

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

*Section 4 of the  
Florida Child Abuse  
Prevention and  
Permanency Plan:  
July 2010 – June 2015*

**2012 Biennial Revision**

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









***Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015***  
**2012 Biennial Revision**

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## Part 1 – Introduction

In accordance with state law (§39.001, Florida Statutes), this five-year *Florida Promotion of Adoption Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* provides for the promotion of public adoption of those children who have been served by Florida’s child welfare system. The vision, mission, overarching goal and desired results of the plan are:

### ***Vision***

Florida’s highest priority is that children are raised in healthy, safe, stable, and nurturing families.

### ***Mission***

To serve as a blueprint that will be implemented to provide for the care, safety, and protection of all of Florida’s children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development.

### ***Overarching Goal***

All families and communities ensure that children are safe and nurtured and live in stable environments that promote well-being.

### ***Desired Results of Plan Implementation***

***Promotion of Adoption*** – By June 30, 2015, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 66.4 percent.

***Promotion of Adoption*** – By June 30, 2015, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights (TPR) for more than 12 months will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008-2009 rate of 53.19 percent.

The *Florida Adoption Promotion Plan: July 2010 – June 2015* was developed by the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor with the assistance of the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council, its membership agency and organization staff members and five workgroups with statewide representation. *Part 2* of this plan provides a status report on adoption in Florida. *Part 3* discusses the areas of focus for the plan in light of the continuum of programs and services necessary for a comprehensive approach to the promotion of adoption. *Part 4* encompasses three strategies and eight objectives action plans to be implemented over the next five years. *Part 5* provides a glimpse of the work and plans of the 20 circuits for the next five years to promote adoption. The full text of the circuit plans is provided in Appendix I, under separate cover.

## Plan Strategies and Objectives for the Promotion of Adoption

### **Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1: Infuse the *Protective Factors* into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents.**

By June 30, 2015, Florida-based adoptive parent recruitment systems will have intentionally incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a foundation for their work.

#### *Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1 Objectives:*

- 1.1 Local Recruitment Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]
- 1.2 Parent Preparation and Training.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents, instruction on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the *Protective Factors*.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2: Strengthen Florida Recruitment Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented systems and efforts to better target recruitment of families to meet the needs of children and youth awaiting public adoption.

#### *Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2 Objectives:*

- 2.1 Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have provided information and resources to promote and build efforts by faith-based and community-based systems to provide family and community supports that would build the *Protective Factors* in Florida's families.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 2.2 Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted and child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of *Explore Adoption* tools and materials and the Heart Galleries.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]
- 2.3 Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented fully the state adopted Customer Service Protocol for supporting families through the adoption process and after finalization of child adoption.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.** By June 30, 2015, leadership of plan implementation will have monitored and annually assessed the progress and effectiveness of the plan-based initiatives.

#### *Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3 Objectives:*

- 3.1 Instrumentation and Procedures Design.** By March 30, 2011, the State of Florida will have created procedures and instrumentation for use by the plan workgroups for monitoring and annually reviewing progress.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 3.2 Progress Monitoring.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented an ongoing monitoring of plan implementation progress and used the findings to refine the action plans for future implementation.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 3.3 Annual Review and Assessment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented annual progress reviews and used the findings to refine the strategies and objectives for future implementation.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]

## Part 2 – Summary of Adoption Data and the Timeliness of Adoptions

This subsection comprises three areas of reporting:

- 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.
- A summary detailing the adoption process and its timeliness for children adopted from within the child welfare system.
- A summary of the support of adoptive families' information.

### **Adoption Data Reported by the Department of Children and Families to the Federal Administration for Children and Families via the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).**

The Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) tracks state performance on federal child welfare outcome measures using AFCARS, including five measures related to the timeliness of adoptions from foster care. Four of these measures are included in this report.

Data and summaries were provided by the Department of Children and Families to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor in December 2011. These data and information have been aggregated in order to describe the status of adoption in Florida. It should be noted that for the information provided below on the AFCARS measures, original comparison benchmarks were established in 2007 based on analyses using data from the 2004 Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) which spans the months October through September. Differences in reporting period can alter measured performance. For example, FFY 2011 spans October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. On the other hand, the current state performance information is based on the 12 – month period from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 (SFY 2010 – 2011), using the most recent available data for this 2012 Biennial Revision.

**AFCARS Measure 1 – Percent Discharged in Less than 24 Months.** Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the period July 2010 through June 2011, *51.05 percent were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home.* The target was to reach the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for FFY 2004 which is 36.6 percent. *Florida has exceeded this target for four consecutive years.* Florida has made steady progress on this measure over the last several years, increasing from 23.9 percent in FFY 2004 to 51.05 percent in SFY 2010 – 2011 (e.g., July 2010 through June 2011). This measure is limited to children adopted during the period and does not address the likelihood that children, presently in care, will be adopted within 24 months. It is important to note that this measure can be misleading, especially when an agency successfully recruits adoptive families for older children/teens who have been in foster care for multiple years and therefore may create a negative impact on this measure. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected on the next page. As shown in Table 1, all but four of the 20 Florida circuits exceeded the federal target.

**Table 1. Percent Discharged to Adoption in Less than 24 months (by Circuit)**

Circuit	Performance	Circuit	Performance
Circuit 08	71.63%	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>51.05%</b>
Circuit 14	70.69%	Circuit 12	48.32%
Circuit 04	68.11%	Circuit 03	46.67%
Circuit 18	60.98%	Circuit 10	45.71%
Circuit 15	58.39%	Circuit 05	45.15%
Circuit 02	57.35%	Circuit 11	42.65%
Circuit 09	56.35%	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>36.60%</b>
Circuit 06	54.95%	Circuit 19	35.34%
Circuit 17	52.69%	Circuit 13	35.19%
Circuit 07	52.54%	Circuit 20	32.84%
Circuit 01	51.76%	Circuit 16	25.00%

**AFCARS Measure 2 – Median Length of Stay in Foster Care.** Of all children adopted from foster care during the period July 2010 through June 2011, the *median length of stay in foster care was 20.00 months from the date of latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption.* The target was to reach the national 25th percentile for FFY 2004, established in FFY 2007, which is 27.3 months. This measure, like the first measure, is limited to children adopted during the period, so it only describes the length of stay of this particular group of adopted children. As shown in Table 2, *Florida exceeded the federal target.* Florida’s median length of stay has dropped for several years, from 35.1 months in FFY 2004 to 23.00 months in SFY 2010 – 2011. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected below. Last year, 14 (70%) of Florida circuits met the federal target, and this year, 17 (85%) of the 20 Florida circuits met or exceeded the federal target.

**Table 2. Median Length of Stay (LOS) in Foster Care (by Circuit) for Children Discharged to Adoption**

Circuit	Median LOS	Circuit	Median LOS
Circuit 08	18.0	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>23.0</b>
Circuit 04	19.0	Circuit 05	25.0
Circuit 14	19.5	Circuit 12	25.0
Circuit 18	20.0	Circuit 10	26.0
Circuit 15	21.0	Circuit 03	26.5
Circuit 02	22.0	Circuit 11	27.0
Circuit 06	22.0	Circuit 19	27.0
Circuit 09	22.0	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>27.0</b>
Circuit 01	23.0	Circuit 16	28.0
Circuit 07	23.0	Circuit 20	30.0
Circuit 17	23.0	Circuit 13	32.0

**AFCARS Measure 3 – Finalized Adoptions.** Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of July 2010, and who had been in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, **31.27 percent were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by June 30, 2011.** The target was to reach the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for FFY 2004, established in FFY 2007 of 22.7 percent. **Florida has exceeded this target.** This measure provides one way of looking at the likelihood of children being adopted who have been in care for a long period of time. It selects all children who were in care at the beginning of the period and follows up after 12 months to see whether they have been adopted. This measure excludes children who, by the last day of the period, have achieved permanency through reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with other relatives, or guardianship. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected below. As shown in Table 3, of the 20 Florida circuits, 18 (90%) met or exceeded the federal target during SFY 2010 – 2011. The two circuits that did not meet the federal target are highlighted in orange. **It should be noted that Florida, for the third year in a row, has received an adoption incentive award from the Department of Health and Human Services for the number of finalized adoptions. Only Texas and Arizona exceeded the amount of Florida’s award.**

**Table 3. Percent of Finalized Adoptions (by Circuit)**

Circuit	Performance	Circuit	Performance
Circuit 19	53.22%	Circuit 14	31.94%
Circuit 05	48.55%	Circuit 13	31.51%
Circuit 12	47.20%	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>31.27%</b>
Circuit 08	41.74%	Circuit 04	27.68%
Circuit 01	40.94%	Circuit 02	24.29%
Circuit 03	39.22%	Circuit 17	23.04%
Circuit 07	37.95%	Circuit 09	23.00%
Circuit 20	36.47%	Circuit 15	22.93%
Circuit 16	35.71%	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>22.70%</b>
Circuit 10	34.50%	Circuit 11	20.70%
Circuit 06	33.11%	Circuit 18	17.45%

**AFCARS Measure 4 – Legally Free for Adoption.** Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of July 2010 or January 2011, had been in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, and were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, **12.05 percent became legally free for adoption** by December 31, 2010 or June 30, 2011 respectively. The target was to reach the national 75<sup>th</sup> percentile for FFY 2004, established in FFY 2007 which is 10.9 percent. **Florida exceeded this target.** This measure reflects how quickly Florida moved to obtain termination of parental rights (TPR) when it appeared that reunification was no longer a viable option. This measure excludes children who did not become legally free during the first six months of the period but who, during that six-month period, achieved permanency through reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with other relatives, or guardianship. Individual circuit performance of the measure is reflected on the next page. As shown in Table 4, the circuits highlighted in orange did not meet the federal target. Of the 20 Florida circuits, 14 (70%) met or exceeded the federal target.

**Table 4. Percent of Children Legally Free for Adoption (by Circuit)**

Circuit	Performance	Circuit	Performance
Circuit 03	55.00%	Circuit 08	12.12%
Circuit 16	34.78%	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>12.05%</b>
Circuit 12	25.71%	Circuit 02	11.54%
Circuit 07	22.76%	Circuit 04	11.11%
Circuit 01	22.61%	<b>Federal Target</b>	<b>10.90%</b>
Circuit 19	18.85%	Circuit 15	10.08%
Circuit 20	18.32%	Circuit 13	9.14%
Circuit 05	17.83%	Circuit 09	9.04%
Circuit 06	16.01%	Circuit 17	7.80%
Circuit 14	12.77%	Circuit 18	6.96%
Circuit 10	12.76%	Circuit 11	3.06%

Reports on this measure were likely impacted due to changes in the Florida Safe Families Network last year when the new Legal Module was brought online and it resulted in missing data. The Department of Children and Families is addressing the problem of missing Termination of Parental Rights dates by sending bi-weekly reports to the field listing records that are missing data and need to be completed. The Department of Children and Families is also providing technical support on how to update records in closed cases for users in the field.

**The Adoption Process for Children Adopted from within the Child Welfare System**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) uses several data sources and metrics related to adoption. Each serves a unique purpose. Some of the differences between these metrics, though important, can be somewhat nuanced. To avoid miscommunication or inadvertent misinterpretation, it is critical to use “the right tool for the right job”. For example, the answer to the question of how many children are available for adoption in Florida depends entirely on the meaning of the term “available for adoption.” Different interpretations of this term refer to different populations, or population subsets. These may include:

- a. Children with a primary goal of adoption, who have not been TPR’d (that is the termination of their parental rights);
- b. Children who have been TPR’d, making them legally available for adoption, regardless of whether adoption is a primary goal;
- c. Children who have been both TPR’d and have a primary goal of adoption;
- d. Children who have been TPR’d, have a primary goal of adoption, and an adoptive family has been identified, but the adoption has not been finalized; and
- e. Children who are TPR’d, have the primary goal of adoption, but no family has been identified and recruitment for a family is still ongoing. These are the children who are eligible to be featured on the *Explore Adoption* website.

As shown in Table 5, adoption-related populations overlap or are nested within each other, and each yields a different number. Table 5 provides a point in time chart as of July 1, 2010 and provides a starting base at the beginning of SFY 2010 – 2011.

**Table 5. Adoption-Related Populations as of July 1, 2010**

POPULATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
a. Children TPR'd or who have a primary goal of adoption	5,303
b. Children with a primary goal of adoption regardless of TPR status	4,470
c. Children TPR'd, regardless of goal	3,175
d. Children who have been TPR'd and have a primary goal of adoption	2,342
e. Children who have been TPR'd, have a primary goal of adoption, do not have an identified family and are eligible to be featured on the DCF website	823*

\*The 823 is from the Monthly Adoption Report all other figures are from the July 1, 2010 AFCARS Extract.

Of the 2,342 children who had a primary goal of adoption and were TPR'd as of July 1, 2010, 1,093 of them (47%) were adopted during the SFY 2010 – 2011. These adoptions represent 36% of the total 3,009 adoptions finalized during the course of SFY 2010 – 2011.

Table 6 shows the length of time from the last TPR date until the adoption finalization for all children adopted during SFY 2010 – 2011. The date of TPR was recorded in the system for 2,958 out of the 3,009 of the children adopted; a 98 percent non-random sample. Of these 2,958 children, most (66.63%) were adopted in less than twelve months and almost all (87.79%) were adopted within 24 months (highlighted in green) of their TPR dates.

**Table 6. Length of Time between TPR and Adoption Finalization for SFY 2010 –2011 Finalized Adoptions**

Number and Percent of Children Adopted by the Number of Months Between TPR and Finalization of Adoption based on 2,958 for whom data are available		
Time Span	Number of Children Adopted	Percent of Children Adopted
< 12 Months	1,971	66.63%
12 – 24 Months	626	21.16%
24 – 36 Months	186	6.29%
36 – 48 Months	69	2.33%
> 48 Months	106	3.58%
Data Not Available*	51	
<b>Total of Adopted Children</b>	<b>3,009</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* TPR date was not included in FSFN for these children at the time of the extract, so the related time frames based on this date could not be calculated. These are excluded from the percentages calculated.

Table 7 shows the length of time from the last TPR date until June 30, 2011 for those children who were legally free for adoption as of the end of the State Fiscal Year. The date of TPR was recorded in the system for 1,796 of the 2,152 children who were legally free for adoption by June 30, 2011, an 83.46 percent non-random sample. Of these 1,796 children, less than half (48.66%) have been waiting more than 12 months (highlighted in orange) to be adopted. More than 390 of the children who were available for adoption at the end of the SFY 2010 – 2011 have been waiting for three or more years to be adopted.

**Table 7. Length of Time Since TPR for Children Remaining Available for Adoption as of June 30, 2011**

<b>Remaining Children available for Adoption by the Number of Months Between TPR and June 30, 2011 for the 1,796 children for whom data are available</b>		
<b>Time Span</b>	<b>Number of Waiting Children</b>	<b>Percent of Waiting Children</b>
<b>&lt; 12 Months</b>	922	51.34%
<b>12 – 24 Months</b>	293	16.31%
<b>24 – 36 Months</b>	188	10.47%
<b>36 – 48 Months</b>	130	7.24%
<b>&gt;48 Months</b>	263	14.64%
<b>Data Not Available*</b>	356	
<b>Total Number of Waiting Children</b>	2,152	100%

\* TPR date was not included in FSN for these children at the time of the extract, so the related time frames based on it could not be calculated. These are excluded from the percentages calculated.

### **Timeliness of Adoption**

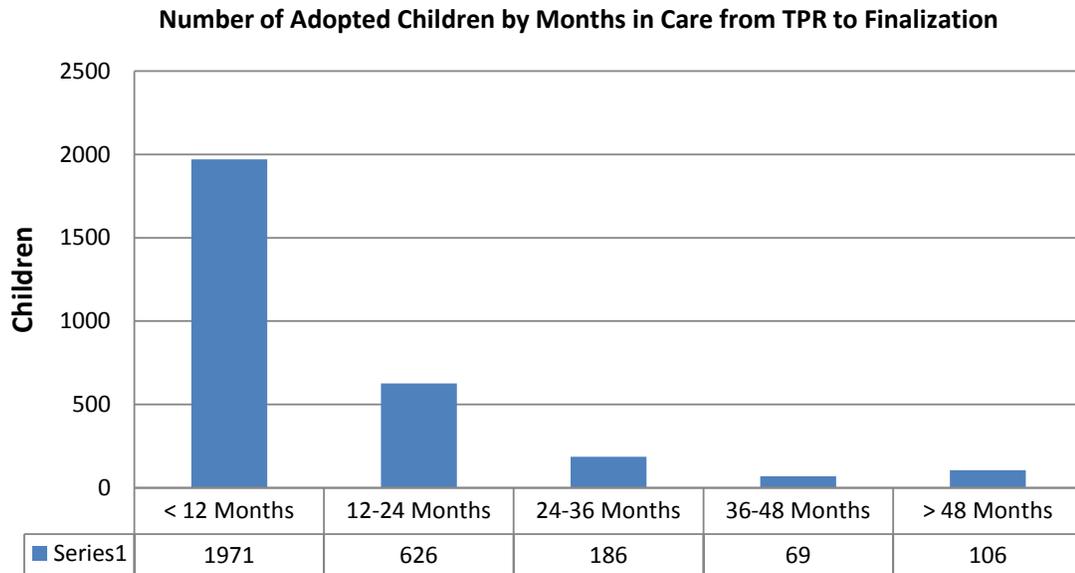
The state’s five-year prevention and permanency plan has two desired population results for the promotion of adoption. Both deal with the timeliness of adoption – increasing the adoptions that occur within 12 months of TPR and decreasing the length of time children have been waiting for adoption since TPR.

**State Plan Desired Result 2 – Promotion of Adoption** – By June 30, 2015, the percent of children adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free for adoption will increase from the State Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009 rate of 66.4 percent.

It should be helpful to know the number of months from securing the termination of parental rights (TPR) to the adoption finalization date to assess if there are delays. During SFY 2010 – 2011 3,009 children were adopted. Verified data sets were available and provided for 2,958 of these 3,009 children, representing a 98 percent non-random sample of this population. This section reports information based upon this sample of children for whom the data were complete.

As the following chart documents, 1,971 (66.63%) of the adoptions were finalized in less than twelve months from date of TPR. This is above the target of exceeding 66.4 percent in the next four years. Statewide efforts will continue in order to maintain this progress. As shown in this chart, of the children adopted during SFY 2010 – 2011, almost 400 children were adopted after waiting two or more years and of these, 106 children had been waiting for four or more years. The longer a child is in foster care waiting adoption, the more difficult it may be to place the child. The circuits and their providers have made adoption possible for 987 of these children in their care that had waited longer than 12 months for their adoption.

**Chart 1. Length of Stay in Foster Care from the Date of Termination of Parental Rights to the Date of Adoption Finalization**



As stated earlier, during SFY 2010 – 2011, 3,009 adoptions from the child welfare system were finalized in Florida. Of those, 2,945 had the adoptive parent relationship data entered into the system, a 98 percent non-random sample. Three-quarters of the 2,945 children were adopted by the families known to them and where they were already living – by their foster parents or relative caregivers: **30.29 percent** were adopted by foster parents and **46.60 percent** were adopted by relatives. The remaining **23.87 percent** of these children were adopted by families who were recruited for them. Over the last four years, the number and therefore the percentage of relative caregiver adoptions have increased. As documented in the table below, the percentages of these three adoptive populations do vary by circuit, with the highlighted cells showing the highest percentage for each circuit.

