

2014

Independent Living Services Advisory Council



Photograph of the Suncoast Region #itCANbedone campaign launch

2014

Report of Independent Living Services
for Florida's Foster Youth



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Background

Independent Living Services Advisory Council

The Independent Living Services Advisory Council was created in 2002 by the Florida Legislature (§409.1451(7), Florida Statute). The Department of Children and Families provides administrative support to the Advisory Council.

The charge of the Independent Living Services Advisory Council is to review and make recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of independent living transition services. Each year, the Advisory Council prepares and submits a report to the Florida Legislature and the Department of Children and Families on the status of the services being provided, including successes and barriers to these services.

As set forth in statute, the membership consists of representatives from the Department of Children and Families' headquarters and regional offices, Community-Based Care lead agencies, Florida Department of Education, Agency for Health Care Administration, State Youth Advisory Board, Career Source (formerly Workforce Florida, Inc.), Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office, foster parents, recipients of the Road-to-Independence Program funding, and representatives from faith-based and community-based organizations, mentoring programs, higher education and the judicial system.

Below is a table of the Independent Living Services Advisory Council membership as of December 2014.

Independent Living Services Advisory Council Membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dehryl McCall, Advisory Council Chairman, CareerSource Florida, Inc.▪ Allan Chernoff, City of Life Foundation▪ Curtis Jenkins, Florida Department of Education▪ Mathew Johns, 4Kids of South Florida, Inc.▪ Trudy Petkovich, Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association▪ Teri Saunders, Heartland for Children, Inc.▪ Diane Schofield, Hands of Mercy Everywhere, Inc.▪ Jean Becker-Powell, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice▪ Shila Salem, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity▪ Grainne O'Sullivan, Department of Children and Families, Children's Legal Services▪ Sonia Valladeres, Guardian Ad Litem

Legislative History

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (1999)

In 1999, the federal government enacted the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act. This legislation gave states increased funding to provide foster teens and young adults who have “aged out” of the foster care system better access to programs that are designed to promote the development of adult self-sufficiency. Available Independent Living training opportunities, programmatic supports, and direct services covered by the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act include: educational training and supports; preparation for post-secondary education; daily life skills training; employment training; substance abuse services; pregnancy prevention and preventive health activities; and programs designed to connect foster teens and young adults who have aged out of foster care with positive and permanent adult mentors.

Road-to-Independence Act (2002)

In 2002, Florida’s Legislature passed the Road-to-Independence Act. This state-based program established a system of independent living transition services to enable older children in foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 to transition to self-sufficiency as adults. The Road-to-Independence (RTI) Program is also designed to provide direct stipend payments to young adults who have aged out of foster care while they pursue fulltime educational opportunities through continuing adult education (GED), vocational training/certification, or post-secondary associate and bachelor degrees.

Nancy C. Detert Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act (2013)

In 2013, Florida’s Legislature passed the Nancy C. Detert Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act which allows for young adults in or formerly in foster care to voluntarily extend their time in foster care up to the age of 21. The young adults must be enrolled in school on a full-time basis, working or volunteering a minimum of 80 hours per month, or have a recognized disability that prevents full-time participation in educational or employment opportunities. The act offers financial support to young adults participating in post-secondary educational opportunities and shifts life skills training responsibilities to foster parents and group home providers. The act took effect on January 1, 2014. Drafts of the proposed 65C-41 and 65C-42, Florida Administrative Code, are in the rule development stage of promulgation.

Independent Living Transition Services

The Florida Department of Children and Families contracts with 17 Community-Based Care Lead Agencies in Florida to provide Independent Living services for current and former foster youth and young adults. As set forth in statute, four categories of Independent Living services are currently available in Florida, including:

- Extended Foster Care
- Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS)
- Aftercare Support Services
- Road-to-Independence Program

Extended Foster Care (EFC)

Similar to youth who are not in the Department's care, some youth in foster care are not ready to be on their own when they reach age 18. In addition, once young adults go out on their own, they may need to return home for further support before venturing out again.

As of January 1, 2014 young adults have the choice to remain in foster care until their 21st birthday, or 22nd birthday if they have a documented disability. EFC provides young adults with safe housing, case management services, judicial oversight of their progress toward independence, and other services they need to establish a sound foundation for success as independent adults. There are participation requirements for EFC, such as school/work participation and court reviews, and young adults are able to leave and re-enter the program {s. 39.6251(2)(a-e)}.

Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS)

A young adult who has completed high school or has an equivalent credential and who pursues postsecondary education, whether academic or vocational, may be eligible for additional financial support.

Eligibility for Postsecondary Education Services and Support payments is established in section 409.175(2), F.S. for young adults who:

- Turned 18 while residing in licensed care and who have spent a total of six months in licensed out-of-home care; or
- Were adopted after the age of 16 from foster care, or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian, after spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding such placement or adoption; and
- Have earned a standard high school diploma, or its equivalent; and
- Are enrolled in at least 9 credit hours at a Florida Bright Futures-eligible educational institution. If the young adult has a documented disability or is faced with another challenge or circumstance that would prevent full-time attendance, the young adult may be enrolled for fewer than 9 credit hours, if the educational institution approves.

The law enables PESS for the above described young adults attending Florida Bright Futures eligible schools. There is another option for financial support for a young adult who wishes to attend a postsecondary school that is not a Bright Futures school (e.g., an out-of-state school). An annual federal Education Training Voucher (ETV) educational stipend payment of up to \$5,000, with a state match of \$1,250, may be available provided the chosen academic institution meets ETV eligibility requirements. ETV also may be available for a young adult attending a postsecondary institution only part-time.

PESS stipends are made monthly to support eligible young adults who are pursuing postsecondary education. The community-based care service provider makes all housing and utility payments for the student. Any remaining funds are disbursed to the student. This arrangement continues until the student can demonstrate the capability to responsibly manage housing and utility payments. Students receiving the PESS postsecondary educational stipend also may be in Extended Foster Care.

Aftercare Support Services

Aftercare Support Services are temporary and/or emergency support payments and services designed to prevent homelessness and meet the immediate needs of young adults formerly in foster care. Young adults formerly in foster care, between the ages of 18-22 years who have “aged out” of an out-of-home placement or who were adopted or placed with an approved guardian after reaching the age of 16 may be eligible for these services. Young adults may receive Aftercare Support Services if they are not currently enrolled in Extended Foster Care, PESS, or the Road-to-Independence Program.

Road-to-Independence Program (RTI)

Young adults enrolled in any Independent Living program as of December 31, 2013, including Road to Independence or Transitional Support Services, or children in Subsidized Independent Living may choose to remain in their current program for as long as they retain eligibility for the duration of that specific program.

