**NEW FROM THE INSTITUTE**

A new journal article summary of research conducted by two Institute faculty affiliates, Dr. Heather Thompson and Dr. Morgan Cooley, is available. Through their Lens: Case Managers’ Experiences of the Child Welfare System.

The most recent brief from the Florida Study of Professionals for Safe Families is online. The Children’s Defense Fund Experiences of the Child Welfare System is available.

Dr. Heather Thompson and Dr. Morgan Cooley, conducted by two Institute faculty affiliates, a new journal article summary of research additional information.

Please save those dates and stay tuned for further information.

**SPECIAL TOPIC**

**FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT**

*(Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018)*

As noted by the Children’s Defense Fund, on February 9, 2018, President Trump signed into law the landmark bipartisan Family First Prevention Services Act, as part of Division E in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (H.R. 1892). Family First includes long-overdue historic reforms to help keep children safely with their families and avoid the traumatic experience of entering foster care. It emphasizes the importance of children growing up in families and helps ensure children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to their special needs when foster care is needed; however, some child welfare advocacy groups have expressed reservations about certain elements of the Family First Act. For example, the Florida Coalition for Children is concerned about the impact that losing the Title IV-E waivers will have on Florida’s system of care.

In particular, the Casey Foundation supports the Act’s emphasis on kinship care and kinship navigator programs. According to Tracey Feild, director of the Foundation’s Child Welfare Strategy Group, “Kinship care is better for kids. Every kid needs a family—and when they can’t be with their parents, kids are often better off when they live with family members who provide the love, continuity, stability and cultural connections kids need.” Implementing kinship navigator programs can go a long way toward establishing effective kin care policies in your agency.

For more information, check the following resources:

- Institute’s Family First resource page
- Chronicle of Social Change’s webinar on the Family First Act: What’s Next
- First Focus Campaign for Children Family First Act Fact Sheets
- The Children’s Defense Fund Family First Prevention Services Act
- Generations United webinar Using New Federal Funding Opportunities to Develop Effective Kinship Navigator Programs
- Grandfamilies.org Kinship Navigator Program Summary & Analysis

**AFILIATE SPOTLIGHT**

**MORGAN COOLEY, PH.D., LCSW**

Assistant Professor
Florida Atlantic University, Phyllis and Harvey Sandler School of Social Work, Boca Raton, FL

The Institute welcomes our newest affiliate. Dr. Cooley’s research aims to develop and hone best practices for supporting foster parents and foster families, identifying individual and contextual factors that influence placement stability of youth in foster care, and strengthening child welfare and family policies. Currently, she is developing projects related to enhancing the evidence base of training and services provided to foster families in Florida. Dr. Cooley will be working with the Institute to publish a series of reports on the quality of foster parent training and supports, as perceived by foster parents and other child welfare stakeholders. She welcomes collaboration with other researchers across the state.

**INTERESTED IN BEING AN AFFILIATE?**

**EMAIL US AT FICW@FSU.EDU.**

View our affiliate network here.

**LESS THAN ONE WEEK LEFT!**

**INVITATION TO PROPOSE RESEARCH**

Deadline to submit a proposal is January 15, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

The Institute is accepting proposals for research examining biases that result in disparity within the child welfare system in Florida or among dually-served crossover youth (youth arrested from the general population and those with current Department of Children and Families ‘out-of-home’ placements). The Institute is seeking to understand disparity and its effects on vulnerable families. Learn more here.
### UPCOMING CONFERENCES

- **2019 Violence Intervention and Prevention Summit**  
  February 6–8  Orlando, FL
- **32nd Annual Research and Policy Conference on Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Behavioral Health**  
  March 3–6  Tampa, FL
- **National Indian Child Welfare Association 37th Annual Conference**  
  March 31–April 3  Albuquerque, NM
- **Child Welfare League of America National Conference, Advancing Excellence in Practice & Policy: Meeting the Challenge of the Family First Prevention Services Act**  
  April 9–13  Washington, DC
- **Sarasota YMCA/Safe Children Coalition Conference**  
  April 17–18  Sarasota, FL
- **National Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect**  
  Sponsored by The Children's Bureau  
  April 24–26  Washington, DC
- **National CASA/GAL Conference**  
  May 31–June 4  Atlanta, GA
- **26th Annual National Foster Care Conference: Footsteps to the Future**  
  May 15–17  St. Petersburg, FL

### CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

- **National Organization of Forensic Social Work**  
  June 11–14  Las Vegas, NV  
  Deadline for submissions: February 1, 2019
- **26th Annual National Foster Care Conference: Footsteps to the Future**  
  May 15–17  St. Petersburg, FL  
  Deadline for submissions: February 1, 2019
- **International Society for Child Indicators Children of the World: The Touch of Change**  
  August 27–29  Tartu, Estonia.  
  Deadline for submissions: March 15, 2019
- **32nd Annual National Independent Living Conference: Growing Pains**  
  August 27–30  Orlando, FL  
  Deadline for submissions: May 28, 2019

### RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

**ANNA YELICK, PH.D., MSW**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Florida Institute for Child Welfare

### INVENTORY OF SERVICES FOR KINSHIP CAREGIVERS IN FLORIDA

Dr. Yelick is leading a project this year for the Department of Children and Families (Department) to assess current kinship practices in Florida. The Institute will provide an inventory of kinship practices, highlighting the lead agencies with formalized kinship navigator programs, kinship practices that meet the standard of kinship navigator best practices, and formal or informal kinship practices or policies. The inventory will be developed through a document review, an online survey, and focus groups with community-based care providers and community collaborative partners. The Department seeks this information, in part, to prepare for the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act provisions regarding evidence-based Kinship Navigator Programs and to comply with similar Florida legislation.

For more information on the research project and its relationship to child welfare legislation, please watch the interview with Dr. Yelick.

### LOOKING AHEAD

- **RALLY IN TALLY**  
  February 4 and 5, 2019
  Florida Coalition for Children’s Rally in Tally is dedicated to educating foster youth, families, and child welfare workers on advocating for their needs with Florida’s lawmakers.
  The event offers advocates, especially our youth, the opportunity to meet one-on-one with legislators and share their stories and experiences. As part of the child welfare system, they bring awareness to the issues facing the system each day across the state. Their experiences can be used to educate legislators and influence policy.

- **CHILDREN’S WEEK**  
  March 24 - 29, 2019
  Children’s Week is the only annual event held in the state of Florida that celebrates and honors its commitment to children and advocates. This year’s many events will provide thousands of parents, children, policy makers, professionals and community leaders the opportunity to share knowledge and information about children’s issues in communities across the state.

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