**Table 8. Percentage of Adoptions by Circuit by Type of Adoptive Family**

Circuit	Foster Parents	Relatives	Recruited Parents	Circuit	Foster Parents	Relatives	Recruited Parents
Circuit 01	27%	50%	32%	Circuit 11	36%	43%	17%
Circuit 02	26%	48%	26%	Circuit 12	36%	42%	41%
Circuit 03	35%	39%	19%	Circuit 13	33%	43%	18%
Circuit 04	27%	49%	10%	Circuit 14	45%	26%	30%
Circuit 05	23%	51%	29%	Circuit 15	33%	45%	21%
Circuit 06	23%	47%	24%	Circuit 16	8%	75%	0%
Circuit 07	23%	54%	22%	Circuit 17	43%	37%	22%
Circuit 08	31%	40%	36%	Circuit 18	13%	68%	26%
Circuit 09	39%	36%	30%	Circuit 19	26%	58%	25%
Circuit 10	21%	42%	30%	Circuit 20	47%	38%	23%

**State Plan Desired Result 3 – Promotion of Adoption** – By June 30, 2015, the percent of children legally free for adoption who have been waiting for adoption since the date of termination of parental rights (TPR) for more than 12 months will be reduced from the State Fiscal Year 2008 – 2009 rate of 53.19 percent. (Note: In the original plan submission the figures for SFY 2008 – 2009 were based on a different calculation and have been updated retroactively to improve the quality of the metric. Previously, these figures were calculated based on the date of removal to the end of the fiscal year. The modified metric instead uses the last date of TPR until the end of the fiscal year.)

Table 9 shows the same categories found in Table 5, but for a different snapshot of time. These counts were taken on June 30, 2011 and provide for end of State Fiscal Year 2010 – 2011 counts as well as a starting base for the beginning of the next State Fiscal Year 2011 – 2012.

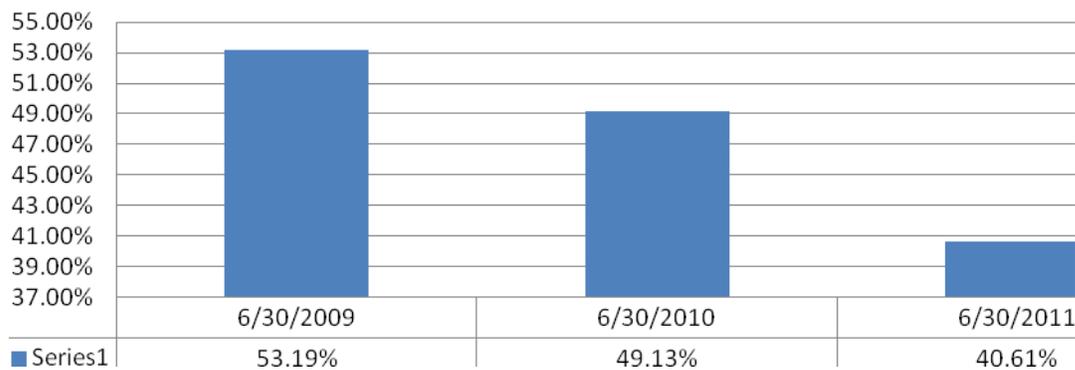
**Table 9. Adoption-Related Populations as of June 30, 2011**

POPULATION DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
a. Children TPR'ed or who have a primary goal of adoption	5,138
b. Children with a primary goal of adoption regardless of TPR status	4,294
c. Children TPR'ed, regardless of goal	3,371
d. Children who have been TPR'ed and have a primary goal of adoption	2,527
e. Children who have been TPR'ed, have a primary goal of adoption, do not have an identified family and are eligible to be featured on the DCF website	746*

\* Source July 1, 2011 AFCARS Extract, except the 746 which comes from the Monthly Adoption Report.

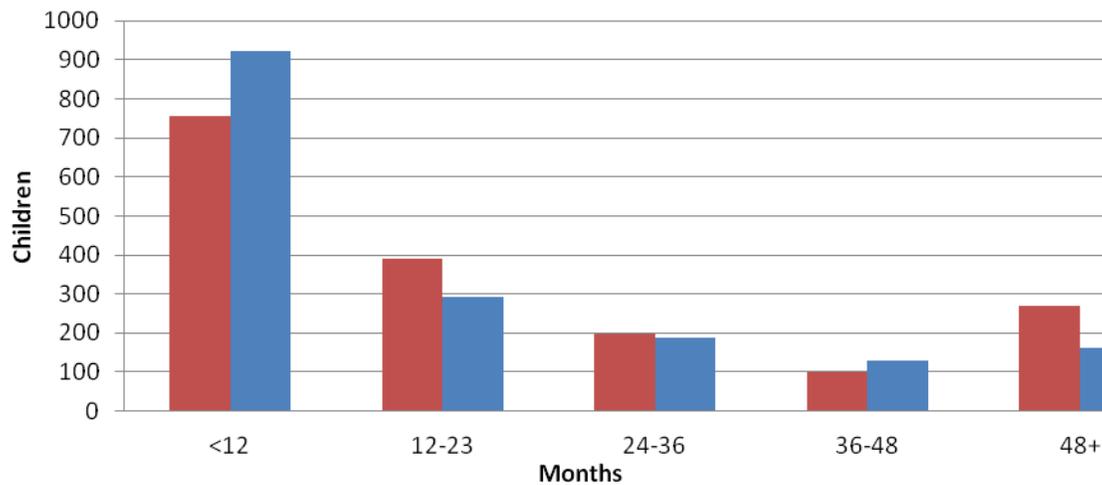
As shown in Table 9 above, 2,527 children were waiting to be adopted as of June 30, 2011. Of these, 1,796 have TPR dates entered in the system providing a 71 percent non-random sample for analysis. Of those, 874 (35%) have been waiting longer than 12 months from the date of their TPR. As shown in Chart 2 below, the percent has decreased from the prior year percent of 49 percent.

**Chart 2. Percent of Children Awaiting Adoption Who Have Been Waiting Longer than 12 Months**



The children awaiting adoption can be further illustrated by the length of time (in months) since they became legally free for adoption (TPR). Chart 3 displays the proportion of children who have been TPR'd, have a primary goal of adoption, and are therefore said to be “available for adoption” for the last two state fiscal years. Taken together, Charts 2 and 3 indicate that more children becoming newly available for adoption are being found permanent adoptive homes within 12 months and that an increasing number of children who have been in foster care and awaiting adoption for a longer period of time are being found permanent homes. In fact, the majority of the total number children available for adoption at the end of the fiscal year have been waiting less than 12 months.

**Chart 3. Children Awaiting Adoption by Length of Time Since TPR**



	6/30/2010	6/30/2011
<b>Total Number of Children</b>	<b>1,954</b>	<b>2,152</b>
Number with Complete Data	1,717	1,796
Percent in Non-Random Sample	87%	83%

As previously shown in Table 9, there were 2,527 children legally available for adoption with a primary goal of adoption as of June 30, 2010. Of these, 746 (30%) do not have identified adoptive families as of June 30, 2011 and are listed on the website as available for adoption. Only the 746 children available without identified adoptive families are described below. On the next page, Chart 4 describes these 746 children by age groupings. Youth who are 13 – 14 years old represent 199 (27%) of the waiting children. Over half (58%) are youth age thirteen or older. Ten percent of the available children are eight years of age or younger while 90 percent are between the ages of nine and seventeen.

**Chart 4. Age Groups of Children without Identified Homes Awaiting Adoption**

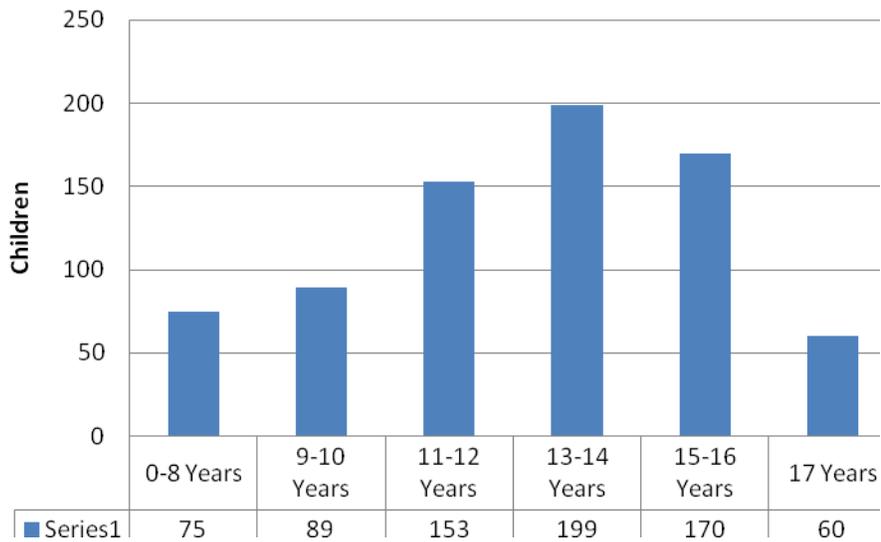
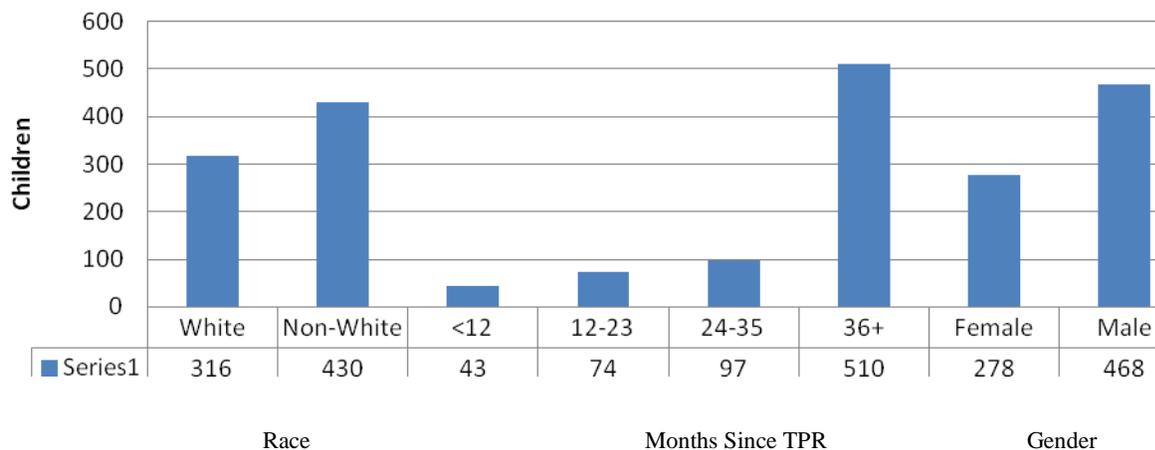


Chart 5 describes the races, lengths of time waiting to be adopted and the genders of non-random samples of the 746 children without identified homes awaiting adoption. Of these children 468 (63%) are male and 37% are female. Over half (58%) of the available children with race data are non-white. Over two-thirds (70%) have been legally available and waiting for three or more years without an identified family. This is significantly different than Chart 3, where the majority of the total number of children awaiting adoption is less than 12 months.

**Chart 5. Race, Amount of Time Waiting and Gender of Children without Identified Homes Awaiting Adoption**



<b>Total Number of Children</b>	746	746	746
<b>Number with Complete Data</b>	746	724	746
<b>% in Non-Random Sample</b>	100%	97%	100%

## **Part 3 – Continuum of Programs and Services**

Florida has made adoption a priority and needed a new initiative encouraging Floridians to adopt children in foster care. Two goals for Florida are:

- To promote a culture of life by raising positive awareness about adoption.
- To promote adoption of children in foster care in need of permanent families by expanding awareness and interest among the general population and specifically among demographic groups that meet the profile of likely adoptive parents.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) codified the right of children in foster care to achieve safe and permanent homes. Since its passage, there has been a 79 percent increase in the number of children adopted from foster care in the United States. The ASFA created mandated time limits for instituting termination of parental rights actions for children lingering in the dependency court system as well as provided financial incentives for states to increase the number of foster care adoptions. The vast majority of the post-ASFA adoptions were by relatives or foster parents. Why so few children are adopted by the general public is an important question. This question is especially true for those children in the foster care system waiting for permanent families.

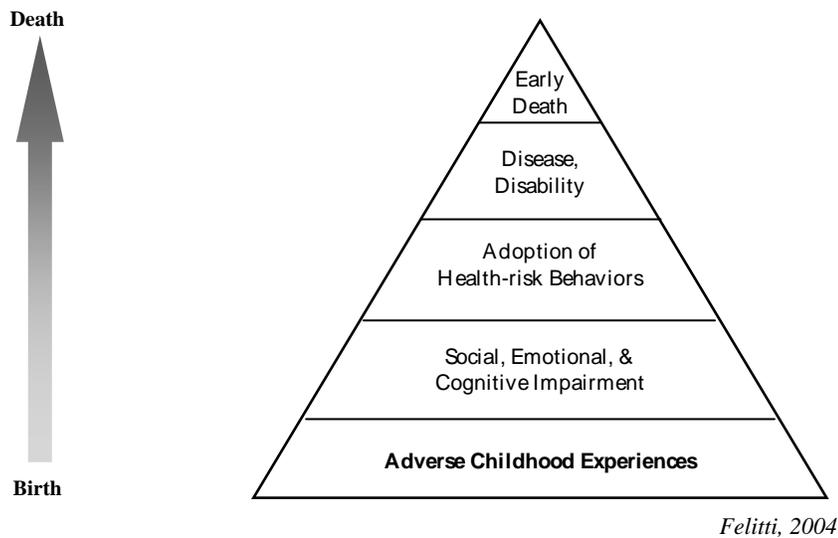
The answer lies in bringing this need to the attention of those most likely to adopt the children who are legally free for adoption within the child welfare system. Efforts to promote adoption in Florida must do more than just raise awareness. It must serve to actually locate forever families for waiting children. The state cannot achieve its desired results of permanency for children if there are no adoptive homes available. Additionally, the state must ensure that the forever families are resilient and bring to the child or children the strengths and stability to nurture, care and facilitate healing from the trauma experienced in the biological family that resulted in the need for adoption and the subsequent trauma encountered as a result of loss of stability and initial attachment. Families should be sought and located on the basis of what each adoptive child will need for stable, nurturing and sustainable healthy relationships for life.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Recent research has identified the physical and mental conditions increasingly being associated with adverse childhood experiences, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Neurologic imaging and traumatology studies have delineated the chronic physiologic and structural changes that occur after chronic stress and abuse (De Bellis, 2005; Elovathingal et al., 2006). Chronic stress and abuse are also associated with specific disease processes and poor mental health outcomes in adults. These adverse childhood experiences (ACES) have been associated with increased rates of teen pregnancy, promiscuity, depression, hallucinations, substance abuse, liver disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, coronary artery disease, and identifiable permanent changes in brain structure and stress hormone function (Anda et al., 2002; Dube et al., 2003; Felitti et al., 1998; Middlebrooks et al., 2008). The National Research Council (1993) and others studied clinical conditions associated with abuse and neglect, including depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and conduct disorders, all of which compound any direct physical injuries inflicted on individual children. Associated trauma and increased risk of low academic achievement, drug use, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminology were also noted. Strong and resilient families should be recruited to care for Florida's children who have lost their homes and encountered an array of adverse childhood experiences through losing their homes and biological families through moving through child welfare, the court system, foster care and ultimately adoption.

The diagram below represents the proposed pathways from adversity (i.e. adverse childhood experiences) to disease and death based upon the research into adverse childhood experiences.

**Diagram 1. Pathways from Adverse Childhood Experiences**



A population-based analysis of over 17,000 middle-class American adults undergoing comprehensive, bio-psychosocial medical evaluations indicated that three common categories of addiction are strongly related in a proportionate manner to several specific categories of adverse experiences during childhood. This suggests that the basic cause of addiction may be predominately experience-dependent during childhood rather than substance-dependent. Adverse childhood experiences are surprisingly common among substance abusers. Addiction may be best viewed as an understandable, unconscious, compulsive use of psychoactive materials in response to stressful, harmful childhood experiences (Felitti, 2004). Our recruited adoptive families will require much preparation and assistance in creating homes for children who may have the predisposition to addictions as a result of their childhood experiences. These families should be recruited for the strengths they will bring to provide the structure and environment to help their adopted children to heal and avoid some of the predictable negative consequences of their past experiences.

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

Research conducted by the Center for the Study of Social Policy found that there are *Protective Factors* that make a difference for families. When families experience the stressors that are highly correlated with child maltreatment, some families maltreat their children and others do not. The Center found that in the homes that do not maltreat their children, although they are experiencing the same stressors, the difference in these homes is the presence of *Protective Factors*. These *Protective Factors* reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect by providing parents with what they need in order to parent effectively, even under stress.

By building relationships with families, programs can recognize signs of stress and build families' protective factors with timely, effective help. The *Protective Factors* are:

- **Nurturing and Attachment** – A child's social and emotional development is highly dependent on the quality of a young child's primary relationships. How caregivers respond to children's emotional expression profoundly influences how they learn to process, understand, and cope with such feelings as anger, happiness, and sadness. Promoting positive behavior and responses in children could strengthen parent-child relationships.
- **Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development** – Extensive research links healthy child development to effective parenting. Children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting fosters psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve.
- **Parental Resilience** – Parents who can cope with the stresses of everyday life, as well as an occasional crisis, have resilience; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to bounce back when things are not going well. Multiple life stressors, such as a family history of abuse or neglect, health problems, marital conflict, or domestic or community violence—and financial stressors such as unemployment, poverty, and homelessness—may reduce a parent's capacity to cope effectively with the typical day-to-day stresses of raising children.
- **Social Connections** – Parents with a social network of emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors often find that it is easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need people they can call on once in a while when they need a sympathetic listener, advice, or concrete support. Research has shown that parents, who are isolated, with few social connections, are at higher risk for child abuse and neglect.
- **Concrete Supports for Parents** – Partnering with parents to identify and access resources in the community may help prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment. Providing concrete supports may also help prevent the unintended neglect that sometimes occurs when parents are unable to provide for their children.
- **Social and Emotional Competence of Children** – Children's emerging ability to interact positively with others, self regulate their behavior, and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Parents and caregivers grow more responsive to children's needs and less likely to feel stressed or frustrated as children learn to tell parents what they need and how parental actions make them feel, rather than "acting out" difficult feelings.

**Note:** While this plan addresses ways to build the *Protective Factors* in Florida families through multiple avenues, it will be incumbent on the State's natural and specialized service systems to ensure that accessible quality concrete supports are available for Florida families in times of need.

Having such resilience is a family characteristic that will be sought by our Florida systems that recruit adoptive parents. These systems include the Adoption Information Center, Department of Children and Families Circuits, Community Based Care Lead Agencies, and One Church One Child. The state will add another partner to the mix – the faith-based and community-based systems that could bring a lot of energy, supports and families to the recruitment efforts. Together the recruitment systems will explore avenues and ways to incorporate the *Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for their work in seeking parents for public adoption. Additionally, parents who are interested in public adoption will have the opportunity to learn about the *Protective Factors* and learn ways to build and sustain them in themselves and in their families.

## Recruitment of Adoptive Parents

In May of 2008, the State of Florida launched an initiative to promote public adoption; the adoption of children in foster care who are legally available for adoption. *Explore Adoption* is an initiative aimed at promoting the benefits of public adoption and urging families to consider creating or expanding their families by adopting a child who is older, has significant special needs, or is part of a sibling group. Every year, about 2,000 children become available for adoption in Florida. This is after a legal process where a court permanently severs ties to their biological parents due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. This past year, 47 percent were adopted by relatives and another 30 percent were adopted by their foster parents. The remaining children, or 23 percent, must be matched with a family previously unknown to them. Within the past eighteen months, Florida has lowered the number of children in Florida legally free for adoption who have no identified family from 850 to 750 children on any given day.

There is a sense of urgency especially for older children and teenagers. These children, who have no identified family and turn 18-years of age, will exit the foster care system (or “age-out” of the foster care system) without ever knowing the stability or love of a forever family. When promoting the adoption of older children and teens, agency practices and the attitudes of caseworkers must be addressed. In a survey conducted in the state of New York (1999) of the longest waiting children, it was found that practices and attitudes played a significant role in the failure to find permanent placements for some children. When asked “Do you think this child is ultimately adoptable?”, 41 percent responded “no” and 26 percent responded “maybe”. The survey concluded that “their skepticism appears to be translated into reduced recruitment efforts on behalf of that child” (Avery, 1999). The State of Florida must embrace the “*You’ve Got to Believe!*” philosophy generated from the Adoption Information Center. Adoption caseworkers will believe that older children and children with special needs can be adopted when they have a pool of adoptive families waiting for them.

