



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist
Governor

Robert A. Butterworth
Secretary

DATE: March 3, 2008
TO: Regional Directors
FROM: Robert A. Butterworth, Secretary
SUBJECT: Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC)

Purpose: This memorandum provides information on changes to the Department's ICPC process that will improve case processing times and expedite the safe and timely placement of children.

Background: As stated in my January 16 press release, children are waiting weeks, even months, to be placed with out-of-state relatives and this is not acceptable. Since that date, I have implemented several changes to the ICPC process. I shared my general direction with lead agencies on February 7 at the Florida Children's Coalition meeting and this memorandum outlines very specific actions being taken to expedite cases and improve the ICPC process.

Actions: To address the critical need for improvements, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Steven Pennypacker as the Florida Interstate Compact Administrator. Mr. Pennypacker brings considerable expertise to the office due to his current assignment as a Department managing attorney for the Third and Eighth Judicial Circuits. In addition, he has served as general magistrate for the Eighth Judicial Circuit, accepting caseload assignments from dependency judges. As Compact Administrator, he will lead the ICPC Initiative, which will entail establishing close working relationships with members of the judiciary as well as developing diplomatic relationships with other states who want to follow Florida's lead, nationally, in improving the ICPC process. Other actions currently underway include:

- ICPC staff will communicate directly with the lead agencies that generate or conduct the ICPC home studies in order to eliminate the duplication of efforts between the lead agencies and regional ICPC liaisons.
- The Office of Information Systems and the Office of Family Safety will automate the Florida ICPC process. Effective immediately, lead agencies must email all requests for home studies to: ICPC@dcf.state.fl.us. The Florida ICPC office will send all incoming requests for home studies, progress reports, etc., to lead agencies in password protected Adobe files. In addition, the ICPC program has been designated as the pilot for the Department's agency-wide imaging initiative.

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- Circuit court judges will be given access to ICPC case status information through the Enterprise Client Index by April 2008. This will enable both the courts and other interested parties to view the status of ICPC cases.
- All incoming and ongoing cases have recently been reassigned to headquarters' ICPC staff based on geographic areas of the country to promote efficiency and improve working relationships between Florida and other states. In addition, one ICPC staff person has been assigned to cases involving Georgia and Alabama and one ICPC staff person has been assigned to all cases involving New York and New Jersey.
- The Office of Family Safety, in collaboration with the Office of the State Court Administrator, will establish an ICPC Advisory Panel comprised of judges to oversee needed improvements.

As you can see, we are moving quickly with some very exciting changes that will have positive outcomes for the families and children we serve. I am committed to the Department being a national leader in the interstate placement of children and I have devoted substantial Department resources to make this system effective. Your commitment to assisting us in implementing these initiatives is greatly appreciated.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Patricia Badland, Director of the Office of Family Safety, at (850) 487-2383 or Eleese Davis, Chief of Systems Performance Management, at (850) 921-9857. The Office of Family Safety will be sending a technical memorandum to lead agencies regarding ICPC processing procedures.

cc: Don Winstead, Deputy Secretary
George Sheldon, Assistant Secretary for Operations
David Fairbanks, Assistance Secretary for Programs
Patricia Badland, Director of Family Safety
Community-Based Care CEOs
Circuit Administrators
Mary Cagle, CLS Director