Jason Barrett**  
CEO  
Flagler Health+  
Governor Appointee



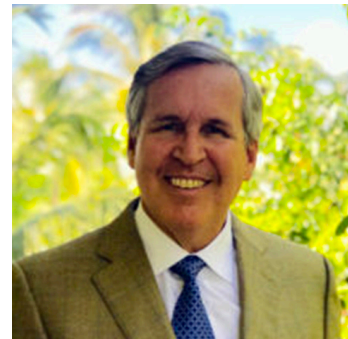
**Senator Lauren Book**  
Senator  
Florida Senate  
Senate President Designee



**Richard Corcoran**  
Education Commissioner  
Department of Education



**Judge Jessica Costello**  
13th Judicial Circuit Court  
Governor Appointee



**Carlos de la Cruz, Jr.**  
Chairman  
Everglades Foundation  
Governor Appointee



**Zackary Gibson**  
Director  
Governor's Office of  
Adoption



**Shan Goff**  
Executive Director  
Office of Early Learning



**Sandra "Sam" Himmel**  
Superintendent of Schools  
Citrus County



# Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Members



**Forough Hosseini**  
**Vice President**  
**ICI Homes**  
**Governor Appointee**



**Justice Robert Luck**  
**Justice**  
**Florida Supreme Court**  
**Supreme Court Appointee**



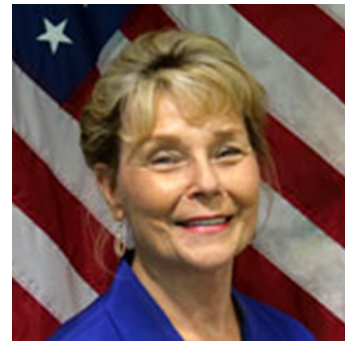
**Simone Marsteller**  
**Secretary**  
**Department of Juvenile Justice**



**Mary Mayhew**  
**Secretary**  
**Agency for Health Care Administration**



**Daniel Olson**  
**Director of Governmental Affairs**  
**Office of Attorney General**  
**Attorney General Appointee**



**Barbara Palmer**  
**Director**  
**Agency for Persons with Disabilities**



**Chad Poppell**  
**Secretary**  
**Department of Children and Families**



**Scott Rivkees**  
**Florida Surgeon General**  
**Department of Health**



**Patricia Williams**  
**Representative**  
**Florida House of Representatives**  
**Speaker of the House Designee**



**Victoria Zepp**  
**Vice President**  
**Florida Coalition for Children**  
**Chief Financial Officer Designee**

# 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 the Executive Director to serve as the Cabinet's liaison. The Executive Director reports directly to the Assistant Secretary of DCF's Child Welfare and the Cabinet Chair.

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





# FIRST QUARTERLY MEETING



The first Children and Youth Cabinet meeting was held on March 25th at the Florida Capitol.

Members began by providing brief legislative updates, highlighting their respective agencies' needs and priorities.

**Secretary Chad Poppell, Department of Children and Families (DCF)** outlined Title IV-E waiver changes and funding. He described policy and procedural changes at DCF and addressed public records exemption for foster parent names to protect their identities (for safety reasons).

**Secretary Simone Marstiller, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)** provided an update on expanding prevention and diversion programs and increasing quality oversight of residential providers.

**Director Barbara Palmer, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)** described a \$40 million budget proposal to assist with transitioning individuals off

the waitlist for the Waiver Program and helping them begin to receive services.

**Director Rodney MacKinnon, Office of Early Learning (OEL)** addressed a budget request for authority to spend School Readiness Program federal funds awarded to OEL to help reduce the waiting list for services.

**Director Alan Abramowitz, Florida Guardian ad Litem Program** shared a new measure through the Certification Board to improve advocacy efforts. He also mentioned the Regis Little Act, which ensures vulnerable foster youth have a guardian in place at age 18 to protect children with special needs.

**Chancellor Jacob Oliva, Department of Education (DOE)** praised Governor DeSantis and the State of Florida for proposing the increase in funding to improve security within schools, provide

scholarships, and expand onsite job training for teachers and staff.

**Superintendent Sam Himmel, Citrus County Schools** addressed the topic of using threat assessments on students and appropriate next steps for engaging parents in children's needs, if identified.

**Director Zack Gibson, Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection** provided an update on the Interagency Agreement that addresses the state's efforts to integrate and coordinate services for children served by more than one agency, which was signed by Cabinet members and multiple state and governmental entities.