More than half of all adoptions of children in the child welfare system are by foster parents or by relatives who know and are already caring for the child. Many foster parents who adopt were generally recruited to be foster parents, without the intention to adopt. Others become foster parents as a first step in the adoption process (i.e., “foster-to-adopt”). In both cases, the opportunity to serve as foster parents gives them opportunities to partner with the community based care providers in their initial efforts to reunify their foster children with their biological families. Because foster parenting requires a different relationship with the agency and with the child, these families entering the system as foster parents may look much different and have different motivations than do those entering the system to adopt a child without serving as a foster parent. In the adoption process, foster parents have the advantage of existing relationships with their children’s placement agency, knowledge of the child welfare system and their experience of caring for special needs children. Therefore, recruitment strategies for new adoptive parents should consider these differences and be able to provide for these parents the information and supports to build relationships, gain knowledge, and learn to care for children with special needs.

Efforts at recruiting new adoptive families can be categorized in three ways. They include:

- Generalized recruitment – using global messages such as *help a child or change a life*.
- Targeted recruitment – focusing on specific groups of children and teens needing homes.
- Child-specific recruitment – using media or materials to describe and recruit parents for an individual child.

As general campaigns may work for recruiting foster families, they are not as successful in recruiting adoptive families. Targeted efforts are more specific and tailored for the communities of interest.

They seek families for categories of young people who are highly represented in the population of those who are legally free for adoption. Both of these campaigns require an analysis of both children needing families and the families who are most likely to adopt them. “Strategic Recruitment” involves the use of marketing tools to help agencies target families who are most likely to respond to recruitment efforts. The tools study families who have adopted special needs children in the past in order to identify the characteristics and geographic areas on which to focus. This helps agencies to design and deliver recruitment messages based on consumer, behavioral, and lifestyle data. In states where strategic recruitment tools have been used, there has been success not just in increasing the number of inquiries but also in increasing the number of families certified to adopt.

There are two strategies for identifying adoptive families for special needs children – targeted recruitment and child-specific recruitment. Targeted recruitment efforts seek to locate people in communities most likely to adopt the children in care. They are based on the local circuit’s demographics and on the characteristics and needs of waiting children in the foster care system. For example, an adoption worker who has several teenagers on his/her caseload would tailor recruitment efforts to those in the communities most likely to adopt teenagers (such as high school or middle school teachers). Targeted recruitment considers the unique needs of the children and youth being served through fostering and adoption, and bases recruitment strategies and messages on their needs (such as race, age, location, culture, medical/mental health needs). Effective targeted recruitment uses demographic data to determine recruiting efforts that take into account the specific needs of children and youth in care. Examples of targeted recruitment include faith-based and community-based initiatives, incentive programs for foster and adoptive families to recruit others from their communities, and posters or flyers at places where foster and adoptive parents typically shop or visit.

Five Points Technology and the Center for the Support of Families have worked with a number of jurisdictions in and out of Florida to identify the most ideal families to provide foster care and to adopt children with special needs. Using strategic recruitment methodology, they have been able to identify recruitment needs for waiting children (targeted recruitment); identify the characteristics of the families best suited and inclined to adopt those children; and use local population analysis and cultural data to provide recruiters with maps of neighborhoods where they will find families who will provide the best match for each child or sibling group. They specialize in designing outreach and recruitment tools that target adoptive families and educate the community about the need to adopt. In April and May 2010, training on how to use this process was made available to all of the circuits as a part of the *Explore Adoption* public awareness campaign.

Child specific recruitment efforts are based on locating and matching an adoptive family to an identified waiting child. As soon as the termination of parental rights (TPR) is set as a goal by the court, there should be an individualized child-specific recruitment plan developed for this child that would best match adoptive parents’ strengths with the child’s significant special needs (e.g. medical complexities, developmental delays, siblings status or even age). Typical examples of where child specific recruitment occurs include newspaper or television features, photo-listings on adoption exchange websites, heart galleries, and “passports” or brochures featuring the child’s strengths and needs.

### **The *Explore Adoption* Public Awareness and Recruitment Campaign (Targeted Recruitment)**

The 2007 Legislature appropriated \$1 million to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor, for the purpose of initiating a statewide marketing campaign to promote the adoption of the children who are in Florida’s foster care system. After extensive research including survey and polls statewide, the *Explore Adoption* initiative was developed as a new brand

for public adoption. *Explore Adoption* aims to find permanent loving homes for Florida's children in care. It promotes the benefits of public adoption, clarifies misconceptions about public adoption, and urges families to consider creating or expanding their families by adopting a child who is older, has significant special or medical needs, or is part of a sibling group.

In order to change the face of public adoption in Florida, the communications team researched the kinds of families who are more likely to adopt, held focus groups and developed specific family portraits to help adoption specialists recruit the right kinds of families. They created a new warm and welcoming website, [www.adoptflorida.org](http://www.adoptflorida.org) that features available children; family success stories and highlights our committed partners. They also wrote and produced public service announcements in English and Spanish along with radio spots, which place the joys of family and benefits to adoptive parents front and center. Working in partnership with the Florida Association of Broadcasters they negotiated a leveraged media buy with a seven to one match. In 2009, the public service announcements won a State Gold Addy award (American Advertising Federation).

Additionally, they wrote, shot and produced an adoption TV special featuring three unique Florida families who have adopted deserving children and given them homes they always dreamed of. The TV special was broadcast twice during primetime in every market in Florida and also appears as a Video On Demand (VOD) option on cable. In December 2009, the TV special won a Suncoast Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Emmy award.

Through public education, expanded partnerships, Web-based outreach and a mass media campaign, *Explore Adoption* has helped Florida set state records on the number of adoptions of children from foster care, with nearly 17,000 children have been adopted from foster care in the last five years.

Florida is a national leader in safely reducing the number of children in foster care through diversion and reunification programs and dramatically increasing the number of foster children who are being adopted. This means that there is a smaller pool of children that are available for adoption – and these are the hardest-to-place and special needs children that Florida needs to recruit families for. In May 2010, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, within the Executive Office of the Governor re-launched the *Explore Adoption* campaign by airing all TV, radio and print PSAs and advertisements. The Office also hosted news events, refreshed educational materials, released a redesigned website with new pages for post-adopt support resources and heart gallery finder.

*Explore Adoption* marketing kits and materials are available to adoption specialists (e.g., recruiters and home finders), faith-based and community-based organizations, community liaisons, adoption advocates, or anyone who can deliver the materials and the message about public adoption. The marketing kits include printed materials utilizing information and testimonies of families who have successfully adopted special needs children. These are also available on DVD to be shown in small groups such as adoption orientations or as Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for the media. The *Explore Adoption* website ([www.adoptflorida.org](http://www.adoptflorida.org)) is linked to the Adoption Information Center for general information on the adoption process and to the State of Florida Adoption Exchange to view children legally free for adoption. The *Explore Adoption* initiative has been successfully launched throughout the State of Florida with collateral material distributed on the local level.

To keep this campaign successfully moving forward, materials will need to be reprinted and redistributed; the website will need to be maintained and provided with new and evidence-based information; the existing PSAs and programs will need to be disseminated and broadcasted; and updated public awareness videos, stories and materials will need to be created and disseminated.

## **Heart Galleries (Child Specific Recruitment)**

The heart gallery movement began in 2001 when a New Mexico Adoption Specialist, Diane Granito, decided to match children available for adoption with professional photographers. The dramatic portraits became a traveling exhibit that put a face on the invisible population of children needing permanent families. The heart gallery movement has been a huge success and there are now over 100 heart galleries operating in nearly every state in the United States.

Heart galleries work with local professional photographers to help find homes for specific children by creating compelling personal portraits that capture each child's unique personality and interests. These portraits are displayed in areas where families most likely to adopt will have a chance to view them. Attached to the portraits are brochures containing brief information on that child with contact information for inquiries. Heart gallery volunteers also work with the children in preparing them for their portraits and their biographies. In addition to the portrait exhibit, each heart gallery provides a website with general information on special needs adoption and a photo listing of children in the area who are legally free for adoption. These same portraits can be used on the State of Florida Adoption Exchange and the *Explore Adoption* website for recruitment of families.

The State of Florida leads the nation in the development of heart galleries. Currently there are 16 operating in the following areas:

1. Art of Adoption – Northwest Florida Heart Gallery
2. Heart Gallery Brevard
3. Heart Gallery Broward
4. Heart Gallery Central Orlando
5. Heart Gallery Jacksonville
6. Heart Gallery North Florida
7. Heart Gallery of Treasure Coast and Okeechobee
8. Heart Gallery Palm Beach County
9. Heart Gallery Pinellas Pasco
10. Heart Gallery Sarasota
11. Heart Gallery Southwest Florida
12. Heart Gallery Tampa Bay
13. Heart Gallery Volusia, Flagler and Putnam
14. Heartland for Children – Polk, Highlands, and Hardee Heart Gallery
15. Miami Heart Gallery
16. Mid – Florida Heart Gallery

Florida is unique in that all regions are represented by one of our 16 Heart Galleries. By banding together and speaking as one voice statewide, we can work together to generate better outcomes at the legislative and state policy level for the children that we serve. The Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor, facilitated the creation and launch of the Florida Association of Heart Galleries. The purpose of the association is to promote unity, advocacy and education with in the organization and to the Florida public at large. The Association provides a broader platform to communicate the Heart Gallery message of finding forever families and forums for Heart Galleries to exchange ideas and best practices, network and grow, share and problem solve.

## **Preparation of Children for Placement**

Preparing our children for adoption begins when adoption has been identified as a potential goal for the child. During this phase, specific services are provided to the child for whom adoption is being considered. They include assessment of needs, placement readiness, and diligent recruitment.

Before the adoption case manager begins recruitment efforts for a special needs child on his/her case load, a comprehensive assessment of the youth's history in the child welfare system must be gathered and brought into the current context. Information on the profile of the child should include: background of dependency case from agency files; previous relationships and attachment history; physical, developmental, and psychological history; educational testing and academic progress; cultural needs; and interests, talents, and hopes of the child. Efforts should be made to involve the child or youth, as developmentally appropriate, in the writing of the child study and the recruitment plan. A more therapeutic process of preparing the child for adoption includes addressing past losses in order to heal and reattach to another family. This can be accomplished in many ways such as individual counseling, participation in peer support groups, and in completing a Life Book. Trust is a major factor in successfully preparing a child for placement. It is recommended that foster children waiting for adoptive families retain one primary case manager to support them through the matching and placement process. Engaging the assistance of others who have significant ties to the child (e.g., foster parents, youth ministers, teachers, counselors, etc.) will benefit both in the preparation of the child and in the introduction of new relationships. After a thorough assessment of the child to determine his/her needs has been completed, the recruitment of an adoptive family then can begin.

## **Parent Preparation and Training**

There exists a steep attrition rate as prospective families navigate the process from the initial call through finalized adoption. The Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy (2005) identified two critical points in the inquiry process. The first is the prospective parents' initial call to an agency. This information call can be an intensely emotional experience for the prospective adoptive parent. However, agencies faced with the challenge of balancing recruitment with screening, do not handle it as well as they might. The second is the placement process. In this study, adoptive families reported great confusion about how the placement decision is made and what role they, as prospective adoptive parents, have in it. Recommendations to address these two concerns include:

- Focus early on recruitment rather than screening.
- Change the way initial calls are handled.
- Document the adoption process and qualifications for adopting.
- Separate screening from training.
- Establish a quality assurance process for soliciting and incorporating feedback from prospective families.

In order to find and retain interested and qualified families who would be willing to provide forever homes for waiting children, it is absolutely critical that child welfare agencies develop ways of listening to prospective parents throughout the adoption process and responding to their needs and concerns. This can be achieved through two easily developed resources: a customer service protocol and an adoption manual or handbook.

A customer service protocol or standard operating procedure should be in place for each agency that requires immediate response to inquiries, assisting with questions, and following up on information mailed to prospective families. A sample survey indicated that half of inquiries made to agencies did

not result in adoption and that there is only a 20 percent return of applications sent through the mail. Personal attention to prospective families will keep families engaged.

Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) comprises 10-weeks of parenting preparation and training for prospective foster and adoptive parents. It is one of the curricula used to provide information about adoption, the adoption process and parenting children of trauma that is used with parents who are interested in learning more about adoption. Because of the commitment needed for MAPP and other similar curricula, families should first attend information meetings or orientations to help them understand what would be involved and expected of them in order to qualify as well as decide whether or not to foster parent or adopt. An adoption specialist can begin the relationship with a prospective family at this point and assist them through the adoption process.

Background screenings should be commenced early in the process, either at orientation or at least well before the start of MAPP training – to identify prospective adoptive parents who are not qualified before they get too far into the process. When parents decide they want to adopt a child from the foster care system, preservice training (e.g., MAPP) is required prior to their approval to become adoptive parents. During the ten weeks of MAPP training meetings, participants in the group:

- Are prepared for foster parenting and adoption.
- Have the opportunity to select which role (foster parent or adoptive parent) would best suit them and their family.
- Determine the children with whom they could best work.
- Even “select out” if the decision is made not to continue to pursue foster parenting or adoption.

After the prospective family has been approved for adoption and a potential match has been made, the adopting family must be educated about the identified child’s special needs. Disclosure of the child’s social and medical information to the prospective adoptive family is required by law. An in-depth study should include the medical and social history of the child, the medical history of the birth family, and the child’s relationships and the significance of them. This information must be provided in writing to the prospective adoptive family.

## **Continuum of Programs and Services Necessary for a Comprehensive Approach to the Promotion of Adoption**

**Adoption awareness efforts** – Web-based, television, newspaper, magazine and radio public service announcements that provide a backdrop for general community awareness about the children in foster care who need adoptive families. The *Explore Adoption* campaign is pre-packaged and ready to be customized and used.

**Targeted recruitment efforts** – Focusing on specific groups of children and teens needing homes and identifying and targeting those communities most likely to adopt these children. Descriptions of common special needs of available children will lead to target populations that should be recruited; community and faith-based initiatives; incentive programs for foster and adoptive families to recruit others from their communities; advertisements, posters or flyers at places where foster and adoptive parents typically shop or visit; websites such as *Explore Adoption*; etc. The *Explore Adoption* campaign is pre-packaged and ready to be used.

**Child-specific recruitment efforts** – Locating and matching an identified waiting child with an approved adoptive family; media or materials describing and recruiting parents for an individual child; statewide and national adoption websites (e.g., *Explore Adoption*, Adoption Information Center, etc.); statewide and local heart galleries; radio, newspaper or television features; “passports” or brochures featuring the child’s strengths and needs; etc.

**Orientation for prospective adoptive parents** – Meetings for staff to explain the adoption process and requirements for becoming an adoptive family; follow-up literature and guides; etc.

**Assistance (navigating the system) for prospective adoptive parents** – Consistent contact with prospective families, helpdesk for prospective families, guidebooks, brochures or paperwork that explains the process and steps that must be completed to become an approved adoptive parent, etc. *Explore Adoption* website has a FAQ page that would assist with this.

**Pre-adoption training for prospective parents** – Adoptive parent training (e.g., MAPP) and family self-assessment to determine if adoption is a feasible plan for prospective adoptive family, adoption specific training after completion of the MAPP class, etc.

**Pre-adoption information for “waiting” parents** (i.e., family approved for adoption) – Referrals to local adoptive parent support groups; consultation, brochures or paperwork explaining the process and steps that must be completed once a child is identified as a possible match for approved adoptive families; adoption-specific training after receiving approval to adopt; etc.

**Placement case management for “pre-adoptive” parents** – Match staffing, placement supervision, child history disclosure, anticipated child-specific services and training needs, etc.

## Part 4 – Plans of Action for the Promotion of Adoption

Three strategies and eight objectives comprise the plans of action for the promotion of adoption.

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1: Infuse the *Protective Factors* into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents.** By June 30, 2015, Florida-based adoptive parent recruitment systems will have intentionally incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a foundation for their work.

### *Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1 Objectives:*

- 1.1 Local Recruitment Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]
- 1.2 Parent Preparation and Training.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents, instruction on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the *Protective Factors*.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2: Strengthen Florida Recruitment Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented systems and efforts to better target recruitment of families to meet the needs of children and youth awaiting public adoption.

### *Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2 Objectives:*

- 2.1 Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have provided information and resources to promote and build efforts by faith-based and community-based systems to provide family and community supports that would build the *Protective Factors* in Florida's families.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 2.2 Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted and child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of *Explore Adoption* tools and materials and the Heart Galleries.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]
- 2.3 Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented fully the state adopted Customer Service Protocol for supporting families through the adoption process and after finalization of child adoption.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.** By June 30, 2015, leadership of plan implementation will have monitored and annually assessed the progress and effectiveness of the plan-based initiatives.

*Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3 Objectives:*

- 3.1 Instrumentation and Procedures Design.** By March 30, 2011, the State of Florida will have created procedures and instrumentation for use by the plan workgroups for monitoring and annually reviewing progress.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 3.2 Progress Monitoring.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented an ongoing monitoring of plan implementation progress and used the findings to refine the action plans for future implementation.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 3.3 Annual Review and Assessment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented annual progress reviews and used the findings to refine the strategies and objectives for future implementation.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]

**Crosswalks of the *Protective Factors* and Continuum of Programs and Services**

As stated previously, presence of the *Protective Factors* in families reduces the potential for child abuse and neglect by providing parents with what they need in order to parent effectively, even under stress. This plan was intentional with creating strategies and objectives that were either low cost or no cost and could easily implement the *Protective Factors* to ensure that Florida’s children are placed in safe, stable, and nurturing homes. The chart below shows that each strategy and objective supports at least three of the *Protective Factors*, with three objectives implementing all five. The **Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation** and objectives are not included in the crosswalk because the objectives support implementation of all of the strategies and objectives in the five-year plan. One could conclude that all levels are impacted because of the support role of this objective, or one could conclude that none of the levels should be checked because it provides only a supporting role in the effort.

**Table 10. Crosswalk of Promotion of Adoption Strategies and Objectives with the *Protective Factors***

Protective Factor	Promotion of Adoption Strategies and Objectives				
	1. Infuse the <i>Protective Factors</i> into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents.		2. Strengthen Florida Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption.		
	Local Recruitment Efforts	Parent Preparation and Training	Faith-Based and Community -Based Efforts	Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment	Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents
Nurturing and Attachment	✓	✓		✓	
Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development	✓	✓		✓	✓
Parental Resilience	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Social Connections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Concrete Supports for Parents	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social and Emotional Competence of Children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

There are eight categories in the continuum of programs and services to promote adoption. This plan was intentional in ensuring that each of the categories in the continuum would be addressed by the promotion of adoption strategies and objectives. As shown below, each plan strategy and objective addresses at least three programs and services in the continuum of services for the promotion of adoption. The **Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation** and objectives are not included in the crosswalk because the objectives support implementation of all of the strategies and objectives in the five-year plan. One could conclude that all levels are impacted because of the support role of this objective, or one could conclude that none of the levels should be checked because it provides only a supporting role in the effort. Thus, this strategy is omitted from the table.

**Table 11. Crosswalk of Promotion of Adoption Strategies and Objectives with the Continuum of Programs and Services Necessary for a Comprehensive Approach to the Promotion of Adoption**

Promotion of Adoption Continuum of Programs and Services	Promotion of Adoption Strategies and Objectives				
	1. Infuse the <i>Protective Factors</i> into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents.		2. Strengthen Florida Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption.		
	Local Recruitment Efforts	Parent Preparation and Training	Faith-Based and Community -Based Efforts	Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment	Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents
Adoption awareness efforts			✓	✓	
Targeted recruitment efforts	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Child-specific recruitment efforts	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Orientation for prospective adoptive parents	✓	✓			✓
Assistance (navigating the system) for prospective adoptive parents					✓
Pre-adoption training for prospective parents					✓
Pre-adoption information for “waiting” parents					✓
Placement case management for “pre-adoptive” parents					✓

**Plans of Action for Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1:  
Infuse the *Protective Factors* into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents**

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1: Infuse the *Protective Factors* into Florida Systems that Recruit Adoptive Parents.** By June 30, 2015, Florida-based adoptive parent recruitment systems will have intentionally incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a foundation for their work.

