



**State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families**

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**David E. Wilkins**  
Secretary

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**DATE:** October 4, 2011

**TO:** Regional Directors, Community-Based Lead Agencies, and Sheriffs' Offices

**THROUGH:** John Cooper, Assistant Secretary for Operations

**FROM:** Jamie Self, Executive Director, Family and Community Services  
Christie Ferris, Director, Office of Child Welfare

**SUBJECT:** Child Welfare Training and Certification – Effective October 1, 2011

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The purpose of this memorandum is to notify you of critical changes to our child welfare training and certification program that are required to implement House Bill 279. This legislation substantially revises s. 402.40, F.S. and requires child welfare staff hired on or after October 1, 2011 to earn and maintain professional certification from a professional credentialing entity.

Effective October 3, 2011, the Department approved the Florida Certification Board (FCB) as a child welfare credentialing entity. Although the law allows the Department to approve more than one credentialing entity, the FCB is currently the only approved child welfare credentialing entity in Florida.

Since passage of this legislation, the FCB has been working with representatives from the Department, Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agencies, case management organizations, state university system, and representatives from the Sheriffs' Offices to identify the child welfare core competencies and standards. These workgroups have been very productive and will continue to guide implementation activities.

Effective October 3, 2011, changes to child welfare certification include the following:

**Credentialing**

- 1) The FCB will grant reciprocity and award child welfare certification to all individuals who hold a current Department-issued child welfare certification in good standing. In addition, individuals who complete the Phase I Post test and Phase 2 Field Based Performance Assessment by December 31, 2011, will also be granted reciprocity. Reciprocity into the FCB certification system will be completed at no cost to the Department, CBCs, Sheriffs, or certificate holder for a period of 12 months through October 3, 2012.
- 2) All child welfare staff that entered pre-service child welfare training prior to October 1, 2011 will be permitted to complete their current training program. The contract with the University of South Florida (USF) has been extended to December 31, 2011 to ensure a smooth transition from our current certification process to the new requirements. Employees who complete the Phase I Post-test and the Phase 2 Field Based Performance Assessment (FBPA) by December 31, 2011 must submit an application for certification to

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the FCB that includes a letter from the USF documenting successful completion of Phase 1 and Phase 2 training.

- 3) During the reciprocity period of October 3, 2011 through October 3, 2012, the FCB will award credentials in the following categories:
  - a. Protective Investigator
  - b. Protective Investigator Supervisor
  - c. Protective investigator Specialist
  - d. Case Manager
  - e. Case Manager Supervisor
  - f. Case Manager Specialist
  - g. Licensing Counselor
  - h. Licensing Counselor Supervisor
  - i. Licensing Counselor Specialist
  - j. Child Welfare Trainer

If the employee does not hold certification in one of the above categories, the employee and employer will complete an attestation that identifies the current position held and the category of the new credential that should be awarded. In the near future, the FCB will provide a detailed policy, including criteria for the attestation.

- 4) The FCB is developing entry-level credential standards in collaboration with the Department, CBCs, case management organizations, the state university system, and representatives from the Sheriff's offices this week in Tampa.
- 5) Effective October 3, 2011, the FCB will require that individuals in positions requiring certification be certified within one year of date of hire.
- 6) The employer is responsible for ensuring that only credentialed child welfare staff perform child welfare services. The FCB is responsible for tracking compliance with child welfare certification status. The FCB will develop a database to track timelines and automatically place an individual on inactive status when deadlines are not met. The FCB is in the process of developing notification and reporting protocols.

### **Re-Certification**

Effective October 3, 2011, child welfare professionals will be re-certified every two years. To maintain certification, CEU providers must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. Are an accredited college or university;
- b. Are approved for CEUs by another state or national certification or licensing board; or
- c. Hold FCB Approved Provider Status. See [http://www.flcertificationboard.org/Training\\_How-To-Become-An-Education-Provider.cfm](http://www.flcertificationboard.org/Training_How-To-Become-An-Education-Provider.cfm) for more information.

### **Curriculum**

HB 279 also allows child welfare agencies to have the flexibility to develop pre-service training curriculum based upon the approved child welfare core competencies. New curriculum submitted for approval must be based on these core competencies. The Department is in the process of procuring a vendor to update the statewide curriculum for Child Protective Investigators.

**Florida Administrative Code Chapter 65C-33, Child Welfare Training and Certification**

The Department will be filing a notice of rule development within the next 30 days. Due to the changes in legislation many rules of Chapter 65C-33 will be repealed.

The FCB will be sending additional certification materials to all child welfare organizations. Questions regarding certification should be directed to the FCB at 850-222-6314. Questions regarding curriculum should be directed to John Harper at 850-717-4643 or email [john\\_harper@dcf@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:john_harper@dcf@dcf.state.fl.us) and questions regarding changes to the Florida Administrative Code should be directed to Eleese Davis at 850-717-4650 or email [eleese\\_davis@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:eleese_davis@dcf.state.fl.us).

cc: Pete Digre, Deputy Secretary  
Drew Parker, General Counsel  
CBC Contract Managers  
Florida Coalition for Children