These updates were followed by a presentation from the Florida Dental Association (FDA). President, Dr. Jolene Paramore, shared the importance of children's dental health, explaining that tooth decay was the leading childhood disease. She also mentioned the FDA's "Give Kids a Smile" events, which offer free dental care for children. APD Director Barbara Palmer noted how important these events are, especially for children with developmental disabilities.

The final agenda item was a joint presentation from Whole Child Leon, an organization dedicated to connecting parents and caregivers with needed services, and the Tallahassee Pediatric Behavioral Health Center (TPBHC), which focuses on improving children's mental health and wellbeing. Whole Child Leon Executive Director Courtney Atkins and

Alexis Rojas, Executive Director of TPBHC, discussed their ongoing partnership: Whole Child Leon receives grant funding from TPBHC to conduct biopsychosocial evaluations and psychoeducation with children referred by local pediatricians or the Early Learning Coalition.

## CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

Governor Ron DeSantis Appoints First Lady Casey DeSantis as Chair of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet.



In April 2019, while highlighting Child Abuse Prevention Month, Governor DeSantis appointed the First Lady to serve as the Chair of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. As a mother and fearless advocate for all children, this appointment has given the First Lady an opportunity to use her voice in a meaningful way and bring attention to the issues impacting children and families across the state.

"I'm honored to serve the people of Florida in this new capacity and look forward to working with child advocates across the state to better the lives of some of the most vulnerable citizens of our society. Protecting our children from harm and making sure that every child in Florida has the opportunity to succeed and pursue the American Dream is a top priority of this administration."

— First Lady Casey DeSantis, April 2019



## SECOND QUARTERLY MEETING



The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet's second meeting took place on August 23rd at the Orange County Commission Chambers in Orlando.

The meeting began with Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings, who addressed the opioid epidemic from both professional and personal perspectives. Following his moving testimony, the Cabinet heard from three young people who shared stories about challenges they have faced and how they overcame adversity.

**Timmy Lee from Pasco County** spoke about growing up in a bad environment and spending time in foster care, as well as the near destruction of his family's home from a house fire. Despite those obstacles, he turned his situation around through hard work and perseverance. Today, he is a youth leader and advocate who works to make a positive difference in his local community.

**Hazel Montoya from Orange County** is a 17-year-old youth leader at the Pace Center for Girls in Orange County.

She described being stuck in a hopeless situation prior to Pace, dealing with depression, surrounded by the wrong crowd, and struggling to survive. Since joining Pace, she has found her passion and uses her voice to help others serving on the Girls Leadership Council. Her goal is to attend college and to become a pediatrician.

**Javonta Brown from Broward County** talked about how he was placed in more than eight foster homes, from Tallahassee to Jacksonville, within a two-year period, which caused him to fall behind academically. However, Javonta refused to let his traumatic childhood define the rest of his life, and now, he attends Tallahassee Community College where he is majoring in political science, and he aspires to become a Supreme Court Justice.

The inspiring stories from these young people set the tone for the remainder of the meeting and the important topics members discussed.

As Chair of the Technology Workgroup, Victoria Zepp shared that the technology workgroup was instrumental in securing an additional \$20 million in federal grants for Florida and how this accomplishment was recognized nationally as the first of its kind.

Zack Gibson then provided an update on the Cabinet's Interagency Agreement, which addresses the state's efforts to integrate and coordinate services for children provided by multiple agencies. He noted that, as the agreement is set to be renewed in 2022, he will work with his community-level contacts to amend it and identify opportunities for enhancement.

Supreme Court Justice Robert Luck contributed to these remarks by speaking about the One Child, One Family program, an evidence-

based program that strives to identify all cases involving one family and bring them before one judge. The program requires coordination of services when a child is involved with multiple agencies.

Justice Luck also described an Early Childhood Courts bill (to be recognized like Drug Courts and Veterans Courts) that supports the idea that, when children in the dependency system are properly resourced, they have quicker access to services that deter them from repeat offenses or re-entering back into the system.

Alan Abramowitz reiterated the importance of Early Childhood Courts and noted the statewide success resulting from using this model.

Having heard the members' updates and participating in a meaningful discussion about collective goals, the Chair closed the meeting with a call for continued communication and collaboration.





Third

## QUARTERLY MEETING



During the third meeting of the Children and Youth Cabinet, members began to determine the Cabinet's specific direction – youth suicide prevention.

