



FLORIDA
INSTITUTE
for CHILD
WELFARE

INSTITUTE INSIGHTS

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WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR



Welcome to the Florida Institute for Child Welfare's Inaugural Newsletter. It is my hope that this newsletter is informative and useful as we continue with Institute activities. I want this newsletter to inform you of past, present and future research, as well as child welfare training resources and funding opportunities.

The purpose of the Institute is to prioritize the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children and families. The Institute supports the science that is generated by expert faculty and research affiliates throughout the state. In addition, the Institute is still growing in its capacity to evaluate programs and provide an array of trainings and technical assistance. The Institute provides recommendations that are supported by scientific research with the goal of influencing child welfare policy and anchoring the child welfare service array in evidence.

2017 LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

The following legislation was heard during Session and is currently being reviewed by the Governor.

SB 1044 - Child Welfare

This bill would allow information from the Central Abuse Hotline to be used to screen potential caregivers for residential group homes. In addition, there is new language regarding information about the location/identity of fathers during shelter hearings and refinement of placement and treatment goals for substance exposed newborns. This bill also adds to the definition of "permanency goal" and would require DCF along with their child welfare community partners to create an accountability system that measures the quality of foster homes and residential group homes.

HB 963 - Newborn Screenings

This bill would require the Department of Health, with advice from the Genetics and Newborn Screening Advisory Council, to expand screenings of newborns for conditions that are recommended by a Federal panel. This is contingent on the approval and availability of screening tests.

SB 852 - Human Trafficking

This bill would require that DCF and Sheriff's Offices conduct a multidisciplinary staffing on child victims of commercial sexual exploitation to determine most appropriate placement and treatment. In addition, it would require that certain data is maintained on victims and that there is a service plan in place which includes follow-up.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our annual FICW Affiliates Meeting will be held on June 7, the day before the NASW annual conference in Orlando. Dr. Kimberly McGrath, clinical coordinator of foster care services at Citrus Health Network, will be the keynote speaker and discuss the CHANCE program for human trafficking victims, as well as her proposal for a university-based curriculum on human trafficking.

FACULTY AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT

We'd like to recognize Dr. Lisa Rapp-McCall, Professor in the MSW program at Saint Leo University. Joining the Institute's efforts in assisting the Office of Court Improvement to ensure that Florida's Early Childhood Courts (ECC) are adhering to the model, Dr. Rapp-McCall has taken the lead, along with Dr. Michael Campbell of Saint Leo University, and Dr. Neil Boris of the Florida Harris Institute to create a case study of the ECC model in Pasco County. While they were not engaged in any funded research with the Institute this past year, Dr. Rapp-McCall and her colleagues are committed to connecting academic research and methodology to enhance community program effectiveness.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

THE FLORIDA STUDY OF
PROFESSIONALS FOR

SAFE FAMILIES



In an effort to address child welfare workforce retention issues, the Institute is conducting a five-year longitudinal study of newly hired CPIs and Case Managers. The Florida Study of Professionals for Safe Families (FSPSF), led by Dr. Dina Wilke with the FSU College of Social Work, launched in September 2015 and has recruited 1,501 newly hired workers throughout the state of Florida to participate. This represents approximately 82 percent of all the new hires in training between September 2015 and December 2016. Important areas of focus include background characteristics, personal responses to child welfare work, and organizational issues such as caseload characteristics, supervision, and administrative support. Study participants are surveyed every six months, and data collection has just begun for those who are 18-months post-hire.

The Institute and the FSPSF research team has prioritized making results available to agencies and other important stakeholders. Read the project's first **Research Brief** to find out the results from a qualitative study on the experiences of CPIs and Case Managers transitioning from pre-service training to independent casework. The **first year report**, which contains a summary of baseline data is also on the Institute website, and the following articles are current in-press, and available from the authors:

Radey, M., & Schelbe, L. (In press). Classroom to caseload: Transition experiences of frontline child welfare workers. *Journal of Child Welfare*.

Wilke, D. J., Radey, M., & Langenderfer-Magruder, L. (In press). Recruitment and retention of child welfare workers in longitudinal research: Successful strategies from the Florida Study of Professionals for Safe Families. *Children and Youth Services Review*.

FOSTER CARE MONTH

National Foster Care Month, a month set aside to acknowledge foster parents, family members, volunteers, mentors, policymakers, child welfare professionals, and other members of the community who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes and connections. During National Foster Care Month, we renew our commitment to ensuring a bright future for the more than 400,000 children and youth in foster care, and we celebrate all those who make a meaningful difference in their lives.

History of National Foster Care Month

For more than 100 years, the Children's Bureau has worked to assist children and youth in foster care; engage youth in decisions that affect their lives; and support foster families, kinship caregivers, child welfare professionals, and others who help these children.

- Before the creation of the Children's Bureau in 1912, child welfare and foster care were mainly in the hands of private and religious organizations.
- During World War II, when more than 8,000 children were evacuated from Europe to the U.S., the Children's Bureau oversaw their temporary placement in U.S. foster homes.
- In 1972, the Children's Bureau sponsored—and President Nixon proclaimed—National Action for Foster Children Week to raise awareness of the needs of children in foster care and recruit more foster parents. The following year, Children published "The Bill of Rights for Foster Children."
- In 1988, President Reagan issued the first Presidential proclamation that established May as National Foster Care Month.

Upcoming Conferences

NASW Social Work Conference
June 8 - 10, 2017 • Orlando, FL

**Florida Coalition for Children
Foundation's Annual Conference**
July 24 - 26, 2017 • Boca Raton, FL

Florida Behavioral Health Conference
August 16 - 18, 2017 • Orlando, FL

2017 Child Protection Summit
August 29 - 31, 2017 • Orlando, FL

CSWE Annual Program Meeting (APM)
October 19 - 22, 2017 • Dallas, TX

Looking Ahead

- As the research partner to DCF, the Institute is leading the design of a **Developmental Evaluation of the Results Oriented Accountability Program**.
- For FY 2017-2018, the Institute will provide a grant to evaluate the Child Welfare Pre-Service Training of front-line employees. Information on this grant process will be forthcoming.

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THE INSTITUTE CAN NOW ENGAGE IN CONTRACTS TO CONDUCT EVALUATIONS AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. PLEASE CONTACT **DR. PRYCE** AT **JPRYCE@FSU.EDU**