***Promotion of Adoption Strategy 1 Objectives:***

- 1.1 Local Recruitment Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]
  
- 1.2 Parent Preparation and Training.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents instructions on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the *Protective Factors*.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.1: Local Recruitment Efforts

**1.1. Local Recruitment Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.

[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

### ***Types of Promotion of Adoption Approaches:***

- Adoption Awareness
- Targeted Recruitment
- Child-specific Recruitment
- Orientation for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Assistance for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Training for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Information for “Waiting” Parents
- Placement Case Management for “Pre-adoptive” Parents

### ***Socio-Ecological Model Level(s) Influenced by this Objective:***

- Societal Level
- Relationship Level
- Community Level
- Individual Level

### ***Protective Factors that should be Built/Supported by this Objective:***

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports for Parents
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

***Plan of Action for Local Recruitment Efforts***

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.1: Local Recruitment Efforts.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the <i>Protective Factors</i> as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/ Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
1.1.1 Conduct an analysis of Adoption Program Administrative Rule 65C-16 for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the rule regarding the recruitment of adoptive families.	1.1.1 By July 30, 2010, the analysis of Administrative Rule 65C-16 will have been completed.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	07/30/2010
1.1.2 Promulgate rule revisions based on the analysis conducted for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the rule.	1.1.2 By October 31, 2013, the rule will have been promulgated.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare  Community Based Care Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Based Care Agencies</li> <li>Department of Children and Families General Counsel</li> <li>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> </ul>	08/01/2010	10/31/2013
1.1.3 Conduct trainings for Department of Children and Families Region and Circuit staff and community partners on the promulgated rule.	1.1.3.1 By January 31, 2013, training on the promulgated rule will have been delivered at the Adoption Information Center conference.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption Information Center</li> <li>Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>Guardians ad Litem</li> <li>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	09/01/2011	01/31/2013

**Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.1: Local Recruitment Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.

Action Steps	Measures/ Benchmarks	Leads	Potential Partner Organizations	Begin Date	End Date
1.1.5 Develop and disseminate guidelines on the promulgated rule.	1.1.5.1 By January 31, 2013, 100 percent of the Department of Children and Families Regions and Circuits will have received guidelines on the rule.  1.1.5.2 By February 28, 2013, 100 percent of Community Based Care Agencies will have received guidelines on the rule.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Adoption Staff</li> <li>• Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>• Guardians ad Litem</li> <li>• Heart Galleries</li> <li>• One Church One Child</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	09/01/2011      09/01/2011	01/31/2013      02/28/2013
1.1.6 Provide technical assistance to Regions and Community Based Care Agencies related to the promulgated rule.	1.1.6 By June 28, 2013, and annually thereafter, 100 percent of the requests from staff and providers for technical assistance have been fulfilled.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Based Care Agencies</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families Regions</li> <li>• Other Stakeholders</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	02/01/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015

**Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.1: Local Recruitment Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated the *Protective Factors* as a part of the foundation for the targeted recruitment of communities and potential adoptive families to provide long term stability and best meet the needs of the children awaiting adoption.

Action Steps	Measures/ Benchmarks	Leads	Potential Partner Organizations	Begin Date	End Date
<p>1.1.7 Develop and implement strategies for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the way of work for recruiting adoptive families.</p>	<p>1.1.7.1 By June 30, 2011, strategies will have been developed, and revised annually thereafter, for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the way of work for recruiting adoptive families.</p>	<p>Protective Factors and Permanency Workgroup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• Forever Families</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>09/01/2010 07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014</p>	<p>06/30/2011 06/29/2012 06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015</p>
	<p>1.1.7.2 By December 30, 2011, a plan will have been developed for providing ongoing awareness and training on strategies and skills for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the way of work for recruiting adoptive families.</p>			<p>07/01/2011</p>	<p>12/30/2011</p>
	<p>1.1.7.3 By June 28, 2013, and annually thereafter, a plan will have been implemented for providing ongoing awareness and training on strategies and skills for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the way of work for recruiting adoptive families.</p>			<p>01/04/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014</p>	<p>06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015</p>
	<p>1.1.7.4 By September 30, 2013, and annually thereafter, training will have been delivered at one or more of the following: Department of Children and Families Dependency Summit, Florida Coalition for Children’s Annual meeting, Statewide Foster and Adoptive Parent Conference and Adoption Information Conference.</p>			<p>01/04/2012 10/01/2013 10/01/2014</p>	<p>09/30/2013 09/30/2014 06/30/2015</p>

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.2: Parent Preparation and Training

**1.2. Parent Preparation and Training.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents, instruction on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the *Protective Factors*.

[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

### ***Types of Promotion of Adoption Approaches:***

- Adoption Awareness
- Targeted Recruitment
- Child-specific Recruitment
- Orientation for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Assistance for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Training for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Information for “Waiting” Parents
- Placement Case Management for “Pre-adoptive” Parents

### ***Socio-Ecological Model Level(s) Influenced by this Objective:***

- Societal Level
- Relationship Level
- Community Level
- Individual Level

### ***Protective Factors that should be Built/Supported by this Objective:***

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports for Parents
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

**Plan of Action for Parent Preparation and Training**

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.2: Parent Preparation and Training.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents, instruction on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the <i>Protective Factors</i> .					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
1.2.1 Conduct an analysis of the Child Welfare Administrative Rule 65C-13 for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the rule regarding pre-service training for prospective adoptive families.	1.2.1 By August 31, 2013, the analysis of Administrative Rule 65C-13 will have been completed.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP), Parent's Resources for Information Development Education (P.R.I.D.E.) and other Leaders</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/30/2010	08/31/2013
1.2.2 Promulgate rule revisions based on the results from the analysis for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the rule.	1.2.2 By March 31, 2014, the rule will have been promulgated.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare  Community Based Care Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Based Care Agencies</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families General Counsel</li> <li>• Guardians ad Litem</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	09/01/2010	03/31/2014

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.2: Parent Preparation and Training.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents, instruction on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the <i>Protective Factors</i> .					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
1.2.3 Conduct trainings for adoptive parent preparation trainers and for child welfare professionals on the promulgated rule.	1.2.3.1 By May 31, 2014, training on the promulgated rule will have been delivered at the Adoption Information Center's May Adoption Conference.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare  Community Based Care Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Adoption Specialists</li> <li>• Adoption Staff</li> <li>• Community Based Care Staff</li> <li>• Trainers for Adoptive Parent Preparation Trainings (MAPP, P.R.I.D.E., etc)</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	08/01/2011	05/31/2014
1.2.4 Develop and disseminate guidelines on the promulgated rule to Department of Children and Families Regions.	1.2.4 By May 31, 2014, 100 percent of Regions will have received guidelines on the promulgated rule.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families Regions</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	03/01/2012	05/31/2014
1.2.5 Disseminate guidelines on the promulgated rule to Community Based Care Agencies and other community partners.	1.2.5 By June 27, 2014, 100 percent of Community Based Care Agencies will have received guidelines on the rule.	Department of Children and Families Region and Circuits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information System</li> <li>• Adoption Providers</li> <li>• Community Based Care Agencies</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• One Church One Child</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	06/01/2012	06/27/2014

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 1.2: Parent Preparation and Training.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have incorporated in its orientation and education programs for potential adoptive parents, instruction on the importance and ways to ensure the presence of the <i>Protective Factors</i> .					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
1.2.6 Provide technical assistance to Regions, Community Based Care Agencies and other stakeholders on the promulgated rule.	1.2.6 By June 28, 2013, and annually thereafter, 100 percent of the requests from staff and providers for technical assistance will have been fulfilled.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Providers</li> <li>• Community Based Care Agencies</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families Regions</li> <li>• One Church One Child</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015
1.2.7 Develop and implement strategies for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the orientation and education for prospective adoptive parents.	<p>1.2.7.1 By June 30, 2011, strategies will have been developed, and revised annually thereafter, for incorporating the <i>Protective Factors</i> into the orientation and education for prospective adoptive parents.</p> <p>1.2.7.2 By September 30, 2013, and annually thereafter, training will have been delivered at one or more of the following: Dependency Summit, Florida Coalition for Children’s Annual meeting, Annual Statewide Foster and Adoptive Parent Conference and Adoption Information Conference.</p>	<p>Protective Factors and Permanency Workgroup</p> <p>Community Based Care Lead Agencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• Forever Families</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	09/01/2010 07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014  01/04/2012 10/01/2013 10/01/2014	06/30/2011 06/29/2012 06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015  09/30/2013 09/30/2014 06/30/2015

**Plans of Action for Promotion of Adoption Strategy Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2:  
Strengthen Florida Recruitment Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs  
of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption.**

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2: Strengthen Florida Recruitment Systems to Better Recruit Families to Meet the Needs of Children and Youth Awaiting Adoption.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented systems and efforts to better target recruitment of families to meet the needs of children and youth awaiting public adoption.

***Promotion of Adoption Strategy 2 Objectives:***

- 2.1 Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have provided information and resources to promote and build efforts by faith-based and community-based systems to provide family and community supports that would build the *Protective Factors* in Florida's families.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 2.2 Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted and child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of *Explore Adoption* tools and materials and the Heart Galleries.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]
- 2.3 Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented fully the state adopted Customer Service Protocol for working with and responding to parents from the moment of expressing interest in adopting through the point of finalization of child adoption.  
[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.1: Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts

**2.1. Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have provided information and resources to promote and build efforts by faith-based and community-based systems to provide family and community supports that would build the *Protective Factors* in Florida's families.

[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]

### *Types of Promotion of Adoption Approaches:*

- Adoption Awareness
- Targeted Recruitment
- Child-specific Recruitment
- Orientation for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Assistance for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Training for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Information for "Waiting" Parents
- Placement Case Management for "Pre-adoptive" Parents

### *Socio-Ecological Model Level(s) Influenced by this Objective:*

- Societal Level
- Relationship Level
- Community Level
- Individual Level

### *Protective Factors that should be Built/Supported by this Objective:*

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports for Parents
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

### *Tactics:*

**2.1.1 Educational Conferences, Summits.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have held annual statewide Faith-Based and Community-Based Educational Conferences, Regional Summits, and Webinars to engage faith and community leaders.

**2.1.2 Best Practices.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have created and implemented a review team to continue to research and report on best and promising practices state and nationwide to help circuits with their initiatives.

**Please Note:** The plan of action for this objective mirrors that of the **Prevention Objective 1.6, Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.1, and Support of Adoptive Families Objective 2.3.** The implementation of this plan of action is designed to accomplish all three objectives in concert with one another.

***Plan of Action for Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts, Educational Conferences, Summits, and Webinars***

<b>Prevention Objective 2.1, Tactic 2.1.1: Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts, Educational Conferences, Summits, and Webinars.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have held annual statewide Faith-Based and Community-Based Educational Conferences, Regional Summits, and Webinars to engage faith and community leaders.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.1.1.1 Create a Faith-Based and Community-Based Education Committee to coordinate and plan statewide summits or webinars and provide support in the engagement of faith and community leaders with local congregations.	2.1.1.1 By February 28, 2012, the Faith-Based and Community-Based Summit Committee will have been created.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Welfare Providers</li> <li>• Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>• Community-Based Organizations</li> <li>• Faith-Based Organizations</li> <li>• Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council</li> <li>• Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Partners for Promise, Department of Children and Families</li> <li>• Private Organizations</li> <li>• State Agency's Faith-Based and Community-Based Liaison</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2011	02/28/2012
2.1.1.2 Partner with an existing statewide summit and provide a faith-based and community-based panel workshop.	2.1.1.2 By December 31, 2012, and annually thereafter, the Faith Based Educational Summit will have been held.	Faith-Based and Community-Based Summit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• State Agency's Faith-Based and Community-Based Liaison</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	01/01/2012 01/01/2013 07/01/2014	12/31/2012 12/31/2013 12/31/2014

<b>Prevention Objective 2.1, Tactic 2.1.1: Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts, Educational Conferences, Summits, and Webinars.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have held annual statewide Faith-Based and Community-Based Educational Conferences, Regional Summits, and Webinars to engage faith and community leaders.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.1.1.3 Partner with state agencies to create regional faith-based and community-based summits.	2.1.1.3 By December 31, 2013, and annually thereafter, regional summits will have been held.	Faith-Based and Community-Based Summit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council</li> <li>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>State Agency's Faith-Based and Community-Based Liaison</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	01/01/2013 01/01/2014	12/31/2013 12/31/2014

*Plan of Action for Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts, Best Practices*

<b>Prevention Objective 2.1, Tactic 2.1.2: Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts, Best Practices.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have created and implemented a review team to continue to research and report on best and promising practices state and nationwide to help circuits with their initiatives.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.1.2.1 Create a Best Practices Review Team.	2.1.2.1 By July 31, 2014, the Best Practices Review Team will have been created.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Welfare Providers</li> <li>Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>Community-Based Organizations</li> <li>Faith-Based Organizations</li> <li>Heart Galleries</li> <li>Private Organizations</li> <li>State Agency's Faith-Based and Community-Based Liaison</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	01/01/2013	07/31/2014
2.1.2.2 Design a research and distribution methodology.	2.1.2.2 By December 31, 2014, the methodology will have been designed.	Best Practices Review Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>State Agency's Faith-Based and Community-Based Liaison</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/31/2014	12/31/2014

<b>Prevention Objective 2.1, Tactic 2.1.2: Faith-Based and Community-Based Efforts, Best Practices.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have created and implemented a review team to continue to research and report on best and promising practices state and nationwide to help circuits with their initiatives.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.1.2.3 Conduct the research and develop the report and update annually.	2.1.2.3 By June 30, 2015, findings will have been posted on the website and communicated to distribution list that includes the Adoption Information Center, faith and community partners, local circuit teams, and liaisons from state agencies, etc.	Best Practices Review Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• State Agency's Faith-Based and Community-Based Liaison</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2014	06/30/2015
2.1.2.4 Implement the distribution methodology of the report.	2.1.2.4 By June 30, 2015, reports will have been distributed statewide to help circuits, with the areas in most need being targeted.	Best Practices Review Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Best Practices Review Team</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• State Agency's Faith-Based and Community-Based Liaison</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2014	06/30/2015

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.2: Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment

**2.2. Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted and child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of *Explore Adoption* tools and materials and the Heart Galleries.

[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

### *Types of Promotion of Adoption Approaches:*

- Adoption Awareness
- Targeted Recruitment
- Child-specific Recruitment
- Orientation for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Assistance for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Training for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Information for “Waiting” Parents
- Placement Case Management for “Pre-adoptive” Parents

### *Socio-Ecological Model Level(s) Influenced by this Objective:*

- Societal Level
- Relationship Level
- Community Level
- Individual Level

### *Protective Factors that should be Built/Supported by this Objective:*

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports for Parents
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

### *Tactics:*

**2.2.1 *Explore Adoption.*** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted recruitment strategies through the use and support of *Explore Adoption* tools and materials.

**2.2.2 *Heart Galleries.*** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of the Heart Galleries.

**Plan of Action for Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment, Explore Adoption**

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.2, Tactic 2.2.1: Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment, Explore Adoption.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted recruitment strategies through the use and support of <i>Explore Adoption</i> tools and materials.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.2.1.1 Update <i>Explore Adoption</i> tools, materials, and website as needed.	2.2.1.1 By June 30, 2011, and annually thereafter <i>Explore Adoption</i> tools, materials, and website will be updated.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>Forever Families</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010 07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	06/30/2011 06/29/2012 06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015
2.2.1.2 Distribute updated <i>Explore Adoption</i> tools and materials statewide to all circuits through the Regional Offices.	2.2.1.2 By July 30, 2011, and annually thereafter, 100 percent of the Circuits will have received updated materials.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption Information Center</li> <li>Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>Regional Public Information Officers</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	07/30/2011 07/30/2012 07/30/2013 07/30/2014
2.2.1.3 Distribute updated <i>Explore Adoption</i> tools and materials to all Community Based Care Lead Agencies, adoption providers and other stakeholders.	2.2.1.3 By August 31, 2011, and annually thereafter, 100 percent of Community Based Care Lead Agencies will have received updated materials.	Department of Children and Families Regions and Circuits  Community Based Care Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption Information Center</li> <li>Adoption Providers</li> <li>Community Based Care Agencies</li> <li>Heart Galleries</li> <li>One Church One Child</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	08/01/2011 08/01/2012 08/01/2013 08/01/2014	08/31/2011 08/31/2012 08/30/2013 08/29/2014
2.2.1.4 Develop and revise annually one page tip sheet on how providers can use the <i>Explore Adoption</i> materials to enhance their targeted recruitment efforts.	2.2.1.4 By September 30, 2011, and annually thereafter, the one page tip sheet on how to use the <i>Explore Adoption</i> materials will have been developed or revised.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption Information Center</li> <li>Department of Children and Families, Communication Office</li> <li>Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	08/31/2011 08/31/2012 08/30/2013 08/29/2014	09/30/2011 09/28/2012 09/30/2013 09/30/2014

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.2, Tactic 2.2.1: Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment, <i>Explore Adoption</i>.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased targeted recruitment strategies through the use and support of <i>Explore Adoption</i> tools and materials.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.2.1.5 Disseminate <i>Explore Adoption</i> one page tip sheet to Adoption Specialists, Home Finders, and adoption recruiters.	2.2.1.5 By October 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, the one page tip sheet will have been distributed to 100 percent of the Home Finders, Adoption Specialists, and adoption recruiters/trainers.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Adoption Supervisors</li> <li>• Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>• Home Finders</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	09/30/2011 09/28/2012 09/30/2013 09/30/2014	10/01/2011 10/01/2012 10/01/2013 10/01/2014
2.2.1.6 Provide technical assistance and training to Home Finders staff members on using the <i>Explore Adoption</i> materials.	2.2.1.6 By October 30, 2011, and annually thereafter, technical assistance and training will have been delivered during at least one of the monthly Home Finders conference calls.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• Home Finders</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	10/01/2011 10/01/2012 10/01/2013 10/01/2014	10/30/2011 10/30/2012 10/30/2014 10/30/2014
2.2.1.7 Create a statewide kick-off event November 1 to celebrate National Adoption Month and to recognize the children still waiting for forever families.	2.2.1.7 By November 1, 2010, and annually thereafter, a kick-off event will have occurred in Florida	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Adoption Supervisors</li> <li>• Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010 07/01/2011 07/01/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	11/01/2010 11/01/2011 11/01/2012 11/01/2013 11/01/2014
2.2.1.8 Utilize social media to promote <i>Explore Adoption</i> .	2.2.1.8 By June 30, 2011, <i>Explore Adoption</i> will have a Twitter account used consistently.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Children and Families</li> </ul>	04/28/2011	06/30/2015

**Plan of Action for Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment, Heart Galleries**

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.2, Tactic 2.2.2: Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment, Heart Galleries.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of the Heart Galleries.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.2.2.1 Feature information about the Florida Association of Heart Galleries in the media: (e.g., on the <i>Explore Adoption</i> website, at the Department of Children and Families Dependency Summit, etc.).	2.2.2.1 By July 30, 2010, and annually thereafter, the Florida Association of Heart Galleries information will have been posted or updated on the <i>Explore Adoption</i> website and other venues as appropriate.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor  Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florida Association of Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Forever Families</li> <li>• Partners for Promise</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010 07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	07/30/2010 07/30/2011 07/30/2012 07/30/2013 07/30/2014
2.2.2.2 Disseminate referrals to the Florida Association of Heart Galleries for exhibit opportunities.	2.2.2.2 By June 30, 2011, and annually thereafter, 100 percent of referrals will have been disseminated to the Florida Association of Heart Galleries.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor  Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families Circuit Offices</li> <li>• Florida Association of Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Partners for Promise</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010 07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	06/30/2011 06/29/2012 06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015
2.2.2.3 Provide technical assistance and coordination support to the Florida Association of Heart Galleries.	2.2.2.3 By June 30, 2011, and annually thereafter, 100 percent of the requests for technical assistance and coordination support will have been fulfilled.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor  Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florida Association of Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010 07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014	06/30/2011 06/29/2012 06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015

**Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.2, Tactic 2.2.2: Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment, Heart Galleries.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of the Heart Galleries.