The Chair began the meeting by discussing her takeaways from the many *Hope for Healing Florida* listening sessions that she participated in recently. During one, she learned that death by suicide is the eighth leading cause of death among all age groups in Florida, and even more alarming, it is the fourth leading cause of death among 5 to 14-year-olds and the third leading cause of death among 15 to 24-year-olds. While these statistics are devastating, she was optimistic about the Cabinet's ability to make a difference. She knew members had the capacity to identify and address gaps in critical resources and services.

Following her remarks, Dr. Thomas Joiner, a renowned expert on suicide prevention and a professor of psychology at Florida State University, talked about the need for more

immediate care when patients are discharged from psychiatric facilities and/or were Baker Acted for suicide attempts.

Two devoted mothers then proceeded to share their personal connection to youth suicide. Mary Bowers spoke of how she lost her daughter to suicide six years ago, which spurred her to begin working for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Anita Whitney Davis, a Parent Liaison at the Governors Charter Academy in Tallahassee, shared how her son attempted suicide earlier in the year but is now successfully recovering.

After thanking these women for their courage, the Chair invited members to update the rest of the Cabinet on their respective agencies' efforts to support families struggling with youth mental health challenges or possible suicide ideation.



Rodney Moore, Assistant Secretary of Substance Abuse and Mental Health at the Department of Children and Families, provided an update on the Florida Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council's five-year plan. He noted that the plan is currently being reviewed and will be presented to Secretary Chad Poppell in June 2020.

To close, the Chair directed members to focus on youth suicide prevention. She asked them to come to the next meeting with recommendations of how their agencies could offer or expand youth suicide prevention resources and, perhaps even more importantly, communicate the availability of these resources to help combat the epidemic.



West Palm Beach listening session with community leaders about mental health and substance abuse. July 15, 2019



Listening session with St. Johns County students about the importance of mental health. September 30, 2019

Fourth

## QUARTERLY MEETING



During the fourth meeting, the Chair emphasized the value of mentorship in preventing youth suicide. A video was shown highlighting the Governor's experience as a mentor during his service in the U.S. Navy. Following the video, the Chair invited speakers to share their mentorship experiences.

At the meeting, LaSharonté Williams-Potts explained that she has mentored 22 children as a Guardian ad Litem, and she continues to volunteer in her current position as an attorney for the Florida Department of Agriculture. She received a well-deserved standing ovation at the conclusion of her remarks.

The Volunteer Services Director at Volunteer Florida, Jovita Woodrich, then introduced the agency's new online platform, which connects Floridians with volunteer opportunities. She talked about how *Volunteer Connect* can be used to promote mentorship programs and strongly encouraged the Cabinet to consider utilizing it moving forward.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair asked Rodney Moore, Assistant Secretary of Substance Abuse and Mental Health at the Department of Children and Families, to provide another update on the Suicide Prevention Coordinating Council's five-year plan. He noted that the Council met in September and created an additional committee that includes 12 state agencies, bolstering efforts to reduce the increasing rate of suicide in Florida.

The Chair provided final remarks, noting that the Cabinet is in a unique position to offer innovative solutions to address the issue of youth suicide, including strong mentorship programs that can increase the scale and scope of support.