Any young adult enrolled in a pre-2014 Independent Living Program may choose to opt in to Extended Foster Care or PESS. Young adults cannot participate in both RTI and EFC or PESS.

Number of Teens in Out-of-Home Care and Young Adults Accessing Independent Living Services

- **4,200** - Approximate number of teens between the ages of 13-17 residing in out-of-home care placement on any given day during the 2014 calendar year
- **2,400** - Approximate number of young adults ages 18-23 accessing Independent Living services on any given day over the 2014 calendar year

Number of Young Adults, Ages 18- 23, Accessing Independent Living Services			
	Dec 2013	June 2014	Sept 2014
Extended Foster Care (EFC)	0	588	431
Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS)	0	890	1,076
EFC and PESS	0	11	16
Aftercare	33	37	0
Road to Independence	2,139	956	738
Transitional Support Services	286	2	0
Total*	2,458	2,480	2,261

**Duplicated count*

Youth Engagement and Advocacy

Through direct participation on Florida’s Children and Youth Cabinet’s Youth Commission, current and former youth in foster care are given the opportunity to develop leadership skills and advocate for a variety of issues that directly impact state agency efforts, such as the Child and Family Services Review process and the agency improvement planning efforts.

Florida Youth SHINE (Striving High for Independence and Empowerment) is a youth run peer driven organization that empowers current and former foster youth to become leaders and advocates within their communities. Florida Youth SHINE continues to engage current and former youth in foster care throughout the state. In 2014, the 12 chapters held numerous local meetings and have partnered with or served as representatives on local Youth Advisory/Advocacy Boards.

The Florida Youth Leadership Academy Class VII met in the spring of 2014. The program focused on developing leadership and advocacy skills designed to help engage foster youth in business, government and education. The program is jointly sponsored by the Department of Children and Families and Connected by 25.

Several current and former youth in foster care provide leadership and advocacy for children residing within the foster care system through legislative testimony, policy meetings, the Dependency Summit, and other leadership efforts.

Housing

In July and August 2014, Office of Child Welfare staff met with officials from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation and the Department of Economic Opportunity to discuss housing options for young adults in care. The Office of Child Welfare then developed a statewide map identifying areas with housing providers that have made a number of properties/apartments available for this population. Staff linked the Community-Based Care (CBC) providers with the Florida Housing contacts and established a housing utilization list to track whether the housing was being utilized and the reason if not. Barriers identified as a result of this effort included communication issues between the housing property managers and the CBC liaisons, and

qualification issues for youth in meeting the requirements to reside in the properties. The properties and point person contact information for these properties was then listed on the newly established “#itCANbedone” website, www.MyFLFamilies.com/itCANbedone, for access by youth and case managers.

In September 2014, staff reviewed the existing living arrangements for the young adults in care in the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN). The vast majority of former foster youth reside on their own in apartment settings. While this may be appropriate for some young adults enrolled in postsecondary educational programs, the Department will partner with CBCs, our Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, and other community partners to help recruit additional foster homes for young adults participating in Extended Foster Care.

Health Care

In July 2014, community advocates notified the Office of Child Welfare that a large number of young adults served by DCF are not aware of their new eligibility for Medicaid. These young adults aged out prior to the extension of foster care and the Affordable Care Act, and are now over 21 years of age. In partnership with the Department’s Automated Community Connection to Economic Self Sufficiency (ACCESS) Office, the Office of Child Welfare identified the population of young adults who had not applied for Medicaid. The Office of Child Welfare issued guidance and worked in partnership with Community-Based Care providers throughout the state to address this concern. As a result, as of December 1, 2014, all young adults participating in an Independent Living Program have been enrolled in Medicaid.

To continue monitoring Medicaid enrollment of youth who reached age 18 while in foster care but are not currently receiving Independent Living Services, in fall 2014 the Department began disseminating a quarterly list to each Regional Managing Director reflecting young adults ages 18-26 who reached age 18 while in foster care with their current Medicaid status. Lists were sent in September and December 2014 and will continue through 2015.

Awareness Campaign

In September 2014, the Department and partners throughout the state launched the “It Can Be Done” campaign. This campaign highlights successes of Florida’s youth in foster care in pursuing their educational, professional and life goals. The campaign, developed in partnership with former and current foster youth, engages local businesses, organizations and communities to rally around foster youth to support and empower them in achieving their goals. Youth and supporters can share their successes and show their enthusiasm by using the hashtag #itCANbedone on photos and videos on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The social media posts are intended to show youth achieving their goals and showcase community support.

The campaign website, MyFLFamilies.com/itCANbedone, highlights resources available for youth and provides businesses, organizations and communities ways to offer support. Supporters have the opportunity to help with everything from mentorships and internships, to fostering and adoption.

Keys to Independence Pilot Project

A driver's license can help a youth obtain employment, go to school events, and participate in social activities. However, there are many barriers for youth in foster care who want to learn to drive safely and to obtain a driver's license. In order to address this, the Florida Keys to Independence Act was signed into law in 2014. It is aimed at assisting youth in licensed foster care between the ages of 15 to 21. The legislature set aside \$800,000 per year for this three-year pilot project. The pilot project will reimburse youth and caregivers for costs associated with driver's education, obtaining driver's licenses and motor vehicle insurance.

There are three options for insurance coverage for youth in foster care who obtain a driver's license:

- Foster parents/caregivers may choose to add a youth in foster care, who is living in their home, to their own insurance policy.
- A youth who is 17 years of age can now sign for his/her own insurance under the disability of non-age section of the Keys to Independence Act.
- A youth may apply for coverage under the Florida Automobile Joint Underwriting Association (FAJUA). The FAJUA has the ability to provide young adults in the foster care system with a "Non-Owner" Automobile Insurance Policy.

Department of Agriculture Fostering Success Pilot Project

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) hired six young adults who have aged out of Florida's foster care system as part of a pilot program created by the Florida Legislature. The program was developed as a priority of Representative Ben Albritton, who worked with the Florida Guardian ad Litem program, the Department of Children and Families and other legislators to implement and fund the pilot. The pilot is in coordination with the state's new "It Can Be Done" outreach campaign, which seeks to open career opportunities for former foster youth.

On-Campus Support for Current and Former Foster Youth Enrolled in Post-secondary Education

The Department has supported the development of Florida Reach, a network for campus support efforts for current and former foster youth enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions. Developed jointly by the Department of Children and Families and Department of Education, Florida Reach identifies best practices, supports statewide data collection and research, and is creating a resource guide for coaches and liaisons to use when working with foster youth and alumni. Florida Reach also focuses on career development opportunities to assist former foster youth in obtaining stable employment.

