

Child Protection Transformation

Child Protection Transformation project will transform the role and practice of hotline, investigation and case management so that each component of the system works as an integrated unit, equipped to gather better information, relay information faster, conduct higher quality investigations, gather a more complete picture of the child and family, and offer a more effective engagement strategy to ensure the child's safety and family's independence. Moreover, the front-line staff, supervisors and leadership will be highly qualified and empowered with the range of knowledge, skill, and expertise needed and will build strong partnerships with a broad array of community partners. Work will be conducted using the right core business practices that allow for professional discernment and flexibility to deal with the unique challenges associated with each child and family, and the technology will be aligned to support the work. The end result will be the right strategies and solutions to achieve lasting child safety, permanency and well-being.

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Florida Department of Children and Families Child Protection Transformation Project Overview

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WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION TRANSFORMATION?

Child Protection Transformation is multi-year project designed to address identified concerns with Florida's child protection system. The vision is to transform Florida's child welfare system of care to work more effectively with children and families towards achieving child safety. We will do this by introducing a new, consistently applied safety decision-making methodology, professionalizing our workforce and enhancing our technology.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION



- 1. Florida Safety Decision-Making: System of safety management** Major practice reform from Hotline through ongoing services to improve child safety decision-making through analysis, consistent application of agency best practice, law, code, training and policy with the main goal to improve child safety outcomes across the spectrum of child welfare services by improving the quality of our work with families through enhanced business processes, new decision support instruments and tools, improved system navigation, standardized operating procedures and policy, quality training and field support, revised quality assurance with continuous quality improvement, and standardized agency performance metrics.
- 2. Professionalization:** Includes base salary increases for Child Protective Investigators and creation of a career lattice of opportunities as well as the development of Florida Safety Decision-Making Methodology training.
- 3. Technology:** Command Center Transformation, all Florida Safe Families Network Updates and SACWIS Compliance
- 4. Compliance:** Revision of all statute, rule, operating procedures to align with our transformed business model
- 5. Communication and Change Management:** Ensures delivery of all core project messages to all stakeholders.

WHY ARE WE TRANSFORMING?

The horrific abuse and tragic death of Nubia Barahona in 2011 and the abuse suffered by her brother Victor in their adoptive home became the catalyst driving a comprehensive review of the state of Florida's child protection system.

The review highlighted concerns that are clearly interrelated and contributed between and among the others. The concerns were grouped into four main categories:

- *Inconsistent, inefficient, and redundant practices across the state and throughout the child welfare system*
- *High Recurrence, Recidivism, Re-investigations rates*
- *Technology and System inefficiencies*
- *Staff turnover and ineffective training*

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

- *Improved and permanently changed business practice and consistent safety decision making*
- *Reduced re-investigations and re-abuse*
- *Systems integration and technology improvements for efficiency*
- *Professionalized and stabilized work force*
- *Higher quality casework and better outcomes for children and families*



The Florida Safety Decision-Making Methodology

Intake through Case Closure

INFORMATION STANDARDS: Making good decisions about safety begins with gathering sufficient information. Information is gathered using six standardized information domains throughout the life of a case:

Nature and Extent of the Maltreatment	Circumstances that Accompany the Maltreatment
Child Functioning	Adult Functioning
Discipline and Behavior Management	General Parenting Practices

SUFFICIENT INFORMATION is gathered and used during all phases of child welfare to determine if:

1. There are threats of danger to a child's safety.
2. The child is vulnerable to those threats.
3. The parent(s) possess sufficient protective capacities to manage identified threats to child

SAFE CHILDREN

RISK CLASSIFICATION SCORE helps CBC determine priority for Family Support

UNSAFE CHILDREN

At the completion of the investigation process, the child is determined to be safe.

The family may be referred for voluntary Family Support Services or other community resources. Florida's Title IV-E waiver allows the flexibility for Community Based Care agencies to provide an array of prevention and diversion services for safe children.

The Child Protection Investigator develops a safety plan in collaboration with the family and their support network to maintain the child safely in the home or temporarily place child out of the home.

Case Management Services are employed to provide:

- On-going safety plan monitoring and management
- To collaboratively develop a family assessment and case plan to improve parental protective capacities.
- To return children to parent(s)' care when an in-home safety plan is feasible and sustainable.
- To provide for the care, safety, and protection of children in an environment that fosters healthy social, emotional, intellectual and physical development and promotes the safety, health and well-being of all children under the state's care.
- To achieve another permanency option for children who cannot be reunified.

WHY THIS?

A child in Florida is approximately two times more likely to have an open Child Protective Service case than the national average. Florida needs to refocus our practice and center services on children and families. Our families deserve a comprehensive assessment and intervention process from initial intake to case closure, and a more precise way to determine safety and respond to unsafe children.

The Florida Safety Decision-Making Methodology is an integrated practice model of what is considered to be the current national cutting-edge best practice approaches for child welfare services. This model will improve Florida's safety outcomes for children and will better help families by focusing services more on safety, focusing on the protective capacities of parents and caregivers and improving family engagement.

Florida families deserve the Department's assistance to help achieve child safety and self-sufficiency when intervention is necessary. Our families deserve to work with highly skilled, trained and knowledgeable professionals to keep children safe and keep families together and accountable.

The health and safety of the children served shall be of paramount concern.
Section 39.001 (1)(b)(1), Florida Statutes