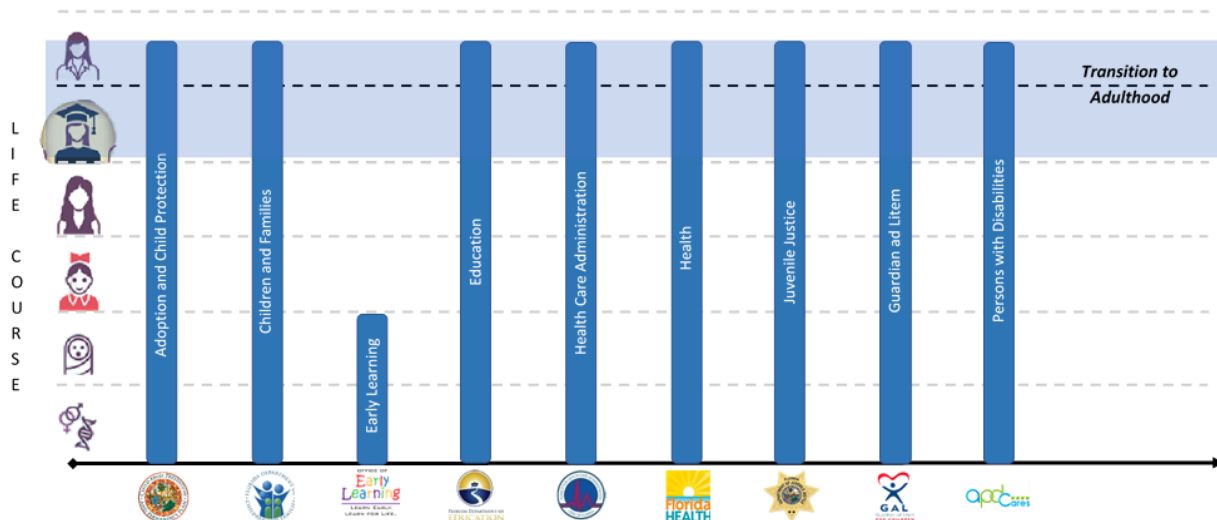
# Looking Ahead



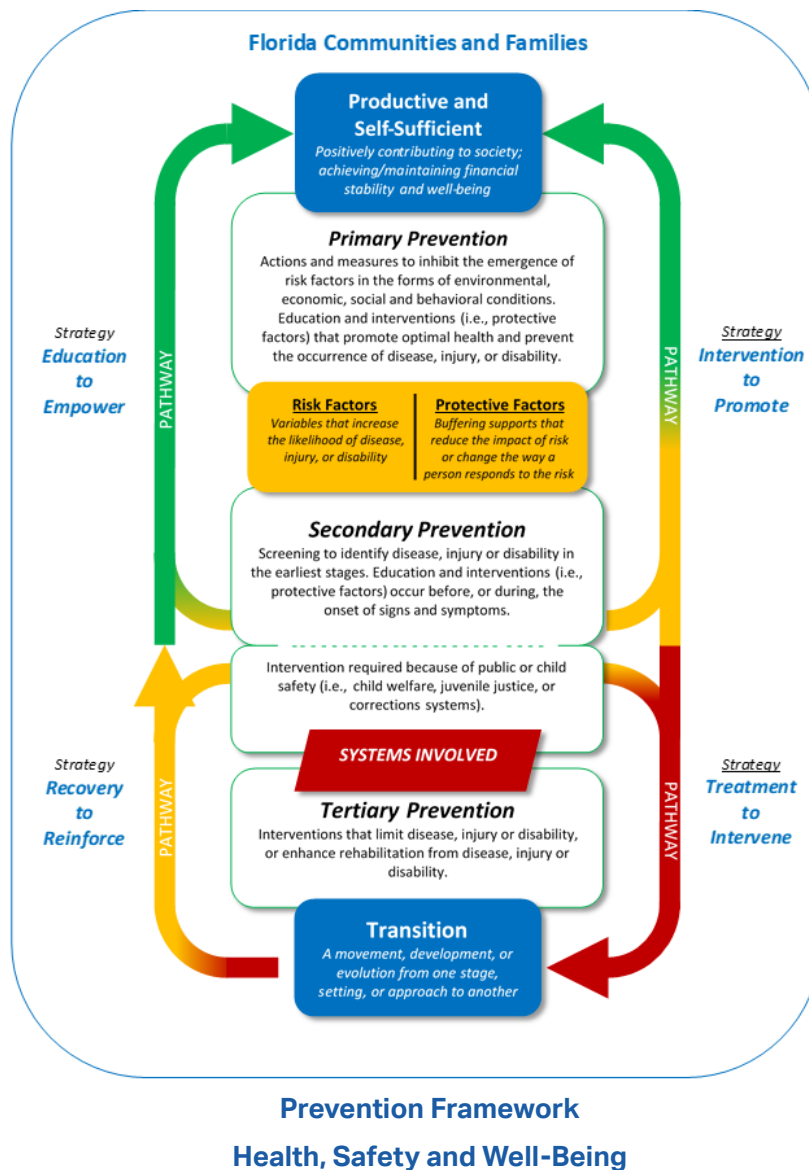
“Seeking help is not something to be ashamed of, and at the end of the day, getting help and living a productive life is what is important.”

— First Lady Casey DeSantis, Chair

**FLORIDA CHILDREN & YOUTH CABINET**  
 Child-Serving Agencies' Focus from Prenatal to Transition to Adulthood  
*Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention Services*







“As Chair of the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet, I am committed to working with organizations across the state to coordinate and improve access to critical mental health resources for children and their families.”  
— First Lady Casey DeSantis, Chair

**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:

- (a)
  - 1. The Secretary of Children and Families;
  - 2. The Secretary of Juvenile Justice;
  - 3. The director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities;
  - 4. The director of the Office 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.

- (b) 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.
- (c) The Governor or the Governor's designee shall serve as the chair of the cabinet.
- (d) 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.

**<sup>1</sup>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.