Currently, 18 colleges and universities throughout the state have identified campus coaches or liaisons to work with students from foster care. For more information, visit www.myflfamilies.com/reach.

Overview of Available Data and Reports

Independent Living and Transition Critical Services Checklist (2007-2010)

In 2007, Florida created the Independent Living and Transition Critical Services Checklist. This survey was designed to analyze and capture the success levels of youth who had aged out of foster care (ages 18-22) in establishing adult self-sufficiency. Current foster teens (ages 13-17) also were surveyed in an effort to gain a better understanding of how well foster teens are being prepared for the possibility of aging out of foster care, as well as to understand how foster teens viewed the overall quality of services provided by the foster care system. The paper-based Independent Living and Transition Critical Services Checklist was last administered in 2010, and has since been replaced by three separate online surveys, listed next.

Federal National Youth in Transition Database (2011-current)

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) online survey is a federally required 88 question survey. The federal NYTD survey is administered in Florida every other year by Connected by 25 in an online format to current and former foster teens in predetermined cohorts of 17, 19, and 21 year-olds. The objective of the survey is to gain a better understanding of how this population is moving towards achieving the goal of adult self-sufficiency. Categories and questions covered by the survey address health, housing and transportation, education, employment, and involvement with the juvenile/criminal justice system.

Florida National Youth in Transition Database (2011-current)

In 2011, Florida's Department of Children and Families implemented an expanded version of NYTD to be used on an annual basis to survey Florida's young people ages 18-22 that have aged out of Florida's foster care system. This survey is administered on an annual basis to all former foster care youth (ages 18-22) who can be located and are willing/able to complete the 88-question survey. The survey is administered in an online format and mirrors the categories and questions covered by the federal NYTD survey.

My Services (2011-current)

My Services is a 200+ question online survey that is administered by Connected by 25 in spring and fall of each year that attempts to survey all foster teens (ages 13-17). The survey provides general information on how well teens are being prepared for adult self-sufficiency, as well as how they view the overall quality of services provided by the foster care system. Categories and questions in the survey include:

- Case management practices and general documentation requirements
- Educational attainment services and progression planning
- Employment preparation and employment supports
- Financial literacy and life skills training

- General foster care support and quality of care
- Opportunities to participate in normal teen activities
- Health/dental care services
- Involvement with the juvenile/criminal justice system
- Preparation for aging out of the foster care system

Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) Outcomes Report for Young Adults from Foster Care

Recently, the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program Office (FETPIP) released a report about the activities of all young adults who turned 18 while in the custody of the state during the last seven years. FETPIP is a data collection system that obtains follow-up information on young adults including job employment, continuing postsecondary education activities, military association, and public assistance participation and incarceration status. The purpose of the report is to provide information about young adults served by DCF that can be used for program review processes. General information about FETPIP is available at <http://www.fl DOE.org/fetpip/>.

Survey Results for Teens Ages 13-17

Independent Living and Transition Critical Services Checklist and MyServices

The following survey findings are derived from a combination of both the Independent Living and Transition Critical Services Checklist and the My Services surveys. **Years included in each table reflect the when data collection began; however, not all questions were included from the beginning of data collection.**

Education

Education											
Caseworker reviews school grades and report cards	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					73%	71%	69%	72%	71%	67%
	Number Yes					1,139	1,204	1,189	1,035	943	858
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
Youth has an Education & Career Path Plan [This may be your EPEP]	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					52%	40%	35%	34%	36%	29%
	Number Yes					818	681	599	491	475	368
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
Youth has an Individualized Education Plan [IEP]	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					43%	43%	41%	43%	41%	39%
	Number Yes					669	723	709	622	543	501
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
Youth has changed schools at least once during the school year	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					47%	30%	47%	31%	49%	49%
	Number Yes					734	506	800	440	650	626
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272

Source: My Services Survey - Responses by youth ages 13-17.

Survey results indicate nearly three-fourths of foster teens reported their grades and report cards were reviewed by their caregiver or caseworker. The surveys also indicated teens appear to be unaware or disconnected from the educational planning process, given that only about one-third to one-half of the respondents stated they had an Education and Career Path Plan or Individualized Education Plan. Teens also reported school stability as a major problem; nearly half of all teens reported they had changed schools within the past year.

Employment

Employment											
Currently employed	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes		7%	5%	4%	8%	7%	6%	8%	7%	8%
	Number Yes				64	95	83	74	76	66	64
	Total				1,726	1,198	1,221	1,199	1,013	930	842
Earns extra money by babysitting, mowing lawns, cleaning yards and other activities	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					74%	75%	65%	48%	49%	50%
	Number Yes					532	789	794	690	649	632
	Total					1,361	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
<i>Responses by youth ages 14-17 spring 2010 and 13-17 all Others</i>											
Completed a life skills training program on how to get a job-including job interviewing skills, completing a job application and resume	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					47%	55%	46%	56%	55%	48%
	Number Yes					417	439	330	356	296	269
	Total					883	798	711	638	453	556
<i>Only asked of youth ages 15-16</i>											

Source: My Services Survey - Responses by youth ages 14-17 spring 2010 and ages 13-17 for all other years.

During this reporting period, only a small percentage of foster teens reported they are currently employed (8%). However, half of foster teens indicated they are being given the opportunity to earn money through alternative activities, such as babysitting or yard work. One troubling finding from the survey is that only about half of surveyed foster teens indicated they have received training on how to apply and interview for a job.

Health and Dental Care

Health and Dental Care											
	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
Youth receiving needed medical care	Percentage No, I am receiving the medical care I need					86%	84%	86%	89%	85%	86%
	No, I am receiving the medical care I need					1,338	1,435	1,479	1,218	1,124	1,095
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
Youth receiving needed mental health care	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					87%	88%	85%	88%	88%	84%
	Number Yes					934	969	897	784	734	721
	Total					1,072	1,098	1,057	891	836	855
Youth receiving substance abuse treatment services	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					61%	57%	61%	63%	66%	56%
	Number Yes					345	334	353	317	299	252
	Total					568	569	579	499	451	448
Youth taking prescription medication	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					44%	47%	44%	47%	49%	50%
	Number Yes					682	793	753	680	646	639
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
Youth who have seen a dentist in the last year	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes				72%	85%	85%	86%	88%	89%	87%
	Number Yes				893	1,330	1,448	1,472	1,269	1,171	1115
	Total				1,237	1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1272
Youth who have had an eye exam in the last year	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes				44%	81%	82%	68%	71%	66%	67%
	Number Yes				540	1,271	1,195	1,164	1,029	873	858
	Total				1,237	1,560	1,460	1,712	1,441	1,319	1272

Source: My Services Survey - Responses by youth ages 14-17 spring 2010 and youth ages 13-17 for all other years.