Action Steps	Measures/Benchmarks	Leads	Potential Partner Organizations	Begin Date	End Date
<p>2.2.2.4 Conduct meetings for representatives from local Heart Galleries to identify challenges, communication and supports.</p>	<p>2.2.2.4 By June 30, 2012, and annually thereafter, meetings will have occurred to assist and support local Heart Galleries.</p>	<p>Florida Association of Heart Galleries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• Forever Families</li> <li>• Local Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Partners for Promise</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014</p>	<p>06/30/2012 06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015</p>
<p>2.2.2.5 Identify locations for the Florida Association of Heart Galleries to have the exhibit displayed.</p>	<p>2.2.2.5 By June 30, 2012, and annually thereafter, the Florida Association of Heart Galleries will have the statewide exhibit scheduled for the year.</p>	<p>Florida Association of Heart Galleries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• Forever Families</li> <li>• Local Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Partners for Promise</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>07/01/2011 07/02/2012 07/01/2013 07/01/2014</p>	<p>06/30/2012 06/28/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015</p>

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.2, Tactic 2.2.2: Targeted and Child Specific Recruitment, Heart Galleries.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have increased child specific recruitment strategies through the use and support of the Heart Galleries.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
2.2.2.6 The Florida Association of Heart Galleries will have an operational website.	2.2.2.6 By July 31, 2012, the Florida Association of Heart Galleries will have an operational and up to date website	Florida Association of Heart Galleries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• Forever Families</li> <li>• Local Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Partners for Promise</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/1/2011	07/31/12
2.2.2.7 The Florida Association of Heart Galleries will raise the awareness of the group through participating in statewide events (ex. Department of Children and Families annual summit, Explore Adoption events, and the Adoption Information Center Events).	2.2.2.7 By June 30, 2012, and annually thereafter, the Florida Association will have participated in at least one statewide event.	Florida Association of Heart Galleries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption Information Center</li> <li>• Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare</li> <li>• Forever Families</li> <li>• Local Heart Galleries</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Partners for Promise</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/1/2012 07/1/2013 07/1/2014 07/1/2015	06/30/2012 06/30/2013 06/30/2014 06/30/2015

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.3: Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents

**2.3. Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented fully the state adopted Customer Service Protocol for working with and responding to parents from the moment of expressing interest in adopting through the point of finalization of child adoption.

[Leads: Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care Lead Agencies]

### *Types of Promotion of Adoption Approaches:*

- Adoption Awareness
- Targeted Recruitment
- Child-specific Recruitment
- Orientation for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Assistance for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Training for Prospective Adoptive Parents
- Pre-adoption Information for “Waiting” Parents
- Placement Case Management for “Pre-adoptive” Parents

### *Socio-Ecological Model Level(s) Influenced by this Objective:*

- Societal Level
- Relationship Level
- Community Level
- Individual Level

### *Protective Factors that should be Built/Supported by this Objective:*

- Nurturing and Attachment
- Knowledge of Parenting and of Child and Youth Development
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports for Parents
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

**Please Note:** The plan of action for this objective mirrors that of the **Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.3** and **Support of Adoptive Families Objective 1.1**. The implementation of this plan of action is designed to accomplish both objectives in concert with one another.

***Plan of Action for Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents***

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 2.3: Information and Support for Prospective Adoptive Parents. By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented fully the state adopted Customer Service Protocol for working with and responding to parents from the moment of expressing interest in adopting through the point of finalization of child adoption.</b>						
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/Benchmarks</b>	<b>Leads</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	
2.3.1 Incorporate the state adopted Customer Service Protocol into the contracts with Community Based Care Lead Agencies.	2.3.1.1 By July 31, 2010, the Department of Children and Families will have negotiated use of the Customer Service Protocol in contracts with 100 percent of Community Based Care Lead Agencies.	Department of Children and Families  Community Based Care Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Children and Families, Regional Administrators</li> <li>Department of Children and Families, State Office Staff, as Appropriate</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	07/31/2010	
	2.3.1.2 By June 29, 2012, and annually thereafter, 100 percent of Community Based Care Lead Agencies will have incorporated the entire state adopted Customer Service Protocol into their contracts.				04/02/2012	06/29/2012
					04/01/2013	06/28/2013
					04/01/2014	06/30/2014
					04/01/2015	06/30/2015
2.3.2 Provide two workshops on the Customer Service Protocol; and evaluation methodology as part of regional training.	2.3.2.1 By July 30, 2010, the first workshop in Regional Training will have been completed.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare, Adoption Contract Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption Specialists</li> <li>Community Based Care Lead Agencies</li> <li>Post Adoption Services Counselors</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	07/30/2010	
	2.3.2.2 By August 31, 2010, the second workshop will have been conducted at the 2010 Dependency Summit.				08/02/2010	08/31/2010
2.3.3 Conduct customer service evaluation after adoptive parent preparation training (e.g., MAPP, P.R.I.D.E.) and orientation classes (every six months).	2.3.3 By June 30, 2011, and every six months thereafter, the community based care providers will have completed self assessments.	Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare  Community Based Care Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Based Care Agencies</li> <li>Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	01/10/2011	06/30/2011	
				07/01/2011	12/21/2011	
				01/04/2012	06/29/2012	
				07/02/2012	12/21/2012	
				01/03/2013	06/28/2013	
				07/01/2013	12/21/2013	
				01/06/2014	06/30/2014	
				07/01/2014	12/21/2014	
				01/05/2015	06/30/2015	

**Plans of Action for Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3:  
Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.**

**Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3: Monitor and Evaluate Plan Implementation.** By June 30, 2015, leadership of plan implementation will have monitored and annually assessed the progress and effectiveness of the plan-based initiatives.

***Promotion of Adoption Strategy 3 Objectives:***

- 3.1 Instrumentation and Procedures Design.** By March 30, 2011, the State of Florida will have created procedures and instrumentation for use by the plan workgroups for monitoring and annually reviewing progress.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 3.2 Progress Monitoring.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented an ongoing monitoring of plan implementation progress and used the findings to refine the action plans for future implementation.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]
- 3.3 Annual Review and Assessment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented annual progress reviews and used the findings to refine the strategies and objectives for future implementation.  
[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.1: Instrumentation and Procedures Design

**3.1. Instrumentation and Procedures Design.** By March 30, 2011, the State of Florida will have created procedures and instrumentation for use by the plan workgroups for monitoring and annually reviewing progress.

[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]

*Because this is an objective that supports implementation of all of the strategies and objectives in the five-year plan, the standard format for identifying the areas of the continuum, the levels of the socio-ecological model and the protective factors addressed is not included. One could conclude that all levels are impacted because of the support role of this objective, or one could conclude that none of the levels should be checked because it provides only a supporting role in the effort.*

It is elected that the efforts taken to accomplish each plan objective will be monitored and assessed annually in order to address both implementation and effectiveness. This will entail two levels of oversight and study. One is the **monitoring** of the ongoing progress of the implementation of the plan. It is important that all of the planning and implementing partners be actively involved on a regular basis to discuss their efforts and determine how, collectively, they are taking action as a continuous process. This will provide opportunities to determine and celebrate the producing of measurable improvement in the well-being of Florida's communities and in the performance of the actions contributing to these results. The second is the **annual review of progress** with a focus on the summary accomplishments of the process as well as what results or changes have been noted as a result of the work each year. See Appendix G for an example of an annual review.

During the first year of plan implementation, the lead partners for each objective (CAPP Plan Leaders) will be involved in designing the final monitoring tool to be used. Skilled evaluators in private practice and affiliated with Florida universities will be tapped to provide assistance with this effort. Instrumentation and procedures will be developed that will lend themselves to serving as a management tool for the leadership and partners for each of the plan objectives. Below is the plan of action for the development of the monitoring and evaluation instrumentation and procedures.

### *Plan of Action for Instrumentation and Procedures Design*

<b>Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.1: Instrumentation and Procedures Design.</b> By March 30, 2011, the State of Florida will have created procedures and instrumentation for use by the plan workgroups for monitoring and annually reviewing progress.					
Action Steps	Measures/ Benchmarks	Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Begin Date	End Date
3.1.1 Form an Evaluation Design Team.	3.1.1 By August 31, 2010, the Evaluation Design Team will have been created.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Professional Evaluators</li> <li>• Universities/Colleges</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	08/31/2010

**Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.1: Instrumentation and Procedures Design.** By March 30, 2011, the State of Florida will have created procedures and instrumentation for use by the plan workgroups for monitoring and annually reviewing progress.

Action Steps	Measures/ Benchmarks	Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Begin Date	End Date
<p>3.1.2 Develop the procedures for instrumentation for the ongoing monitoring system.</p> <p>3.1.3 Develop the instrumentation for the ongoing monitoring system.</p> <p>3.1.4 Test the instruments and procedures.</p> <p>3.1.5 Revise and finalize instruments and procedures as appropriate.</p> <p>3.1.6 Distribute the instruments and procedures to the CAPP Plan Leaders.</p>	<p>3.1.2 – 3.1.6 By December 31, 2010, the procedures and instrumentation for monitoring progress will have been completed and distributed to the CAPP Plan Leaders.</p>	<p>Evaluation Design Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Professional Evaluators</li> <li>• Universities/Colleges</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>09/01/2010</p>	<p>12/31/2010</p>
<p>3.1.7 Develop the procedures for instrumentation for the annual review.</p> <p>3.1.8 Develop the instrumentation for the annual review.</p> <p>3.1.9 Test the instruments and procedures.</p> <p>3.1.10 Revise and finalize instruments and procedures as appropriate.</p> <p>3.1.11 Distribute the instruments and procedures to the CAPP Plan Leaders.</p>	<p>3.1.7 – 3.1.11 By March 30, 2011, the procedures and instrumentation for annual reviews will have been completed and distributed to the CAPP Plan Leaders.</p>	<p>Evaluation Design Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</li> <li>• Professional Evaluators</li> <li>• Universities/Colleges</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>09/01/2010</p>	<p>03/30/2011</p>

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.2: Progress Monitoring

**3.2. Progress Monitoring.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented an ongoing monitoring of plan implementation progress and used the findings to refine the action plans for future implementation.

[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]

*Because this is an objective that supports implementation of all of the strategies and objectives in the five-year plan, the standard format for identifying the areas of the continuum, the levels of the socio-ecological model and the protective factors addressed is not included. One could conclude that all levels are impacted because of the support role of this objective, or one could conclude that none of the levels should be checked because it provides only a supporting role in the effort.*

While the monitoring and evaluation instrumentation and procedures are being developed, a statewide learning community will be formed. The participants will serve as the key informants throughout the plan implementation period. Leadership and other partners for each plan objective will be invited to serve as active members of the statewide promotion of adoption learning community. There will be at least one representative from each plan objective. They will serve as the leads for conducting performance reviews at the objective level and for informing and advising the learning community at the state level. At this time we will call them CAPP Plan Leaders. However, these leaders could appoint designees to stand in their stead.

### Objective Level

A lead will be identified for each of the five (5) objectives for the first two (2) promotion of adoption plan strategies. Each CAPP Plan Leader will assume the responsibility for convening the workgroup partners for the initiative on a regularly scheduled basis. The purpose of these meetings (either in person or via conference call) will be to prepare a performance report that covers such areas as:

- The customers or recipients reached or served by the initiative during the period.
- How well have we implemented the action plan? What has worked well? What has not? What should we do about it? [This is not a blow by blow of everything the workgroup has done, but a more strategic look at whether or not what needed to happen did happen; why or why not.]
- How successful have we been in engaging our partners? Is anyone missing and if so, what should we do about it?
- What do we need to do in this next period to continue our stellar performance or make it even better? What will we do and who will do it?

The final reporting areas will be addressed and defined by the work on **Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.1**. These reports will be used to plan mid-course adjustments in order to maintain stellar implementation or improve performance as appropriate. They will also be used as the basis for the conversation with the statewide learning community.

### State Level

This learning community will be involved in regularly scheduled conference calls. These will be held at least quarterly and more often if the community decides to do so. During the calls, participants will be asked to:

- Report on the status of implementation for each objective.
- Share successes.
- Share barriers to implementation and solutions generated if applicable.
- Brainstorm new or possible solutions.

The final discussion areas will be addressed and defined by the work on **Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.1** Instrumentation and Procedures Design. These state level reports will be used to assist with planning for mid-course adjustments in order to maintain stellar implementation or improve performance as appropriate.

Additionally, spokespersons for the learning community will be identified. Reports will be prepared based upon the state level meetings. These reports will be presented and discussed with the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council as a standing agenda item at the Advisory Council meetings during the five-year period.

***Plan of Action for Progress Monitoring***

<b>Prevention Objective 3.2: Progress Monitoring:</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented an ongoing monitoring of plan implementation progress and used the findings to refine the action plans for future implementation.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/ Benchmarks</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
3.2.1 Identify leads or key informants for each objective.	3.2.1 – 3.2.2 By December 30, 2012, the statewide learning community will have been appointed.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Professional Evaluators</li> <li>• Universities/Colleges</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	12/30/2012
3.2.2 Form the statewide learning community.					
3.2.3 Leads will regularly submit monitoring reports to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection.	3.2.3.1 By October 31, 2010, quarterly thereafter, the leads for each objective will have submitted monitoring reports.	CAPP Plan Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide Learning Community</li> <li>• Workgroup Partners</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	10/31/2010
	3.2.3.2 By January 30, 2012, and biannually thereafter, the leads for each objective will have submitted monitoring reports.			10/01/2010 01/31/2011 01/01/2011 03/31/2011 03/01/2011 07/30/2011  07/01/2011 01/30/2012 01/01/2012 07/30/2012 07/01/2012 01/30/2013 01/01/2013 07/30/2013 07/01/2013 01/30/2014 01/01/2014 07/30/2014 07/01/2014 01/30/2015 01/01/2015 06/30/2015	
3.2.4 Conduct meetings of the statewide learning community.	3.2.4 By June 30, 2015 the learning community will have held meetings and informed future plan implementation.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	06/30/2015
3.2.5 Give status update presentations at the meetings of the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council.	3.2.5 At the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council meetings, a status update will have been discussed.	CAPP Plan Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide Learning Community</li> <li>• Workgroup Partners</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	06/30/2015

## Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.3: Annual Review and Assessment

**3.3. Annual Review and Assessment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented annual progress reviews and used the findings to refine the strategies and objectives for future implementation.

[Lead: Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor]

*Because this is an objective that supports implementation of all of the strategies and objectives in the five-year plan, the standard format for identifying the areas of the continuum, the levels of the socio-ecological model and the protective factors addressed is not included. One could conclude that all levels are impacted because of the support role of this objective, or one could conclude that none of the levels should be checked because it provides only a supporting role in the effort.*

The annual reporting procedures will be developed as a result of implementation of **Promotion of Adoption Objective 3.1** Instrumentation and Procedures Design. Once this is completed, it will be shared with each of the CAPP Plan Leaders during a statewide learning community meeting. At least annually, the instrument will be completed for each objective by the CAPP Plan Leader and discussed at the statewide learning community meeting. The individual reports and the results of the discussion will be codified into an annual report that will be delivered to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor and to the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. This information will also be provided to a workgroup that will conduct a “turn the curve” exercise to monitor and discuss population level changes and future direction. The product of these exercises will be made available to the Children and Youth Cabinet of Florida.

### *Plan of Action for Annual Review and Assessment*

<b>Prevention Objective 3.3: Annual Review and Assessment.</b> By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented annual progress reviews and used the findings to refine the strategies and objectives for future implementation.					
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Measures/ Benchmarks</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Potential Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Begin Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
3.3.1 Conduct a turn the curve population accountability session.	3.3.1 – 3.3.3 By June 30, 2015, the turn the curve workgroup will have provided an annual report to the Children and Youth Cabinet of Florida.	Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Turn the Curve Workgroup</li> <li>• Statewide Learning Community</li> <li>• Workgroup Partners</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	07/01/2010	06/30/2015
3.3.2 Prepare an annual turn the curve report.					
3.3.3 Provide the annual report to the Children and Youth Cabinet of Florida.					

**Prevention Objective 3.3: Annual Review and Assessment.** By June 30, 2015, the State of Florida will have implemented annual progress reviews and used the findings to refine the strategies and objectives for future implementation.

Action Steps	Measures/ Benchmarks	Lead	Potential Partner Organizations	Begin Date	End Date
<p>3.3.4 Draft the annual report.</p> <p>3.3.5 Deliver the annual report to the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor and Legislature.</p> <p>3.3.6 Deliver the annual report to the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council.</p>	<p>3.3.4 – 3.3.6 By December 30, 2011, and annually thereafter, the annual report of progress will have been published in the Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor Annual Report to the Executive Office of the Governor and Legislature.</p>	<p>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Statewide Learning Community</li> <li>• Workgroup Partners</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>10/01/2011 12/30/2011</p> <p>10/01/2012 12/31/2012</p> <p>10/01/2013 12/31/2013</p> <p>10/03/2014 12/31/2014</p>	
<p>3.3.7 Update the state plan.</p>	<p>3.3.7 By June 30, 2012, and annually thereafter, the annual report of progress will have been submitted to update the state plan.</p>	<p>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Statewide Learning Community</li> <li>• Workgroup Partners</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>01/03/2012 06/30/2012</p> <p>01/03/2013 06/30/2013</p> <p>01/06/2014 06/30/2014</p> <p>01/05/2015 06/30/2015</p>	
<p>3.3.8 Review the monitoring reports.</p> <p>3.3.9 Review the annual reports.</p> <p>3.3.10 Prepare the biennial update to the state plan.</p>	<p>3.3.8 – 3.3.10 By June 30, 2012, and biennially thereafter, the state plan will have been revised as appropriate based on changing needs and program evaluation results.</p>	<p>Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Executive Office of the Governor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAPP Plan Leaders</li> <li>• Statewide Learning Community</li> <li>• Workgroup Partners</li> <li>• Other Partners as Appropriate</li> </ul>	<p>01/03/2012 06/30/2012</p> <p>01/03/2013 06/30/2013</p> <p>01/06/2014 06/30/2014</p> <p>01/05/2015 06/30/2015</p>	

## Part 5 – Overview of the Circuit Plans for the Promotion of Adoption

The following summaries and tables are based on the Promotion of Adoption Plans: July 2010 – June 2015 developed by the local planning teams. The composition of the planning teams was designed to mirror and hopefully exceed that of the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council. The Department of Children and Families Circuit Administrators were tapped as the lead of the planning efforts in each circuit. This section provides summaries of the plans’:

- Local priority needs
- Planned objectives and strategies
- Barriers to plan implementation
- Recommendations for changes in policy and legislation.

### Local Plan Priority Needs by Circuit and County

**Table 12. Local Plan Priority Needs by Circuit and County**

Local Plan Priorities					
Circuit	County	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
1	Escambia Santa Rosa Okaloosa Walton	Increase the number of adoptions for special need children who do not have an identified adoptive placement at the time of termination of parental rights.	Reduce the wait time for children in matched placements to be adopted.		
2	Leon Gadsden Wakulla Jefferson Franklin Liberty	Reduce the wait time for all children over the age of 12 to be adopted.	Address the lack of training and educational opportunities available related to adopting children with behavioral, mental health, developmental, and medically complex issues.	Reduce the wait time for sibling groups to be adopted.	
3	Columbia Dixie Lafayette Hamilton Madison Suwannee Taylor	Identify foster parent/adoptive families to meet emerging needs of population of children awaiting adoption: teens, African-American children, sibling groups and those “acting out with others.”	Specific children need targeted recruitment for adoptive placements.	Children awaiting permanent placements need placement stability.	
4	Duval Nassau	Revise Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) training to realistically educate prospective parents about the challenges and rewards of adoption.	Engage community in enhancing targeted recruitment efforts.	Marketing campaign to increase community awareness.	
4	Clay	Enhance targeted recruitment efforts to include partnership with established entities to decrease the time until permanency for teens with behavior/mental issues and children with special needs.	Increase adoption-specific educational resources for prospective and adoptive parents.	Create and obtain funding for Home Finder position.	
5	Citrus Hernando Lake Marion Sumter	Reduce the disproportionate percent of teens waiting for adoption after being legally free for adoption.	Increase the number of families who prefer to adopt older children.		