Eighty-six percent of foster teens indicate they are receiving the medical care they need, and a similar number reported they have had a dental exam within the last year. Teens who reported they were currently taking a prescription medication indicate they have a good understanding of their medication's possible side effects. When asked about mental health and substance abuse services provided under their health care plans, 84 percent of respondents reported they are receiving needed mental health services, but only a little more than half of teens (56%) reported they feel they are getting the substance abuse services they need.

Normalcy

Normalcy											
Youth has a written plan for participation in activities	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes	33%	44%	52%	66%	64%	68%	62%	63%	66%	51%
	Yes				803	1,003	1,153	1,056	914	877	650
	Total				1,216	1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
<i>Responses by youth age 14-17 spring 2010 and 13-17 all others.</i>											
Youth can spend time with friends WITHOUT adult supervision.	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					74%	67%	65%	65%	62%	63%
	Yes					1,153	1,130	1,117	945	822	807
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
<i>Responses by youth age 14-17 spring 2010 and 13-17 all others.</i>											
Youth can spend the night with friends from school or social group.	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					51%	51%	45%	46%	46%	48%
	Yes					650	443	542	467	426	408
	Total					1,269	867	1,199	1,013	930	842
<i>Only asked of youth age 15-17 except for fall 2011 age 16-17.</i>											
Receives a personal allowance each week.	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					54%	55%	53%	56%	57%	56%
	Yes					845	938	901	810	758	711
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
Have a Florida Identification	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes					38%	40%	39%	40%	41%	38%
	Yes					593	687	675	572	540	480
	Total					1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
<i>Responses by youth age 14-17 spring 2010 and 13-17 all others.</i>											
Have a Learners Permit	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes						11%	10%	9%	9%	12%
	Yes						130	117	93	88	97
	Total						1,221	1,199	1,013	930	842

<i>Responses by youth age 15-17.</i>											
Successfully completed a driver's education course	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes	6%	7%	11%	8%	5%	13%	12%	14%	17%	15%
	Yes				81	40	162	139	103	110	129
	Total				955	853	1,221	1,199	742	687	842
<i>Only asked of youth age 16-17.</i>											
Have a Driver's License	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes						7%	3%	2%	3%	2%
	Yes						57	22	15	20	13
	Total						867	862	742	687	591
<i>Source: My Services Survey - Only asked of youth age 16-17.</i>											

Teens in foster care continue to report that efforts to establish more normal living conditions within the foster care system are lagging. The percentage of teens who reported they have a written approved activities plan has fallen to 51%. Compliance with statutory requirements that youth in foster care receive a weekly allowance is only 56%. Teens who reported having a State-issued identification card (38%), learner's permit (12%), or drivers' license (2%) were low.

Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System

Juvenile Justice System Involvement											
Been arrested in the past 12 months	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes	10%	28%	30%	30%	29%	27%	28%	29%	28%	24%
	Yes	405	841	663	514	454	467	482	419	366	302
	Total	3,897	3,004	2,176	1,726	1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
Currently on probation or under DJJ supervision	Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014
	Percentage Yes	Not Asked	42%	23%	24%	21%	21%	22%	23%	23%	18%
	Yes		1,252	505	407	333	364	379	330	308	223
	Total		2,982	2,163	1,710	1,560	1,699	1,712	1,441	1,319	1,272
<i>Source: My Services Survey - Responses by youth age 14-17 spring 2010 and 13-17.</i>											

Juvenile Justice System Involvement by Age

Been arrested in the past 12 months	Age	13	14	15	16	17	Total
	Percentage Yes	14%	23%	29%	28%	23%	24%
	Yes	31	49	70	85	67	302
	Total	217	213	251	305	286	1,272

Source: My Services Survey - Responses by youth age 13-17.

Currently on probation or under DJJ supervision	Age	13	14	15	16	17	Total
	Percentage Yes	12%	15%	30%	25%	27%	18%
	Yes	22	28	48	70	55	223
	Total	183	206	243	300	387	1,272

Source: My Services Survey - Responses by youth age 13-17.

More than one-quarter (26%) of foster teens report they have been arrested within the last year or are currently under some type of Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) supervision. Of those teens who report being arrested within the last year, more than one-third (38%) are age 13. Thirty-five percent of the teens are age 15, 33% are age 16, 32% are age 17 and about one-fifth (21%) of the teens are age 14.

Survey Results for Young Adults 18-22

Florida National Youth in Transition Database Survey

Education

Education								
Completed Grade 12 or Graduation Equivalency Diploma	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	52%	48%	48%	54%	57%	56%	64%
	Yes	979	744	568	1,093	1,041	1,011	912
	Total	1,887	1,547	1,180	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424
Completed Post-Secondary Education	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	5%	3%	3%	3%	7%	5%	12%
	Yes	86	48	33	54	65	96	175
	Total	1,887	1,547	1,180	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424

FL NYTD - responses by young adults age 18-22.

More than one-half (64%) of young adults formerly in foster care reported that they graduated or received a GED. This year, a higher percentage (12%) of young adults reported that they had completed post-secondary education. Increasing both percentages remains a priority of the CBCs and the Department.

Employment

Employment								
Any job: part-time, full-time, temporary, or seasonal	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	30%	22%	17%	14%	19%	49%	20%
	Yes	572	342	203	195	346	907	290
	Total	1,920	1,559	1,199	1,398	1,821	1,852	1,424
Full-time job	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	6%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	Yes	124	54	40	61	72	83	61
	Total	1,920	1,559	1,199	1,398	1,821	1,852	1,424
Of those having a full-time job, percent who have benefits	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	52%	60%	52%	No Longer Asked	No Longer Asked	No Longer Asked	No Longer Asked
	Yes	57	27	16				
	Total	109	45	31				
Minimum wage	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	31%	36%	36%	40%	35%	28%	24%
	Yes	163	118	72	97	109	86	71
	Total	525	331	198	244	310	312	290

Responses by young adults age 18-22.

Twenty percent of young adults formerly in foster care held a job of any kind in 2014. This is down from the 2013 all-time high of 49%. Only four percent of young adults reported having full-time employment. Of those who have a job, less than one-quarter (24%) report earning minimum wage.

Supportive Services

Supportive Services								
Connected to an adult mentor (Question changed to: Do you currently have a relationship that is trusting, supportive, and unconditional with at least one adult who will always be there for you?)	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage							
	Yes	42%	46%	50%	76%	83%	82%	74%
	Yes	738	682	556	1,596	1,392	1,419	1048
	Total	1,755	1,487	1,118	2,013	1,812	1,852	1,424

Responses by young adults age 18-22.

The percentage of young adults connected to an adult mentor decreased from 82% in 2013 to 74% in 2014.

Health and Dental Care

Health and Dental Care								
Youth has health insurance coverage	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage							
	Yes	79%	82%	86%	85%	86%	71%	75%
	Yes	1,498	1,247	1,021	1,719	1,559	1,483	1071
	Total	1,886	1,530	1,189	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424
Received dental services in the last year?	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage							
	Yes	31%	30%	36%	40%	39%	40%	42%
	Yes	572	523	426	800	702	741	601
	Total	1,863	1,753	1,175	2,004	1,821	1,852	1424

Responses by young adults age 18-22

Seventy-five percent of young adults who have aged out of the foster care system have health insurance coverage. While there has been steady improvement to the number of former foster care young adults who are receiving dental care, from 31% in 2008 to 42% in 2014, this is still an area where significant improvement is needed.

Housing & Transportation

Housing & Transportation								
Safe Housing	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	95%	96%	97%	90%	92%	97%	91%
	Yes	1,777	1,465	1,140	1,806	1,683	1,699	1,298
	Total	1,877	1,528	1,178	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424
Spent at least one night homeless in past 12 months (Question changed in 2011 to: Have you ever been homeless?)	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	14%	14%	10%	28%	28%	15%	30%
	Yes	267	218	121	561	492	261	421
	Total	1,899	1,530	1,177	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424
Have reliable means of transportation to school Question changed in 2011 to: Reliable means of Transportation to school and/or Work?	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	80%	84%	87%	73%	80%	79%	75%
	Yes	1,519	1,309	1,033	1,473	1,379	1,371	1,063
	Total	1,901	1,556	1,192	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424
Have a reliable means of transportation to work Question changed in 2011 to: Reliable means of Transportation to school and/or Work?	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	45%	36%	31%	73%	80%	79%	75%
	Yes	645	558	366	1,473	1,379	1,371	1,063
	Total	1,437	1,533	1,193	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424
Do you have in your possession a driver's license	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	75%	69%	70%	44%	47%	28%	30%
	Yes	731	556	402	891	872	513	426
	Total	980	808	571	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424

Responses by young adults age 18-22

The percentage of former foster young adults who reported they are residing in safe housing decreased in 2014, and the percentage of young adults who spent at least one night homeless in the past 12 months increased. Additionally, access to reliable school and work transportation continues to be a significant issue for this population.

Involvement in the Criminal Justice System

Criminal Justice								
Been arrested in the past 12 months <i>Question changed in 2011 to have you ever been arrested</i>	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	25%	23%	17%	43%	40%	11%	33%
	Yes	1,226	551	210	860	688	197	470
	Total	4,905	2,397	1,203	2,015	1,821	1,852	1,424
Currently on probation or under juvenile court supervision	Year	2008	2009	2010	Florida NYTD 2011	Florida NYTD 2012	Florida NYTD 2013	Florida NYTD 2014
	Percentage Yes	10%	12%	10%	No Longer Asked	No Longer Asked	No Longer Asked	No Longer Asked
	Yes	155	227	117				
	Total	1,548	1,888	1,200				

Responses by young adults age 18-22.

In 2014, the percentage of young adults formerly in foster care reporting they had been arrested within the last 12 months increased to 33% after an all-time low of 11% in 2013.

FETPIP Report of Foster Youth Alumni, Ages 18-25

KIDS AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE - FALL 2013 FINDINGS

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS 9,964

TOTAL WITH OUTCOME DATA 7,031 71%

FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT DATA (4th QTR)

FOUND EMPLOYED	2,595	26%
AVERAGE EARNINGS - ALL	\$2,763	
FOUND EMPLOYED FULL-TIME	620	24%
FULL-TIME AVERAGE EARNINGS	\$6,548	

Percent working full-time is of those employed.
Full-Time Earnings = earnings of at least \$4,050 per qtr (min. wage x 13 wks. x 40 hrs)

EARNINGS BY LEVEL*

Number of employed earning:

Less Than \$7.79 per hr (Qtrly Wages less than \$4,050)	1,975	76%
Wages Between \$7.79 and \$14.13 Inclusive (Qtrly Wages at least \$4,050 but less than \$7,350)	512	20%
Wages Between \$14.14 and \$20.47 Inclusive (Qtrly Wages at least \$7,350 but less than \$10,649)	84	3%
Wages at Least \$20.48 per hr. (Qtrly Wages at least \$10,649)	24	1%

*Levels determined by qtrly wage /520 hrs (40hrs. x 13 wks.)

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT DATA

CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT (U.S. Post Office, U.S. Civil Service)	****	****
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FLORIDA CONTINUING EDUCATION DATA

TOTAL CONT. THEIR EDUCATION (Unduplicated)	1,950	20%
...IN DISTRICT POSTSECONDARY	319	16%
...IN FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM	1,549	79%
AA Program	663	43%
AS Program	128	8%
AAS Program	****	****
Adult Vocational Certificate	35	2%
Vocational Credit Certificate	11	1%
Other	705	46%
...IN STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM	164	8%
...IN PRIVATE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY	15	1%

Students may be in multiple settings, therefore,
sum of detail may exceed total unduplicated count.

OF TOTAL CONT. ED. THOSE FOUND EMPLOYED 744 38%

RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps

RECEIVING TANF ... & EMPLOYED	192	2%
RECEIVING FOOD STAMPS ... & EMPLOYED	4,988	50%
RECEIVING TANF &or FOOD STAMPS ... & EMPLOYED	5,007	50%
	1,519	30%

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS DATA

INCARCERATED	391	4%
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION	569	6%

Source: Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program

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This FETPIP report of young adults ages 18-25, who turned 18 while in foster care, is divided into seven primary sets of data types. These are Total Individuals, Total with Outcome Data, Florida Employment Data, Earnings by Level, Federal Employment Data, Florida Continuing Education Data, Receiving Public Assistance, and Florida Department of Corrections Data.