Local Plan Priorities					
Circuit	County	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
6	Pasco Pinellas	Reduce the wait time for children to be adopted.	Reduce the wait time for children with DSM IV Mental Health Issues to be adopted.		
7	Flagler Putnam St. Johns		Increase the number of adoptions that are well matched between teens available for adoption and prospective adoptive families for Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, and St. John's Counties.	Increase enhanced specific training for prospective adoptive parents of youth and siblings for Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, and St. John's Counties.	
7	Volusia	Reduce the number of teens with an APPLA goal at Community Partnership for Children in Volusia County.	Increase the number of adoptions that are well matched between teens available for adoption and prospective adoptive families for Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, and St. John's Counties.	Increase enhanced specific training for prospective adoptive parents of youth and siblings for Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, and St. John's Counties.	
8	Alachua Baker Bradford Gilchrist Levy Union	Identify foster parent/adoptive families to meet emerging needs of population of children awaiting adoption: teens, African-American children, sibling groups and those "acting out with others."	Specific children need targeted recruitment for adoptive placements.	Children awaiting permanent placements need placement stability.	
9	Orange Osceola	Of children legally free for adoption on July 1st, percent adopted by June 30 <sup>th</sup> in Orange county increase by 10% the first year and 5% each year through 2015 after; for Osceola county increase by 5% for each year through the 4 <sup>th</sup> year then maintain.	Decrease the use of APPLA goals by 20% and increase adoption goals by 10% in both counties.		
10	Hardee Highlands Polk	To increase the number of prospective adoptive families.	Reduce the wait time for children and/or sibling groups to get adopted. Reduce the rate of children in their teens that have been waiting for identified adoptive families for more than 12 months.		
11	Miami-Dade	Revised MAPP training. Realistically educate prospective parents about challenges and rewards of adoption.	Post Adoption Services designed to help families cope with the lifelong impact of adoption on children and families. Adoption competent professional to provide referrals and assistance to adoptive parents to access mental and behavioral health professional to provide crisis management, support groups, individual and family counseling services, and limited respite services to prevent adoption disruptions is needed.	Assistance for prospective adoptive parents is needed to help approved parents who are awaiting children maintain interest in adoption while they await the identification of a child and to assist matching approved parents with awaiting children.	

Local Plan Priorities					
Circuit	County	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
12	Manatee	Increase intact sibling group adoptions with a specific focus on children ages 0 to 6 years of age.	Reduce the number of youth who are legally free for adoption and have been waiting more than 24 months for adoption.	Increase timeliness of adoption finalizations in an effort to increase the number of children adopted within 12 months of termination of parental rights and reduce the number of children waiting for adoption more than 12 months after the date of termination of parental rights.	
12	Sarasota	Increase timeliness of adoption finalizations in an effort to increase the number of children adopted within 12 months of termination of parental rights and reduce the number of children waiting for adoption more than 12 months after the date of termination of parental rights.	Increase intact sibling group adoptions with a specific focus on children ages 0 to 6 years of age.	Reduce the number of youth who are legally free for adoption and have been waiting more than 24 months for adoption.	
12	DeSoto	Increase timeliness of adoption finalizations in an effort to increase the number of children adopted within 12 months of termination of parental rights and reduce the number of children waiting for adoption more than 12 months after the date of termination of parental rights.	Reduce the number of youth who are legally free for adoption and have been waiting more than 24 months for adoption.	Increase intact sibling group adoptions with a specific focus on children ages 0 to 6 years of age.	
13	Hillsborough	Significantly decrease the length of stay for children in out of home care and to identify strategies for accelerating permanency.	Provide a continuum of information, training and resources from M.A.P.P. to Match, and to provide pre-adoptive families, including adopted children, with a full "tool box" (array of services, education and support) prior to adoption finalization.	Expand the Circuit's options for placement therefore reducing the wait time for permanency.	
14	Bay Calhoun Gulf Holmes Jackson Washington	Reduce the wait time for children to achieve permanency whose goal is adoption.			
15	Palm Beach	Child-Specific Recruitment for longest waiting youth.	Increase the number of adoptions for youth over 13.	Increase the number of adoptions for youth with mental health needs.	Increase the number of adoptions for youth with developmental disabilities.

Local Plan Priorities					
Circuit	County	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
16	Monroe	Need to increase number of quality families willing to provide permanent homes for children in the dependency system.	Need to better support and prepare prospective adoptive parents for the challenges of adoption as well as for child-specific placement needs so as to prevent unnecessary disruption.	Need to involve community in promoting adoption awareness and supporting the process of adoption.	
17	Broward	Reduce the wait time for children over the age of 8 to be adopted.	Reduce the wait time for sibling groups who need to be adopted together.	Reduce the wait time for African American children to be adopted.	
18	Brevard Seminole	Increase the number of families that are willing and able to adopt the type of children that are currently in care. (ie Medically complex children in Brevard, African American's in Seminole, Older children in Circuit 18).	Increase awareness of children available for adoption through outreach to the Faith Based Community.	For families to be fully educated and aware of the adoption process and the particular needs of dependent children.	
19	Indian River Martin St. Lucie Okeechobee	Targeted recruitment for available children in care greater than 24 months.	Reduced time frames from child's placement in out of home care to reunification or Termination of Parental Rights decision and to availability of child for recruitment efforts.	Expanded support process for prospective families with the adoptions program and support systems (This priority to be addressed through the Circuit's adoption support plan).	
20	Charlotte	Significantly decrease the length of stay for children in out of home care and to identify strategies for accelerating permanency.	Provide a continuum of information, training and resources from MAPP to match and to provide pre-adoptive families, including adopted children, with a full array of services, education and support prior to adoption finalization.	Expand the circuit's options for placement therefore reducing the wait time for permanency.	
20	Collier Glades Hendry Lee	Significantly decrease the length of stay for children in out of home care and to identify strategies for accelerating permanency.	Provide a continuum of information, training and resources from MAPP to match and to provide pre-adoptive families, including adopted children, with a full array of services, education and support prior to adoption finalization.	Expand the circuit's options for placement therefore reducing the wait time for permanency.	

## Local Plan Strategies and Objectives by Circuit and County

**Table 13. Local Plan Strategies and Objectives by Circuit and County**

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
1	Escambia Santa Rosa Okaloosa Walton	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 1 will reduce the number of children who do not have an identified adoptive placement at the time of termination of parental rights to no more than 20% by March 2015.	Objective 1.1 Circuit 1 will decrease the number of children who do not have an identified adoptive family prior to termination of parental rights being ordered from SFY 2009-2010 from 50% to 40% by June 30, 2011.  Objective 1.2 Circuit 1 will decrease the number of children who do not have an identified adoptive family prior to termination of parental rights being ordered from SFY 2010-2011 from 40% to 35% by June 30, 2012.  Objective 1.3 Circuit 1 will decrease the number of children who do not have an identified adoptive family prior to termination of parental rights being ordered from SFY 2011-2012 from 35% to 30% by June 30, 2013.  Objective 1.4 Circuit 1 will decrease the number of children who do not have an identified adoptive family prior to termination of parental rights being ordered from SFY 2012-2013 from 30% to 25% by June 30, 2014.  Objective 1.5 Circuit 1 will decrease the number of children who do not have an identified adoptive family prior to termination of parental rights being ordered from SFY 2013-2014 from 25% to 20% by June 30, 2015.
1	Escambia Santa Rosa Okaloosa Walton	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 1 will reduce the wait time for adoption finalization for children who are in matched placements from an average 14 month wait time to no more than 6 months.	Objective 2.1 Circuit 1 will reduce the wait time to finalization for children who are being adopted by their foster parent, relative or non-relative caregiver from 14 months to no more than 12 months by June 30, 2011.  Objective 2.2 Circuit 1 will reduce the wait time to finalization for children who are being adopted by their foster parent, relative or non-relative caregiver from 12 months to no more than 10 months by June 30, 2012.  Objective 2.3 Circuit 1 will reduce the wait time to finalization for children who are being adopted by their foster parent, relative or non-relative caregiver from 10 months to no more than 8 months by June 30, 2013.  Objective 2.4 Circuit 1 will reduce the wait time to finalization for children who are being adopted by their foster parent, relative or non-relative caregiver from 8 months to no more than 7 months by June 30, 2014.  Objective 2.5 Circuit 1 will reduce the wait time to finalization for children who are being adopted by their foster parent, relative or non-relative caregiver from 7 months to no more than 6 months by June 30, 2015.
2	Leon Gadsden Wakulla Jefferson Franklin Liberty	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 2 will increase the pool of prospective adoptive families that are best matched to the needs of our waiting children.	Objective 1.1 Facilitate the coordination of adoption promotion activities.  Objective 1.2 Increase adoption promotion and recruitment activities and services.  Objective 1.3 Engage faith and community-based organizations in adoption promotion efforts.  Objective 1.4 Increase training and educational opportunities for prospective adoptive parents.

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
3	Columbia Dixie Lafayette Hamilton Madison Suwannee Taylor	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 3 will identify and successfully recruit families for all children legally free for adoption.	Objective 1.1 Implement Concurrent Planning Pilot Project that integrates permanency planning efforts with foster parent/permanency planning family recruitment to meet emerging needs of specific populations of children awaiting adoption: teens, African-American children, sibling groups and those “acting out with others.”  Objective 1.2 Create faith-based initiative for recruiting foster/permanency planning and/or adoptive families.  Objective 1.3 Utilize Explore Adoption marketing materials to increase inquiries.  Objective 1.4 Implement Customer Service and Customer Support Protocol for Adoption Services.
3	Columbia Dixie Lafayette Hamilton Madison Suwannee Taylor	<i>Information not provided</i>	<b>Objectives 2.1 through 2.4 are the same as for Priority Need #1- (see preceding section)</b>  Objective 2.1 (same as 1.1) Implement Concurrent Planning Pilot Project that integrates permanency planning efforts with permanency planning family/foster parent recruitment to meet emerging needs of population: teens, African-American children and those “acting out with others.”  Objective 2.2 (same as 1.2) Create faith-based initiative for recruiting foster/adoptive families.  Objective 2.3 (same as 1.3) Utilize Explore Adoption marketing materials to increase inquiries.  Objective 2.4 (same as 1.4) Implement Customer Service and Customer Support Protocol for Adoption Services.  Objective 2.5 Create “step-down” placements for children exiting therapeutic placements.
3	Columbia Dixie Lafayette Hamilton Madison Suwannee Taylor	<i>Information not provided</i>	<b>Objectives: 3.1 is same as for Priority Need #1- Objective 1.1 Refer to preceding section</b>  Objective 3.1 Implement Concurrent Planning Pilot Project that integrates permanency planning efforts with recruitment of permanency planning families to meet emerging needs of population: teens, African-American children and those “acting out with others.”  Objective 3.2 Help improve processes to insure more timely permanency for the longest waiting youth.
4	Clay	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015; Circuit 4 – Clay Co. will have established a community-specific recruitment effort to secure and retain adoptive families who best fit children with special needs: teens, siblings groups, racial and ethnic minorities, and medically fragile.	Objective 1.1 By June 2015, Circuit 4- Clay Co. will have implemented a targeted community-specific recruitment effort specifically tailored to provide adoptive families for children with special needs.  Objective 1.2 By June 2015, Circuit 4- Clay Co. will provide enhanced services and resources for prospective parents regarding the rewards and challenges of adoptions.
4	Duval Nassau Clay	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 4 will develop a targeted recruitment campaign geared toward singles, families and professionals most likely to adopt children most in need of placement.	Objective 2.1 Use established resources of the Explore Adoption Targeted Recruitment Resource Guide to engage targeted community as a source for adoptive parents and a greater resource for raising awareness of the need.

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
4	Duval Nassau Clay	<i>Strategy 3</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 4 will develop a campaign to raise community awareness about the need for adoptive homes for teens and children with special needs.	Objective 3.1 By June 2015, Circuit 4 will have partnered with active community outreach and neighborhood associations to recruit and secure candidates for Community Ambassadors for adoptions.
4	Duval Nassau Clay	<i>Strategy 4</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 4 will develop marketing efforts to promote adoption throughout the community.	Objective 4.1 Use established resources of the Explore Adoption Targeted Recruitment Resource Guide.
4	Duval Nassau Clay	<i>Strategy 5</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 4 will develop a plan to address cultural awareness essential to overcoming barriers.	Objective 5.1 Use established recruitment programs to increase the number of African American families interested in adopting children from the child welfare system.
4	Duval Nassau	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 4 – (Duval and Nassau Counties) will have provided a Revised MAPP or MAPP II, pre-adoption training and support for all pre-adoptive parents.	Objective 1.1 20% of all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by September 2010. Objective 1.2 40% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by January 2011. Objective 1.3 50% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by May 2011. Objective 1.4 75% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by September 2011, 100% all prospective adoptive parents will have completed the “enhanced” MAPP curriculum by January 2012.
5	Citrus Hernando Lake Marion Sumter	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 5 will have an on-going recruitment process that finds appropriate homes for older children legally free for adoption.	Objective 1.1 Utilize Adoption Chronicles™, Heart Galleries and agency website for general awareness and recruitment efforts. Objective 1.2 Utilize the Family Finding model for child specific recruitment for older children.
5	Citrus Hernando Lake Marion Sumter	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 5 will have in place an effective system for recruiting and supporting families interested in adopting older children from the foster care system.	Objective 2.1 Implementation of “Customer Service” Protocol for YFA Adoptions Services. Objective 2.2 Recruitment among faith base organizations. Objective 2.3 (Also included Objectives 1.1, 1.2 under this strategy).
6	Pasco Pinellas	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 6 will actively utilize the Explore Adoption, Customer Service and Customer Support Protocol for Adoption Services in their adoption promotion programs.	Objective 1.1 Identify current practices in Circuit 6 for adoption promotion. Objective 1.2 Ensure the Eckerd Community Alternatives, Case Management Agencies and all Community partners in Adoption understand and are able to utilize the concepts of the Explore Adoption, Customer Service and Customer Support Protocol for Adoption Services.
6	Pasco Pinellas	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 6 will specifically address their special needs populations of children who are waiting for an adoptive home.	Objective 2.1 Identify effective recruitment efforts currently being utilized and recognize gaps in effectiveness. Objective 2.2 Create a Community Adoption Action Team to assist and identify best practices in innovative adoption recruitment and retention of adoptive families. Objective 2.3 Adoptive children with special needs will be able to successfully transition into adoptive homes with support of adoption issues. Objective 2.4 Innovative Child Specific Recruitment will be utilized to identify and support families for children waiting to be adopted.

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
7	Volusia	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 7 will research and analyze data of children with a goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) for permanency options.	Objective 1.1 Case-by-Case reviews of all children in Volusia County with an APPLA goal to develop innovative solutions to permanency.  Objective 1.2 Form a task force to analyze data regarding children with a goal of APPLA and determine the significance of those youth who also have DJJ involvement.
7	Flagler Putnam St. Johns Volusia	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 7 will develop a new approach through the Child to Family Introduction Staffing and involvement of youth in the pre-adoption process in Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, and St. John's Counties.	Objective 1.1 Develop process for In-depth disclosures of the child's needs and strengths prior to meeting prospective adoptive family.  Objective 1.2 Develop process to involve youth in the selection of prospective adoptive families.
7	Flagler Putnam St. Johns Volusia	<i>Strategy 3</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 7 will enhance training for prospective adoptive parents in Volusia, Flagler, Putnam and St. John's Counties.	Objective 1.1 Increase the number of trainings offered to prospective adoptive families. This will help to expand the quality of skills parents will have to deal with issues that may arise throughout the youth's life.
8	Alachua Baker Bradford Gilchrist Levy Union	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 8 will identify and successfully recruit families for all children legally free for adoption.	Objective 1.1 Implement Concurrent Planning Pilot Project that integrates permanency planning efforts with foster parent/permanency planning family recruitment to meet emerging needs of specific populations of children awaiting adoption: teens, African-American children, sibling groups and those "acting out with others."  Objective 1.2 Create faith-based initiative for recruiting foster/permanency planning and/or adoptive families.  Objective 1.3 Utilize Explore Adoption marketing materials to increase inquiries.  Objective 1.4 Implement Customer Service and Customer Support Protocol for Adoption Services.
8	Alachua Baker Bradford Gilchrist Levy Union	<i>Information not provided</i>	<b>Objectives 2.1 through 2.4 are the same as for Priority Need #1 for Circuit 3 - (see preceding section)</b>  Objective 2.1 (same as 1.1) Implement Concurrent Planning Pilot Project that integrates permanency planning efforts with permanency planning family/foster parent recruitment to meet emerging needs of population: teens, African-American children and those "acting out with others."  Objective 2.2 (same as 1.2) Create faith-based initiative for recruiting foster/adoptive families.  Objective 2.3 (same as 1.3)  Utilize Explore Adoption marketing materials to increase inquiries.  Objective 2.4 (same as 1.4) Implement Customer Service and Customer Support Protocol for Adoption Services.  Objective 2.5 Create "step-down" placements for children exiting therapeutic placements.

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
8	Alachua Baker Bradford Gilchrist Levy Union	<i>Information not provided</i>	<b>Objectives: 3.1 is same as for Priority Need #1 for Circuit 3 - Objective 1.1 Refer to preceding section</b> Objective 3.1 Implement Concurrent Planning Pilot Project that integrates permanency planning efforts with recruitment of permanency planning families to meet emerging needs of population: teens, African-American children and those “acting out with others.”  Objective 3.2 Help improve processes to insure more timely permanency for the longest waiting youth.
9	Orange Osceola	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 9 will increase prevalence and visibility of targeted recruitment efforts through incorporation of Explore Adoption Campaign Materials.	Objective 1 Increase Match Events so children and families have the opportunity to meet each other in a comfortable setting. Objective 1.2 Implement additional targeted recruitment efforts focused on teens.
9	Orange Osceola	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 9 will provide a more consistent marketing and promotion of adoption awareness to the community.	Objective Develop an adoption promotion plan and schedule.
9	Orange Osceola	The children with the permanency goal of APPLA will be reduced from 187 to 100 by June 30, 2015.	Objective Develop strategies to reduce the number of children with the goal of APPLA.
10	Hardee Highlands, and Polk	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 10 will use Faith Based Community Partners to help promote Adoption Awareness Opportunities.	Objective 1.1 By fiscal year 2014-2015, 25 percent of all public adoption inquiries will be from the Faith Based Adoption Initiative.
10	Hardee, Highlands, and Polk	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 10 will use the local Heart Gallery as a component for targeted recruitment strategies.	Objective 2.1 30 percent of all inquiries about public adoption in fiscal year 2014 – 2015 are a result of the Adoption Gallery.
11	Miami-Dade	<i>Information not provided</i>	<i>Information not provided</i>
12	Manatee Sarasota DeSoto	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 12 will have provided training to key Leads, Partners, Champions, and Case Management Organizations in Family Finders, Family Centered Practice, and Family Team Conferencing in an effort to ensure all are operating from the same knowledge base, using the same language, and working towards achieving the adoption promotion goals.	Objective 1.1 Train key Leads, Partners, Champions, and Case Management Organizations in Family Finders.  Objective 1.2 Train key Leads, Partners, Champions, and Case Management Organizations in Family Centered Practice.  Objective 1.3 Train key Leads, Partners, Champions, and Case Management Organizations in Family Team Conferencing.
12	Manatee Sarasota DeSoto	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 12 will work with key Leads, Partners, Champions, and Case Management Organizations to put into practice the evidence based models of permanency (Family Finders and Family Centered Practice) with a philosophy of family and community connections.	Objective 2.1 Implement and put into practice the Family Finders modality.  Objective 2.2 Implement and put into practice the Family Centered Practice modality.  Objective 2.3 Implement the use of the Targeted Recruitment tools to target TPR cases with no identified placement.