The total number of youth who have reached the age 18 while in foster care reported to FETPIP by DCF was 9,964. Seventy-one percent of these individuals were identified via FETPIP's data matching method during the target period, July 2012 - June 2013. Of this group:

- 26% were employed in public, private, or non-profit establishments who are covered by the Florida Unemployment Insurance System during the October-December 2013 target period
- 24% of those individuals were employed full-time
- 76% were earning less than \$7.67 per hour
- None were employed in the federal career service system managed through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) during the October-December 2013 target period

- 20% were continuing their postsecondary education in Florida in a public adult education program, Career & Technical Education (CTE) program, community college, or public or private college or university
 - 79% were enrolled in the Florida college system
 - 16% in a school district-administered postsecondary Career & Technical Education (CTE) program
 - 8% in the Florida University System
 - 1% in a private college or university
 - 38% of those enrolled in higher education were also employed
- 2% received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) during the October - December 2013 period and 50% received food stamps during the target period as heads of household; 30% of those who received food stamps were employed
- 4% were in a state correctional facility during the October-December 2013 period and 6% were adjudicated to the Department of Corrections community supervision during the target period

This initial FETPIP report on young adults from foster care will be used as a benchmark to gauge the efforts of the child welfare system to improve outcomes for foster youth transitioning to independence. The Department will use this data to corroborate trends and conditions identified through the survey data and reports provided by community-based care agencies.

Recommendations of the Independent Living Advisory Council

At this time, the Advisory Council respectfully submits the following conclusions and recommendations to the Department of Children and Families:

Pregnant and Parenting Teens

According to the spring 2014 Report of the MyServices survey, 11% of the surveyed 17 year-old youth in foster care reported having a child or children. An additional 2% were pregnant. The state child welfare system is responsible for ensuring that all youth in foster care are safe, healthy, permanently connected to families, and have the skills they need to be successful. There is a growing recognition among child welfare professionals that designing service delivery methods specifically for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care is a critical part of this responsibility. Adolescent parents face multiple obstacles in balancing their own transition to adulthood with raising a child. Below are several recommendations identified during the past year by the Independent Living Services Advisory Council Pregnant and Parenting Teens Workgroup. The workgroup was composed of representatives from the Department of Children and Families, Community-Based Care lead agencies, Florida Coalition for Children, maternity home providers, child advocates, and other stakeholders.

Safety – Research conducted by the Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy at Florida State University has found that approximately two-thirds of adolescent parents studied

are ready to safely parent their children. **In order to ensure the safety of all children born to teen parents in foster care, this workgroup recommends:**

- **Child welfare professionals should conduct risk assessments for all pregnant and parenting teens to assess parent/guardian protective capacities. Information gathered by a risk assessment would be used to determine whether identified dangers or safety threats can be offset or controlled by the protective capacities of one or more adults in the home, and in subsequent safety planning.**
- **Case plans for pregnant and parenting teens in foster care should include a plan for the care and safety of the teen’s child(ren).**
- **The cases of a teen and his or her children should be connected with a single case manager.**

Family Engagement – Family relationships, both positive and negative, play a key role in the lives of pregnant and parenting teens. **This workgroup recommends for child welfare professionals:**

- **Changing and broadening perspectives to see the whole family unit. For example, encouraging intergenerational parenting classes, grandparent support groups, sibling groups, etc.**
- **Assessing and developing healthy relationships between the teen and an extended network of family support.**
- **Being flexible to accommodate complex family schedules.**

Developmental Influences – Current or past experiences of poor mental health, low self-esteem, low levels of education, poverty, trauma, childhood adversity (including abuse and neglect), previous pregnancies, violence, and human trafficking, may deeply impact the youth being served. **This workgroup recommends for child welfare professionals:**

- **Using an ecological model when working with youth (family, peers, school, and community).**
- **Applying a holistic approach – including trauma-informed care, dating/intimate partner violence, cultural/racial/ethnic considerations.**
- **Incorporating and tailoring messages and activities for diverse groups.**
- **Recognizing triggers.**

Cross-Systems Training – Engaging pregnant and parenting youth in meaningful assessments and service delivery requires qualified staff who have been trained to support these young adults to build, prepare and maintain their own support teams; identify appropriate placements for themselves and their children; engage in healthy relationships; and ensure their children’s healthy development. **Therefore, this workgroup recommends:**

- **Additional cross-systems training and sharing between case managers, service providers, and the Department of Children and Families.**
- **Inclusion in pre-service training for case managers, specialized training on how to best serve pregnant and parenting teens in foster care.**

Data Collection and Evaluation – The state information management system must analyze and use the following information about this population, its needs, and outcomes. **Therefore, this workgroup recommends the annual collection and review of the following data:**

- **Number and percent of youth in foster care who are pregnant, along with their demographic information (age, race, ethnicity, placement history, educational status).**
- **Number and percent of young men in foster care who are fathers, along with their demographic information (age, race, ethnicity, placement history, educational status).**
- **Number and percent of fathers of babies who are actively connected and involved in their baby’s growth and development.**
- **Number and percent of young parents who complete high school, are enrolled in college or postsecondary education program, or have access to meaningful job training or employment opportunities.**
- **Number and percent of young parents who exit foster care to live with family.**
- **Number and percent of babies of young parents in foster care who are born full-term and without drug exposure.**
- **Number and percent of children born to young parents in foster care who are enrolled in a high-quality early care and education program.**
- **Number and percent of parenting youth who remain in care to age 21 and/or re-enter care.**

Additionally, this workgroup recommends the creation of a group care workgroup in the upcoming year to examine challenges and best practices related to group care, and to continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations put forth by the Pregnant and Parenting Teens Workgroup.

Employment

A primary task in transitioning to adulthood is finding and sustaining employment. Florida NYTD and MyServices survey results show that very few current or former foster youth between the ages of 13 and 23 are employed. Similarly, the FETPIP report reveals low rates of employment and low earnings for those former foster youth ages 18-25 who are employed. These findings mirror national studies of former foster youth.

The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends the creation of an employment workgroup to assess the effectiveness of youth access to workforce services at the regional workforce boards or other programs designed to assist young adults in obtaining employment, to include reviewing:

- **Barriers**
- **Common services accessed from region-to-region**
- **Service needs**
- **Gaps in service provision**
- **Recommendations to improve access**

In collaboration with the community-based care agencies, this workgroup will evaluate strategies to promote more community-based partnerships that will teach/emphasize the importance of employment and its impact on achieving self-sufficiency for youth in and aging out of foster care.

This workgroup also will partner with the Department of Education to promote awareness of Career Pathways and the close connections of these pathways to regional economic development, job growth, emerging employment sectors, etc.

Education

When supported by strong out-of-home care practices and policies, positive school experiences can counteract the negative effects of abuse, neglect, separation, and lack of permanency experienced by children and youth in foster care. Education provides opportunities for improved well-being in physical, intellectual, and social domains during critical developmental periods, and supports economic success in adult life. A concerted effort by child welfare agencies, education agencies, and the courts could lead to significant progress in changing the consistent and disheartening picture research portrays about educational outcomes for children in foster care.