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
12	Manatee Sarasota DeSoto	<i>Strategy 3</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 12 will support the statewide initiatives to identify and seek support systems within the community, specifically related to the Faith-Based and Community-Based Systems, for our challenging population of children awaiting identified adoptive homes and in efforts of enhancing and maintaining sibling relationships within the community.	Objective 3.1 Engage the faith based community and build a strong working relationship.
13	Hillsborough	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 13 will implement a system of evidence-based, innovative practice that will enhance the identification of appropriate permanent placements.	Objective 1.1 20% of minorities, sibling groups and teens that have been legally free for adoption for over one year will have identified permanent homes in fiscal year 2010-2011.  Objective 1.2 40% of minorities, sibling groups and teens that have been legally free for adoption for over one year will have identified permanent homes in fiscal year 2011-2012.  Objective 1.3 60% of minorities, sibling groups and teens that have been legally free for adoption for over one year will have identified permanent homes in fiscal year 2012-2013.  Objective 1.4 80% of minorities, sibling groups and teens that have been legally free for adoption for over one year will have identified permanent homes in fiscal year 2013-2014.  Objective 1.5 100% of minorities, sibling groups and teens that have been legally free for adoption for over one year will have identified permanent homes in fiscal year 2014-2015.
13	Hillsborough	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 13 will provide pre-adoption training and support for all pre-adoptive parents and children.	Objective 2.1 25% of all prospective adoptive parents will have completed an established pre-adoption training curriculum by November 15, 2011.  Objective 2.2 40% of all prospective adoptive parents will have completed an established pre-adoption training curriculum by November 15, 2012.  Objective 2.3 50% of all prospective adoptive parents will have completed an established pre-adoption training curriculum by November 15, 2013.  Objective 2.4 75% of all prospective adoptive parents will have completed an established pre-adoption training curriculum by November 15, 2014.  Objective 2.5 100% of all prospective adoptive parents will have completed an established pre-adoption training curriculum by November 15, 2015.
13	Hillsborough	<i>Strategy 3</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 13 will have an established practice, with policies and procedures, in the area of Intervention by Private Adoption Agencies, Professionals in the System of Care Adopting Children in Hillsborough County, Reintroducing Relatives after a TPR and Adoption by Gay/Lesbian/Bi-Sexual Individuals or Couples.	Objective 3.1 Create Policies and Procedures for “Alternate Adoption Options” by July 1, 2011.  Objective 3.2 Design training to implement the practice of “Alternate Adoption Options” by January 2012.  Objective 3.3 Implement training to the System of Care by March 2012.  Objective 3.4 Establish a rotating, continuous training for the System of Care by January 2013.  Objective 3.5 Create and Maintain a Quality Assurance protocol by January 2013.

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective	
14	Bay Calhoun Gulf Holmes Jackson Washington	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 14 will have ensured that children are safe, nurtured and living in stable environments.	Objective 1	Create and maintain a positive community climate that will foster interest in adoption.
			Objective 2	Ensure that individuals who are interesting in becoming adoptive or foster-to-adopt parents have access to appropriate and timely information about eligibility requirements, pre-service training and the process for becoming a licensed foster-to-adopt home or an adoptive family.
			Objective 3	Develop focused recruitment for high need populations (i.e., developmental disability/disruptive behavior; teen SED, sibling groups).
			Objective 4	Conduct targeted recruitment of homes for specific high need children.
15	Palm Beach	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 15 will decrease the number of youth waiting for adoption for more than 12 months.	Objective 1.1	All youth waiting 12 months or more will be reviewed to establish prospective adoptive placements or child-specific recruitment plans.
			Objective 1.2	Child-Specific recruitment plans will be developed and evaluated every six months for youth with medical or mental health needs or developmental delays.
			Objective 1.3	Circuit 15 will decrease the number of youth waiting for adoption more than 12 months from 52.5% to 50% by June 30, 2011.
			Objective 1.4	Circuit 15 will decrease the number of youth waiting for adoption more than 12 months to 47% by June 30, 2012.
			Objective 1.5	Circuit 15 will decrease the number of youth waiting for adoption more than 12 months to 44% by June 30, 2013.
			Objective 1.6	Circuit 15 will decrease the number of youth waiting for adoption more than 12 months to 41% by June 30, 2014.
			Objective 1.7	Circuit 15 will decrease the number of youth waiting for adoption more than 12 months to 38.6% by June 30, 2015.

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
15	Palm Beach	<i>Strategy 2</i> Targeted recruitment for teens.	<p>Objective 2.1 All youth waiting for adoption who are between the ages of 10 – 17 will be reviewed for other permanency options or prospective adoptive families.</p> <p>Objective 2.2 Develop and implement targeted recruitment plans for adolescents in need of adoption.</p> <p>Objective 2.3 Develop and implement targeted recruitment plans for children with medical and developmental needs waiting for adoption.</p> <p>Objective 2.4 Develop and implement targeted recruitment plans for children with chronic mental health needs waiting for adoption.</p> <p>Objective 2.5 The number of youth waiting for adoption who are between the ages of 10 – 17 who are adopted will be increased from the June 30, 2009 rate of 17.9% to 19% by June 30, 2011.</p> <p>Objective 2.6 The number of youth waiting for adoption who are between the ages of 10 – 17 who are adopted will be increased to 21.1% by June 30, 2012.</p> <p>Objective 2.7 The number of youth waiting for adoption who are between the ages of 10 – 17 who are adopted will be increased to 23.6% by June 30, 2013.</p> <p>Objective 2.8 The number of youth waiting for adoption who are between the ages of 10 – 17 who are adopted will be increased to 27% by June 30, 2014.</p> <p>Objective 2.9 The number of youth waiting for adoption who are between the ages of 10 – 17 who are adopted will be increased to 30.3% by June 30, 2015.</p>
16	Monroe	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 16 will have implemented outreach efforts that target populations within the Faith Based Community, Military and school system.	<p>Objective 1.1 FIVE targeted organizations have been contacted and provided adoption information by FY ending June 30, 2011.</p> <p>Objective 1.2 TEN targeted organizations have been contacted and provided adoption information by FY ending June 30, 2012.</p> <p>Objective 1.3 FIFTEEN targeted organizations have been contacted and provided adoption information by FY ending June 30, 2013.</p> <p>Objective 1.4 TWENTY targeted organizations have been contacted and provided adoption information by FY ending June 30, 2014.</p> <p>Objective 1.5 TWENTY-FIVE targeted organizations have been contacted and provided adoption information by FY ending June 30, 2015.</p>
16	Monroe	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 16 will utilize strategies to better support and prepare prospective adoptive parents for the overall challenges and rewards of adoption as well as for placement needs of a specific child.	<p>Objective 2.1 Full implementation of PRIDE by FY ending June 30, 2011.</p> <p>Objective 2.2 Develop and maintain ongoing list of support networks available to waiting families.</p> <p>Objective 2.3 Partner with Care Center/Guidance Clinic to ensure counseling services are provided by adoption-competent therapists.</p> <p>Objective 2.4 Wesley House will offer annual training specific to the needs of adoptive children.</p>

Circuit	Counties	Strategy	Objective
16	Monroe	<i>Strategy 3</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 16 will engage the community in promoting foster care adoption awareness and in providing support to the families involved in the adoptive process.	Objective 1.1 TEN businesses/community agencies are identified in Circuit 11 and 16 who will promote foster care adoption and support our adoptive families by FY ending June 30, 2015.  Objective 1.2 Increase the number of events during National Adoption Month and promote increased community participation throughout the Circuit by FY ending June 30, 2015.  Objective 1.3 Four open house events will be held throughout Circuit 16 annually by FY ending June 30, 2015.
17	Broward	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 17 will reduce the time from TPR to adoption finalization for of African American children.	Objective 1.1 Identify organizations, community groups, and churches that provide support and outreach to this population.  Objective 1.2 Once such groups have been identified, establish on going contact to increase adoption awareness.
17	Broward	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 17 will reduce the wait time for sibling groups who need to be adopted together.	Objective 2.1 ChildNet staff will increase efforts to place children together from the time of initial placement.
17	Broward	<i>Strategy 3</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 17 will reduce the wait time for children over the age of 8 to be adopted.	Objective 3.1 Increase the number of approved adoptive families interested in adopting children over 8.
18	Brevard Seminole	<i>Strategy 1 Targeted recruitment for teens, sibling groups and medically complex children</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 18 will Increase the number of families that are willing and able to adopt the type of children that are currently in care.	Objective 1.1 To increase the number of families who are interested in adopting teens & sibling groups by engaging the faith & educational community.  Objective 1.2 To increase the number of families who are interested in adopting medically complex children by engaging the medical community.  Objective 1.3 To increase the number of families who become engaged in the adoption process accessed through the Heart Gallery.
18	Brevard Seminole	<i>Strategy 2 Update and improve curriculum used to prepare families for adoption</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 18 will implement new curriculum in the mandated training for families wishing to become adoptive parents.	Objective 2.1 To implement updated curriculum that better prepares families to adopt children out of foster care.
18	Brevard Seminole	<i>Strategy 3 Implement a Customer Service Protocol</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 18 will continue full implementation of a Customer Service Protocol.	Objective 3.1 To retain adoptive and prospective adoptive parents through excellent customer service.
19	Indian River Martin St. Lucie Okeechobee	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 19 will implement a faith based adoption initiative.	Objective 1.1 Circuit 19 will partner with Faith Based organizations to increase the number of local families wanting to adopt foster children who have been in care for long periods by 6/30/2013. This will result in a 25% increase in adoptions of kids in care greater than 24 months by 6/30/2015. Baseline: average of 2008 performance of nine families, and 2009 performance of six local families.  Objective 1.2 Explore One Church One Child as a potential resource for Faith based families wanting to adopt and also for targeted recruitment for children.
19	Indian River Martin St. Lucie Okeechobee	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 19 will identify inefficiencies and streamline processes in order to expedite permanency for children.	Objective 2.1 Evaluate the average time frames for each phase of the permanency process (entry into care and TPR goal establishment, Goal establishment and TPR finalization, and Finalization and matching with adoptive family) and identify barriers that may exist within each phase.

<b>Circuit</b>	<b>Counties</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	
<b>20</b>	Charlotte Collier Glades Hendry Lee	<i>Strategy 1</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 20 will significantly decrease the length of stay for children in out of home care and to identify strategies for accelerating permanency.	Objective 1.1	The Circuit will achieve the contracted goal of adoption finalizations, as determined by the Department of Children and Families.
			Objective 1.2	Raise community awareness of the need for adoption.
<b>20</b>	Charlotte Collier Glades Hendry Lee	<i>Strategy 2</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 20 will provide a continuum of information, training and resources from MAPP to match and to provide pre-adoptive families, including adopted children, with a full array of services, education and support prior to adoption finalization.	Objective 1.1	The Circuit will achieve the contracted goal of adoption finalizations, as determined by the Department of Children and Families.
			Objective 1.2	Raise community awareness of the need for adoption.
<b>20</b>	Charlotte Collier Glades Hendry Lee	<i>Strategy 3</i> By June 30, 2015, Circuit 20 will expand the circuit's options for placement therefore reducing the wait time for permanency.	Objective 1.1	The Circuit will achieve the contracted goal of adoption finalizations, as determined by the Department of Children and Families.
			Objective 1.2	Raise community awareness of the need for adoption.

## Anticipated Barriers for Local Plan Implementation by Circuit and County

**Table 14. Anticipated Barriers for Local Plan Implementation by Circuit and County**

Circuit	Barriers to the Promotion of Adoption in the Circuit
<p><b>1</b> Escambia Santa Rosa Okaloosa Walton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to the accomplishment of a comprehensive approach to the promotion of adoption in Circuit 1 include:</li> <li>• The reluctance of older children to participate in recruitment activities</li> <li>• Caseload size and time constraints to completing necessary paperwork (home studies, child studies and compiling subside file documents)</li> <li>• Matched placement caregivers who do not meet the administrative rule standards to be approved to adopt</li> <li>• Matched placement caregivers who do not complete required paperwork timely.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> Leon Gadsden Wakulla Jefferson Franklin Liberty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public perception of adoptions serves as a barrier. Public perception in general is negative (belief that children are 'damaged'; high costs associated with adoption; long, bureaucratic, litigious and intrusive process; etc.)</li> <li>• Some children in care whose parent's rights have been terminated do not wish to be adopted.</li> <li>• The age and behaviors of special needs children may impact a decision to adopt.</li> <li>• Adoptive placement disruptions are a barrier.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> Columbia Dixie Lafayette Hamilton Madison Suwannee Taylor</p> <p><b>8</b> Alachua Baker Bradford Gilchrist Levy Union</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited realization of concurrent case planning</li> <li>• Funding for staff and resources to accomplish goals</li> <li>• The large geographical area within which the resources are currently spread</li> <li>• Adoptive homes interested in pursuing adoption with teen males.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> Duval Nassau Clay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of standard relative placement incentive.</li> <li>• Lack of cultural competence by inexperienced recent graduates who serve as adoption specialist.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> Citrus Hernando Lake Marion Sumter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth and Family Alternatives' staff and the local planning team identified the following barriers and challenges to the implementation of the plan and the comprehensive approach to promoting adoption within Circuit 5.</li> <li>• Number of MAPP certified instructors throughout Circuit 5</li> <li>• The economy at this time can potentially impact action steps, specifically donation of children's photos by local photographers, families willing to add children to their homes maybe anxious because of economy, and families' ability to taking time off from work to attend the required MAPP classes is impacted .</li> <li>• Funding for programs and activities that promote public awareness and community involvement is limited.</li> <li>• Faith-based organizations are often touted as the cure for the lack of resources. While they can provide a valuable response to a variety of needs of families and children, the response may be limited because of their limited capacity and interests. Many faith-based organizations in rural areas, such as Circuit 5, have part time pastors and no staff. Providers must find a way to build relationships with these organizations and make it easier for them to respond to our identified needs/issues.</li> <li>• Additional barriers identified in 2009-2010 that remain are:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Myth on part of the general public that "special needs" children, as termed by the Department of Children and Families, means that the children have multiple developmental/medical needs, when in fact, it could mean that children are older, part of sibling groups etc.</li> <li>○ On-going need for additional financial resources.</li> <li>○ The geography of the circuit hampers our ability to make all services and promotional opportunities geographically accessible to all families.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b> Pasco Pinellas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding in community regarding Adoption issues</li> <li>• Lack of funding to promote secure, sustainable adoptions</li> <li>• Lack of ability to recruit special needs Adoptive parents in gay communities</li> </ul>

Circuit	Barriers to the Promotion of Adoption in the Circuit
<p><b>7</b> Flagler Putnam St. Johns Volusia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state of Florida forbids anyone who is homosexual to adopt a child. However, there is no law discriminating against gay/lesbian adults becoming a foster parent. This becomes an issue if a child free for adoption has been in a foster home for a substantial time and has established emotional ties.</li> <li>• AES does not have a ‘reason type’ to place a child on hold related to an adoption disruption and/or due to therapeutic reasons.</li> <li>• Some teenagers are reluctant to attend these events as it may be perceived as being on display or rejection if a parent is not interested</li> <li>• The target population is too general and not specific to our client population (teenagers). Need to focus on child specific recruitment and those populations who would adopt an older child. (i.e. empty nesters, teachers, social workers, ...).</li> <li>• Appropriations for maintenance adoption subsidy must keep pace with our success in getting children adopted through the state.</li> <li>• The age and behaviors of a special needs child may impact the prospective adoptive parent(s)’ decision to adopt.</li> <li>• Siblings are being separated when first placed in out-of-home care due to the lack of foster homes willing to take sibling groups. Thus, separation sibling staffing and bonding assessments are required for the purposes of adoption after the children have been in their separate placements for a substantial amount of time. Recruitment efforts pertaining to foster care should be focused on the need for temporary placements for our special needs children, not the needs of the foster parent to subsequently adopt.</li> <li>• The length of time after the Termination of Parental Rights for the appeal process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9</b> Orange Osceola</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the reduction of children coming into foster care there will be a smaller pool of children who will be available to adopt. With older teens that have been in the foster care system an adult connection needs to be considered, even if they do not want to adopt or legally be their guardian. Promoting adoptions for teenagers is more challenging than younger children. Tools used to promote adoption, such as Heart Gallery, have an expense attached which is a barrier unless donations are received to pay for these ventures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>10</b> Hardee Highlands Polk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the increased emphasis on Independent Living, there has been an increase in the number of teens not wanting to be adopted. We are also seeing that due to the cash incentive/benefit to delay adoption past the child’s 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, there are more children being adopted past their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.</li> <li>• Most of the adoption finalizations for Highlands and Hardee Counties were actually occurring in Polk County, which contributes to skewed data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11</b> Miami-Dade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Post Adoption services</li> <li>• Adoption Competent professionals</li> <li>• Post adoption day care assistance needed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12</b> DeSoto Manatee Sarasota</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older child resistance to adoption.</li> <li>• Lack of adoptive homes interested in adoption of teen males.</li> <li>• Current economy may hamper consideration of adoption.</li> <li>• Need adoption promotion materials pertinent to targeted adoptions (e.g., older child)</li> <li>• Appropriations for adoption maintenance subsidies must keep pace with increase in adoptions. FL in lower 3<sup>rd</sup> of states in adoption subsidy funding.</li> <li>• Lack of public awareness of adoption process.</li> <li>• Lack of funding for community outreach through print, television, radio and Children Awaiting Parents website.</li> </ul>
<p><b>13</b> Hillsborough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Integrity: Data is a valuable tool for the Hillsborough Kids Network to gauge the System of Care’s strengths and challenges. The Community Alliance and the Hillsborough Kids Board of Directors receives data. Hillsborough Kids uses innovative systems to extract and aggregate data from the state’s data and case management system Florida Safe Family Network (FSFN). Hillsborough Kids has created dashboards using live data from FSFN when the data in FSFN is available. One of the potential barriers to obtaining good, viable data is the continued problems with FSFN since the conversion to FSFN Reports that should be available in the Business Objects environment are not populating correctly and the data is suspected to be incorrect. To gauge the progress on Length of Stay from TPR to Finalization and other critical measures, the FSFN data system must work efficiently and consistently.</li> <li>• Alternate Adoption Options: Doing things differently or changing one’s mindset is often a challenging endeavor. Creating a collaborative relationship with private adoption agencies while embracing the holistic approach to maintaining family connections will be challenging. Exploration of the impact of child welfare professionals adopting children might be more pliable but will certainly raise differences of opinions throughout the network. The most controversial issue will most likely be the exploration of overturning the ban on gay adoptions in Florida.</li> </ul>
<p><b>14</b> Bay Calhoun Gulf Holmes Jackson Washington</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important for this plan to serve as a Circuit 14 community plan and be acknowledged and respected as such. The efforts identified, strategies put in place to achieve the efforts, and needs identified are those of the individuals with a vested interest in the local community. Members of the planning team and those taking active leads know the needs of Circuit 14 and their continued involvement and ideas to achieve the efforts must be supported by leadership outside of Circuit 14.</li> <li>• As with most plans and/or projects momentum comes and goes at periodic times during the process. It is of utmost importance that the efforts identified and actions to be taken are closely monitored to ensure continued progress by all involved. Losing momentum could mean jeopardizing or delaying much needed efforts in Circuit 14. The Department, through partnership with community providers and active circuit planning team members must commit to the sustainability of this plan to achieve best outcomes for the Circuit 14 community. Based on the current relationship within the Circuit 14 community and those committed to this plan this goal is achievable.</li> </ul>