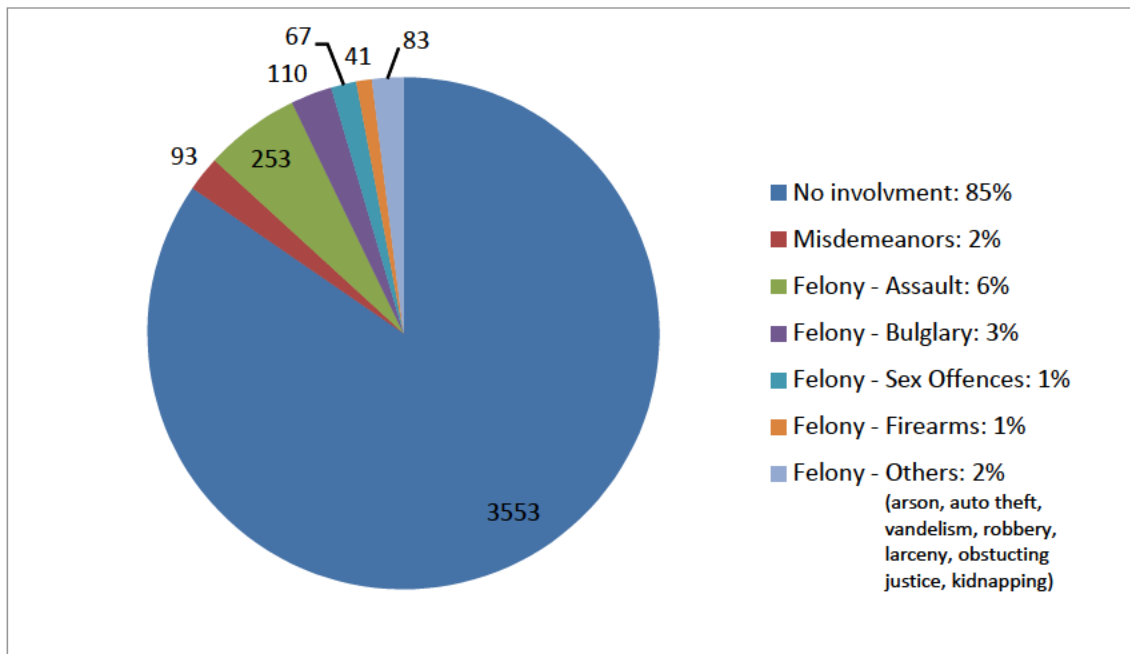
The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends the creation of an education workgroup to assess the effectiveness of youth access to educational services, to include reviewing:

- **School stability**
- **Reading on grade level**
- **School dropout, truancy, and disciplinary actions**
- **High school graduation rates**

Juvenile Justice

Currently, 15% of youth 13-17 in foster care also have open cases with DJJ. The vast majority of these cases involve felony charges. The result of these charges can have long-lasting and debilitating effects on a youth's transition to adulthood.

Department of Juvenile Justice Involvement of Youth, Ages 13-17, in Out of Home Care



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice 2014 Crossover Report

In order to best serve and protect our communities, DJJ has developed several initiatives that may improve outcomes for current and former foster youth also involved in the juvenile justice system. These include:

- **Crossover Youth Practice Model:** The model provides for specialized case management, collaborative recommendations to the judiciary, attendance at hearings, enhanced educational services, and cross system training for stakeholders and families. In-depth data collection captures specific characteristics of dually-involved youth, and provides the foundation for assessing the impact of the CYPM related to the needs and specialized case management for this population. Two of Florida's judicial circuits were among the 13 sites selected across the nation by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at the Georgetown University's Public Policy Institute to implement the model.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) defines trauma as the experience of violence and victimization, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, severe neglect, loss, domestic violence and/or witnessing violence, terrorism, or disasters. Trauma often leads to mental health and other types of co-occurring disorders and contact with the criminal justice system. DJJ is committed to meeting the needs of the youth in our care by providing Trauma-Informed Care.
- **Civil Citation:** The civil citation initiative addresses a youth's behavior at his or her first encounter with the juvenile justice system and provides an alternative to arrest for that child. This gives first-time misdemeanor offenders the opportunity to participate in intervention services at the earliest stage of delinquency. Diverting first-time misdemeanants through civil citation will save millions of dollars that would

otherwise be spent if youth were arrested and required to go through formal delinquency processing.

- **Diversion:** DJJ may recommend diversion programs that are alternatives to the formal juvenile justice system for youth who have been charged with a minor crime. Diversion programs include Community Arbitration, Juvenile Alternative Services Program (JASP), Teen Court, Intensive Delinquency Diversion Services (IDDS), Civil Citation, Boy and Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, mentoring programs, and alternative schools.
- **School-Justice Partnerships:** In Florida, the Supreme Court Steering Committee on Families and Children in the Court was charged with developing and encouraging the implementation of promising practices to help ensure that children involved in dependency and delinquency court cases stay in school and are less likely to be arrested, suspended or expelled. The committee developed an online toolkit at www.floridaschooljustice.org as a resource for local collaborative groups. The toolkit provides information that will help groups identify ways to better address youth misconduct, keep schools safe, limit suspensions and referrals to juvenile justice, and ultimately produce better outcomes for youth.
- **Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI):** Detention is a crucial early phase in the juvenile court process. Placement into a locked detention center pending court significantly increases the odds that youth will be found delinquent and committed to corrections facilities, and can seriously damage their prospects for future success. Yet many detained youth pose little or no threat to public safety. Before JDAI, overreliance on locked detention was widespread — needlessly harming youth.
- **Community Re-entry Teams:** As part of DJJ's transition initiative, the needs of youth returning home following residential placement have been identified through a validated needs assessment. Circuit liaisons have been identified and Community Re-entry Teams have been established to provide support to youth and families throughout the state. The teams operate in each judicial circuit and work to connect youth and families with established resources in their area. These teams are instrumental in ensuring that youth receive the right services, in the right place, at the right time.

The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends that child-welfare organizations throughout the state participate in each of the above DJJ projects and workgroups.

Youth Workgroup

Current and former foster youth are able to provide invaluable input and feedback on programs and policy affecting adolescents. **The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends the creation of a workgroup comprised of a young adult from each of the six Department regions to discuss how to improve the policies, procedures and services provided to them by the Department of Children and Families.** The youth workgroup would be chaired by the current young adult ILSAC member(s).

Youth participating in this workgroup would be requested to participate in one additional substantive workgroup, such as the group care, employment, education, or juvenile justice workgroups.