Circuit	Barriers to the Promotion of Adoption in the Circuit
<p><b>15</b> Palm Beach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are two barriers that can impact the success and sustainability of this plan. Both are influenced by the population of children in care and those awaiting adoption.</li> <li>• Many of our youth waiting for adoption are teens with special needs. Recruitment for adolescents or special needs children individually has been challenging, the combination of these populations creates barriers as the potential pool of adoptive parents is lessened. A more reasonable solution for these youth may lie in developing connections with relatives or former caregivers. These connections may result in other permanency options such as permanent guardianship, or may only serve as a permanent connection for the youth that will extend into their adulthood.</li> <li>• The other potential barrier is the reduced number of children becoming available for adoption. Prevention and diversion efforts across the state have yielded lower numbers of children entering the dependency system. Two changes in population are beginning to result from this shift. First, children and families served typically have higher level needs. Second, reduced numbers of kids entering care also results in fewer children available for adoption. The resulting trend may be that the children who do enter the system and are available for adoption are those with higher level needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16</b> Monroe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geography: Circuit 16 encompasses all of Monroe County and is a 120 mile long island chain. Because Monroe County only has one highway, accessibility to the county seat, Key West, is time consuming and difficult taking approximately 6 hours to make a round trip to the Upper Keys. The Circuit is divided into 3 areas: Lower Keys (Big Pine/Key West), Middle Keys (Marathon) and Upper Keys (Islamorada/Tavernier/Key Largo). Since all services must be provided in triplicate, despite the number of people served, the cost of providing all services is always significantly greater per capita than in all other circuits in the state.</li> <li>• One of the greatest challenges for Monroe County is the recruitment and retention of social service professionals. Due to the high cost of living, geographic isolation and general transient nature of the FL Keys population, the ability to recruit and retain qualified staff to meet the needs of the community is difficult. Circuit 16 currently has 1 certified Adoption Supervisor and 2 certified Adoption Full Case Managers dedicated to promoting adoption, educating the community and managing the county caseload of all children who are awaiting adoption. Over a five year span, the loss of any of the 3 certified adoption staff and/or community adoption advocates working on the Promotion of Adoption Plan will hinder progress outlined in this plan.</li> <li>• Circuit 16 lacks an adoption support group for waiting parents to maintain their interest in adoption and help manage expectations. Monroe County does not have an active Foster Parent Association or Post-Adoption Support Group; therefore, we cannot tap into another group as a forum for our families. This type of support group will have to be developed locally. Circuit 16 also does not have an adoption home finder or paid position that works only with waiting families. In the <u>Report to Congress on Barriers and Success Factors in Adoptions from Foster Care</u>, families surveyed in 2007 who discontinued the adoption process before even having one child placed with them felt that the greatest barrier in the process was lack of agency communication/responsiveness and emotional support.</li> <li>• Lack of local adoption assistance for birth mothers considering adoption: Circuit 16 is partnering with Florida Baptist Children's Home (FBCH) in Dade County to serve birth mothers that are considering adoption for their unborn child. FBCH is a member of the Circuit 16 promoting adoptions committee and this partnership and service to mothers within our community is part of our plan in Section IV. Although this plan of action does not promote the adoption of children within the Dependency system it is included in an effort to provide a service to mothers in our community could prevent children from entering the Dependency system and allows staff to focus on foster children awaiting adoption. Since no agency exists locally, FBCH will have to travel to Monroe County to meet with these clients, presenting a potential barrier to addressing this need.</li> <li>• ICPC will be a delay to meeting the target of Goal 1. The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute discusses the need for ICPC reform and notes that problems arise in four areas: "(1) inadequate attention to the requirements that the receiving state must meet in determining and issuing approval for interstate adoptive placements; (2) confusion regarding compliance with state law in addition to ICPC requirements; (3) jurisdictional uncertainty; and (4) untimely and unresponsive implementation of the approval process. Thirty working days from the date of the receiving state's receipt of the request to the date of the approval or denial should be a mandatory time line. The ICPC approval process should be critically examined and redesigned so that the current technocratic process is replaced by an individualized assessment based on children's best interests. Case examples demonstrate the troubling degree to which adoptions currently are denied or significantly delayed because of administrative mismanagement, unreasonably complex documentation requirements, and mechanistic application of regulatory mandates that fail to consider the circumstances of the individual child."</li> </ul>
<p><b>17</b> Broward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most basic issue to over come is the community's perception/fear of the majority of our waiting population of children who are older, African American, and often time members of a sibling group.</li> </ul>

Circuit	Barriers to the Promotion of Adoption in the Circuit
<p><b>18</b> Brevard Seminole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers related to adoption promotion of available children: A lack of information exchange throughout the United States could be a barrier to the adoption promotion of available children. At times, communities are not aware of other interested families outside of their area, although statewide efforts have improved tremendously throughout Florida. Such conference calls as “Home finders” and networking amongst various Community Based Care Organizations has resulted in additional matches for children from other counties.</li> <li>• Turnover is a barrier to the promotion of adoption. Consistency in staff and familiarity in the community is always a plus in increasing efforts to promote adoption from the foster care system because it translates into a trusting and comfortable relationship between the agency staff and the church/organization leadership; the church/organization leadership will be more apt to encourage their congregation to become foster/adoptive parents if they have built a trusting and amicable relationship with the agency.</li> <li>• Accuracy of the data is a barrier with various sources of gathering data (not always in FSFN); and not always being able to review the data on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Confusion for the community as to different agencies working within the system. The community is not clear on ‘who’s who’ and ‘who does what’. People in the community are more familiar with the Department of Children and Families but not the Community Based Care Agencies; there may hesitation to work with ‘unknown’ agency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>19</b> Indian River Martin St. Lucie Okeechobee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with extensive lengths of stay in the foster care system prior to Termination of Parental Rights present special challenges for successful adoption promotion and support. The unintended impact of our rightfully diligent efforts to provide opportunity for safe and permanent reunification with the biological parents is that their children, no matter their age at removal, are growing older in care without receiving closure that will allow them some childhood normalcy. This situation frequently results in the development of deep-seated mental health issues that not only impact the child for the duration of their childhood, but complicate efforts to identify adoptive parents that may have otherwise been recruited for them. Although our plan addresses streamlining of internal processes, any opportunities that exist to streamline the case plan and court processes must continue to be identified and addressed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>20</b> Charlotte Collier Glades Hendry Lee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding needed for more intensive targeted recruitment</li> <li>• Funding needed for the purchase of supportive services, specifically for the expansion of mental health, including residential care, and orthodontic care.</li> <li>• Funding needed for the purchase of educational services, which are above and beyond the requirements of the school board, but necessary for the children who are being adopted.</li> <li>• Funding needed for the training of adoptive families, as well as reimbursement for adoption home studies completed by private entities.</li> <li>• Documentation of the need:</li> <li>• Surveys and subsidy questionnaires have been received from adoptive families, which document their needs.</li> </ul>

## Local Planning Team Recommendations for State Level and Legislative Action

**Table 15. Local Planning Team Recommendations for State Level and Legislative Action**

Circuit	State Level and/or Legislative Action Recommendations
<p><b>1</b> Escambia Santa Rosa Okaloosa Walton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College tuition waiver eligibility prior to May 5, 1997 finalization date.</li> <li>• Maintenance Adoption Subsidy through high school graduation regardless of age.</li> <li>• Medicaid eligibility through high school and college.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> Leon Gadsden Wakulla Jefferson Franklin Liberty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support current successful efforts to promote adoption.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> Columbia Dixie Lafayette Hamilton Madison Suwannee Taylor</p> <p><b>8</b> Alachua Baker Bradford Gilchrist Levy Union</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds are needed for post adoption services, preventative and proactive services, in addition to additional reactive assistance when families are calling for help.</li> <li>• Condense or abbreviate the MAPP requirement for relatives and non-relatives so the adoption process is not delayed when the child has already been in the home for a significant period of time.</li> <li>• Address differing standards for approvable home studies in the investigations, services, licensing and adoption areas.</li> <li>• Clearer Florida Administrative Code direction regarding the requirement of psychological evaluations for subsidy (interpretation of the current code requirements varies based on location/circuits), specifically for children 3 and under. For children too young to be adequately diagnosed by way of a psychological evaluation, requiring such as a prerequisite to subsidy may be a source of unnecessary delay and ineffective use of resources.</li> <li>• Rule change needed because F.A.C. 65C-16.005(9)(a)2. appears to conflict with § 39.301(23) and 39.302(7), Fla. Stat., with regard to "some indicators" (now "not substantiated") reports. See below.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>F.A.C. 65C-16.005(9)(a)2 states:</b> 2. Abuse History. Cases in which the Abuse Hotline clearance reveals verified findings of abuse, neglect, or abandonment which did not result in a disqualifying felony conviction, and cases in which there were <b>some indicators of abuse or neglect</b>.</li> <li>• <b>§39.301(23) states:</b> When an investigation is closed and a person is <b>not</b> identified as a caregiver responsible for the abuse, neglect, or abandonment alleged in the report, the fact that the person is named in some capacity in the report may not be used in any way to affect the interests of that person. This prohibition applies to any use of the information in employment screening, licensing, child placement, adoption, or any other decision by a private adoption agency or a state agency or its contracted providers, except that a previous report may be used to determine whether a child is safe and what the known risk is to the child at any stage of a child-protection proceeding.</li> <li>• <b>§39.302(7) states:</b> When an investigation of institutional abuse, neglect or abandonment is closed and a person is <b>not</b> identified as a caregiver responsible for the abuse, neglect, or abandonment alleged in the report, the fact that the person is named in some capacity in the report may not be used in any way to adversely affect the interests of that person. This prohibition applies to any use of the information in employment screening, licensing, child placement, adoption, or any other decision by a private adoption agency or a state agency or its contracted providers. If such a person is a licensee of the department and is named in any capacity in three or more reports within a 5-year period, the department may review those reports and determine whether the information contained in the reports is relevant for purposes of determining whether the person's license should be renewed or revoked. If the information is relevant to the decision to renew or revoke the license, the department may rely on the information contained in the report in making that decision.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> Duval Nassau Clay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine a reasonable relative placement incentive to help with the transitional impacts of adding an additional family member to the household.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> Citrus Hernando Lake Marion Sumter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth and Family Alternatives Adoption promotion and recruitment staff offered the following suggestions.</li> <li>• Change of state statute to allow the Florida Department of Law enforcement (FDLE) background screenings to be valid for six months for adoptions versus three months. This would allow families and staff to complete the adoptive home studies without either having to be re-fingerprinted or making staff update the FDLE via the mail.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b> Pasco Pinellas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a state legislative level passing law that allows Gays to adopt would allow recruitment for special needs children at a higher level through an untapped population of potential adoptive families.</li> <li>• More funding to promote special needs adoption awareness and support adoptive families.</li> </ul>

Circuit	State Level and/or Legislative Action Recommendations
<p><b>7</b> Flagler Putnam St. Johns Volusia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption Exchange System does not have a 'reason type' to place a child on hold related to an adoption disruption and/or due to therapeutic reasons. Recommend the Department of Children and Families add a reason type to Adoption Exchange System that relates to disruption.</li> <li>The Circuit 7 Local Planning Team will continue to contact local and state legislators to promote the increase of funding for prevention programs statewide.</li> <li>The state of Florida forbids anyone who is homosexual to adopt a child. However, there is no law discriminating against gay/lesbian adults becoming a foster parent. This becomes an issue if a child free for adoption has been in a foster home for a substantial time and has established emotional ties. Recommend that the Department advocates with state legislators to change the law and allow homosexuals, individuals or couples to adopt a child.</li> <li>Appropriations for maintenance adoption subsidy must keep pace with our success in getting children adopted through the state. Recommend the Department continue to advocate for increasing the Maintenance Adoption Subsidy for our adoptive families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9</b> Orange Osceola</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding for promotion activities needs to allow promotional material, which has been an unallowable expense, including food for adoption events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>10</b> Hardee Highlands Polk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is recommended that a state-level analysis occurs surrounding the current Independent Living practices and incentives as compared to the state-level adoption initiatives to determine more cohesive strategies to accomplish these multiple goals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11</b> Miami-Dade</p>	<p><b>State program level recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain funding for Healthy Start, Healthy Families programs and other essential services supporting pregnant women and young children</li> <li>Additional funds appropriated for prevention services</li> <li>Statewide uniform diversion plan funded</li> </ul> <p><b>Legislative action recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend assistance past 18th birthday of adopted children. Many may be behind in school and parents are still responsible for care. Subsidy should continue if student is actively attending high school until graduation or at age 21, with the exception of military service</li> <li>Laws regarding what abuse and neglect are have gotten very flexible and need review</li> <li>Additional funding for prevention services</li> <li>Sustain and maintain Adoption Subsidy</li> </ul>
<p><b>12</b> DeSoto Manatee Sarasota</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify State Program funding to reduce duplication of services</li> <li>Condense or abbreviate the MAPP requirement for relatives and non-relatives to prevent or delay the adoption process</li> <li>Create more funding flexibility to reduce silos and allow braided funding</li> </ul>
<p><b>13</b> Hillsborough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislative attention to the issues related to FSFN data integrity and functioning.</li> <li>Legislative attention to overturning the ban on gay adoptions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>14</b> Bay Calhoun Gulf Holmes Jackson Washington</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure accurate reporting of information related to actual adoption information specific to each Circuit a focus should be placed on data integrity and functioning in the Florida Safe Families Network System. . To enhance adoption support a dedicated position should be developed within Circuit 14</li> </ul>
<p><b>15</b> Palm Beach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the Road to Independence (RTI) Redesign Project, revisit the stipulation that those adopted after 16 qualify for RTI Scholarships and related funding. This creates a deterrent to adopt until age 16. Although youth are placed, adoption finalizations are postponed until after the youth turns 16.</li> <li>For special needs youth, particularly those that receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the adoption subsidy does not provide the income that SSI did. In the case of relatives, this is also a disincentive as the SSI benefit is significantly higher than the adoption subsidy. Once the family receives the adoption subsidy, it generally makes their household income too high to qualify for SSI, resulting in a decrease in total family income. This is especially important in caring for special needs children and youth.</li> <li>Restructure the adoption goal to base it on numbers of available children as opposed to past performance. Fewer children entering care will result in fewer being available for adoption.</li> </ul>

Circuit	State Level and/or Legislative Action Recommendations
<p>16 Monroe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Circuit 16 committee recommends amending legislation expanding the categories of those eligible to adopt to include homosexuals and unmarried couples. Circuit 16 Committee request to include the following evidence researched by the committee and originally included in the Plan: a) No other State of the Union has such a broad ban barring gays and lesbians from adopting. b) Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), Standards of Excellence for Adoption Services, on their extensive research, has determined that "applicants should be assessed on the basis of their abilities to successfully parent a child and not on their race, ethnicity or culture, income, age, marital status, religion, appearance, differing lifestyles, or sexual orientation. Further, applicants for adoption should be accepted on the basis of an individual assessment of their capacity to understand and meet the needs of the particular child at the point of adoption and in the future." c) The American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health stated in their 2002 Technical Report, that " A growing body of scientific literature demonstrates that children who grow up with 1 or 2 gay and / or lesbian parents, fare as well in emotional, cognitive, social and sexual functioning as do children whose parents are heterosexual. Children's optimal development seems to be influenced more by the nature of the relationships and interactions within the family unit than by the particular structural from it takes." d) The American Psychological Association reports: " Not a single study has significant respect relative to children of gay or lesbian parents to be disadvantaged in any significant respect relative to children of heterosexual parents". This recommendation was made by specific Circuit 16 Promotion of Adoptions Committee composed of members of several community organizations, service providers, judicial, etc.</li> <li>• Streamline adoption process by creating a website (or including on DCF website) a catalog of adoption documents that need to be completed in order to adopt (i.e. application, letter of reference, back up caregiver form, etc.). These documents should be uniformly used by every agency and will allow the general public to explore what will be expected of them in the adoption process. The site can also include a document containing portions of the home study that could be printed and filled out by the family prior to MAPP class. Many families surveyed discontinued the adoption process citing Adoption Process Logistics as their top barrier and felt that the length of time it took to adopt and amount of paperwork involved were too daunting. In addition, utilizing online educational courses as part of the adoption and foster parent training classes would make the 10-12 week training more convenient, assisting families who have other commitments and feel overwhelmed by the time required.</li> <li>• ICPC: Allow on-line tracking of ICPC requests to be accessed by full case managers so they can easily locate the status of the ICPC request. Mandate priority for a family that has a completed adoption home study and background checks to prevent delay in placing a matched child with a family out of State. Hold agencies to ICPC contracted performance measures (i.e. if state has 30 days to assign and complete the home study on family then there has to be a penalty if they do not).</li> <li>• Currently the adopted child is provided a public college/trade school tuition waiver. Consider providing all the children of the adoptive family with this waiver at the time of finalization.</li> <li>• Facilitate mental health care for pre and post adoption families by authorizing payment to non-Medicaid providers. With the overall number of providers limited in Monroe County, and even fewer accepting Medicaid, access to specialty care is reduced for adoptive families. Adding to this challenge is the fact that many adoption competent therapists and attachment/trauma specialists in particular, do not accept Medicaid. Parents need to know that they will be able to meet the needs of a child prior to adoption. <i>A Report to Congress on Barriers and Success Factors in Adoptions from Foster Care names a lack of post-adoption services as a major barrier and goes on to state that Services seemed to be particularly scarce in rural areas. One respondent in the study noted the "limited availability of services for children with serious special needs, especially in the area of mental health and sexual abuse." Forty percent also rated the lack of respite care services as a major barrier. More than half (56 percent) of respondents who rated lack of post-adoption services as a major barrier believed that funding was the best solution to this problem. While some respondents noted that existing services should be improved, most concluded that existing services could be expanded and improved through funding, and that new services could be offered if more funding was available.</i></li> <li>• Provide adoptive parents with preference in obtaining Florida State jobs. Similar to Veteran's Preference.</li> <li>• If and adoptive parent is a State employee provide the adoptive parent free health insurance for the family similar to how the State provides Select Exempt employees free health insurance or similar to the program in which if both spouses work for the State they receive free health insurance.</li> <li>• Mandate that private adoption agencies disclose to adoptive families the potential for receiving the adoption subsidy should their child meet criteria. DCF should prepare a form/handout explaining subsidy requirements for children adopted through private agencies so this information can be easily disseminated to private adoption agencies and attorneys.</li> </ul>
<p>17 Broward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSFN does not allow for circuits to effectively analyze and match waiting children to approved families.</li> <li>• ChildNet's main priority is the safety and well-being of Broward County's foster children. In addition, we aim to find stable loving homes for children that often have very special needs. Florida statute currently limits children from entering stable, loving adoptive homes if the couple in question is homosexual. These individuals are found suitable by the State of Florida to be foster parents, but are then viewed as unsuitable to adopt these children. There are many children in successful foster homes with homosexual foster parents. Legislation needs to change to allow these foster parents to adopt these children when the children are doing well in that environment. Too many foster children continue their childhood without being adopted into a permanent placement. It is irresponsible for the State of Florida to neglect these families as a resource in providing these children with a stable home.</li> <li>• After review of the data provided as well as communications with ChildNet's Post Adoption Specialist and contracted adoption service providers it has been determined that there is a need for more specific trainings for families prior to adoption as well as a need to be ensure that families are aware of available service.</li> </ul>

Circuit	State Level and/or Legislative Action Recommendations
<p><b>18</b> Brevard Seminole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass language that allows Lead Agencies to carry forward retained earnings from one year to the next to ensure a consistent program. This also ensures state funds can be used to augment shortfalls in MAS funding.</li> <li>• Provide a crosswalk of all adoption required activities with the FSFN home study template. The current FSFN application is not user friendly for adoption home studies. The program office should also explore opportunities to implement updated background check systems that provide results to Lead Agencies in a more expeditious manner.</li> <li>• There is room for improvement through collaborative efforts amongst various states by implementing national efforts to increase awareness. If all available children and approved families could be made known at the national level, this would result in increased awareness and additional matches.</li> </ul>
<p><b>19</b> Indian River Martin St. Lucie Okeechobee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislative action should be considered in an effort to extend adoption benefits beyond the age of 18 for adopted children still attending school. Currently, Florida Statute 409.466, Section C reads:</li> <li>• <i>“The department may provide adoption assistance to the adoptive parents, subject to specific appropriation, for medical assistance initiated after the adoption of the child for medical, surgical, hospital, and related services needed as a result of a physical or mental condition of the child which existed before the adoption and is not covered by Medicaid, Children’s Medical Services, or Children’s Mental Health Services. Such assistance may be initiated at any time but shall terminate on or before the child’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.”</i></li> <li>• The State of Florida ends Medicaid and the adoption subsidy at age 18 even though the child is still in school. By changing the last sentence in the statute to read, <i>“Such assistance may be initiated at any time but shall terminate upon graduation from high school or its equivalent.”</i> medical benefits can continue as the child attends school even after his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.</li> </ul>
<p><b>20</b> Charlotte Collier Glades Hendry Lee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility, by the Community Based Care agency, to utilize the non-reoccurring adoption assistance money when there is a surplus.</li> <li>• An adoption subsidy which is the same amount as the foster care board rate.</li> </ul>