Photograph of Independent Living Young Adults at the 2014 Child Protection Summit



Response to the
Independent Living Services Advisory Council
2014 Annual Report

Department of Children and Families

March 23, 2015

Mike Carroll
Secretary

Rick Scott
Governor

Florida Statutes established the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, and mandates the issuance of an annual report from the Council, as well as a response from the Department of Children and Families.

Statutory Authority:

409.1451

(7) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.—The Secretary of the Department of Children and Families shall establish the Independent Living Services Advisory Council for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the independent living transition services. This advisory council shall continue to function as specified in this subsection until the Legislature determines that the advisory council can no longer provide a valuable contribution to the department's efforts to achieve the goals of the independent living transition services.

(a) Specifically, the advisory council shall assess the implementation and operation of the system of independent living transition services and advise the department on actions that would improve the ability of the independent living transition services to meet the established goals. The advisory council shall keep the department informed of problems being experienced with the services, barriers to the effective and efficient integration of services and support across systems, and successes that the system of independent living transition services has achieved. The department shall consider, but is not required to implement, the recommendations of the advisory council.

(b) The advisory council shall report to the secretary on the status of the implementation of the system of independent living transition services; efforts to publicize the availability of Aftercare Support Services, the Road-to-Independence Program, and Transitional Support Services; the success of the services; problems identified; and recommendations for department or legislative action; and the department's implementation of the recommendations for department's implementation of the recommendations contained in the Independent Living Services Integration Workgroup Report submitted to the appropriate substantive committees of the legislature by December 31, 2002. **The department shall submit a report by December 31 of each year to the Governor and the Legislature which includes a summary of the factors reported on by the council and identifies the recommendations of the advisory council and either describes the department's actions to implement these recommendations or provides the department's rationale for not implementing the recommendations.**

(c) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory council must include, at a minimum, representatives from the headquarters and district offices of the Department of Children

and Family Services, Community-Based Care lead agencies, the Department of Education, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the State Youth Advisory Board, Workforce Florida, Inc., the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office, foster parents, recipients of Road-to-Independence Program funding, and advocates for foster children. The secretary shall determine the length of the term to be served by each member appointed to the advisory council, which may not exceed 4 year.

(d) The Department of Children and Families shall provide administrative support to the Independent Living Services Advisory Council to accomplish its assigned tasks. The advisory council shall be afforded access to all appropriate data from the department, each Community-Based Care lead agency, and other relevant agencies in order to accomplish the tasks set forth in this section. The data collected may not include any information that would identify a specific child or young adult.

Recommendations by the Independent Living Services Council for the Florida Department of Children and Families

As required by statute, the Department is submitting the following response to the following workgroup conclusions and recommendations for the Department of Children and Families contained in the Independent Living Services Advisory Council's 2014 report.

1. Pregnant and Parenting Teens

The state child welfare system is responsible for ensuring that all youth in foster care are safe, healthy, permanently connected to families and have the skills needed to be successful. There is an emerging recognition that designing service delivery specifically for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care is a critical part of this responsibility. Adolescent parents face multiple obstacles balancing their own transition to adulthood with raising a child. The Workgroup made recommendations concerning the safety of the mother and the child, family engagement and relationship building components of the family unit, developmental influences of the mother and child, the need for cross system trainings for providers of care and the need to improve the data collection and evaluation for the group.

Department Response: The Department recognizes the value of systematic intervention strategies, focused on safety, family engagement, and developmental influences, Cross-Systems Training, Data Collection and Evaluation for the defining of risk and parental empowerment and case management guidance. The Department will work with the Independent Living Services Advisory Council Pregnant and Parenting

Teens Workgroup and Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agencies to determine the best avenue for this service delivery modality. In addition, the Department will convene a quality care workgroup to review, analyze and define quality of care standards for Group care providers, which will reflect the federally identified data collection and performance measurements per the Social Security Act, SEC.477.(42 U.S.C 677). The goal of the group will be to link the Department's service modality with the development of outcome measurements that directly affect educational attainment, employment and employability, avoidance of dependency, homelessness, nonmarital childbirth, incarceration and high risk behaviors in youth and young adults.

2. Employment

The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends the creation of an employment workgroup to assess the effectiveness of the youth accessing workforce services at the regional workforce boards, to include reviewing:

- Barriers
- Common services accessed
- Service needs
- Gaps in service provision
- Recommendations to improve access

Department Response: The Department recognizes the value of youth employability skills development and its implementation in the framework of service delivery. Therefore the Department has partnered directly with the Department of Economic Opportunities (DEO) and the Department of Education (DOE) to develop the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) data analysis. This analysis reflects an overwhelming number of young adults that have reached age 18 in care within the past seven years that are currently being enrolled in Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF)/ Cash assistance programs or who are considerably under-employed. The Department will work with the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, Career SOURCE, DEO, DOE and CBCs to determine the most helpful service partnerships and program delivery to increase the number of young adults obtaining jobs and employability skills development. In addition, the Department will partner with the Florida Coalition for Children Independent Living Subcommittee to identify young adults in care that experience educational challenges and barriers. Assistance to these individuals will be provided through linkages between system partners to identify cross system resources that can be used by the youth and young adults.

3. Education

The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends the creation of an education workgroup to assess the effectiveness of the youth accessing educational services, to include reviewing:

- School stability
- Reading at grade level
- School dropout, truancy, and disciplinary actions
- High school graduation rates

Department Response: The Department recognizes the need for early educational barrier identification and the development of cross systems options to assist with efficient service delivery to young adults in care. The Department will work with the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, DOE and CBCs to determine the most effective way to obtain the requested data, with the acknowledgement that the Department needs to obtain system entry data in order to identify an outcome benchmark. In addition, the Department will partner directly with the Florida REACH and Florida College Access Network workgroup to obtain, analyze and provide recommendations on the school stability, reading and math levels, school dropout, and truancy factors of the young adult at the time of entry into dependency care. The Department will partner with the Florida College system and the Board of Governors State University System to identify, analyze and provide on campus targeted services to young adults in care.

4. Juvenile Justice

Currently 15% of youth ages 13-17 in foster care also have open cases with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The vast majority of these cases involve felony charges. The result of these charges can have long lasting and debilitating effects on a youth's transition to adulthood. The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends that child-welfare organizations across the state participate in each of the above DJJ projects and workgroups.

Department Response: The Department recognizes the need for system to system collaboration in order to maximize service delivery. The Department will work with the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, DJJ and CBCs as a part of the workgroup to review cross system data, analyze commitment timeframes, living arrangement at time of delinquency activity, trainings for system professionals and development of a robust community re-entry platform for Crossover young adults.

5. Youth Workgroup

Current and former foster youth are able to provide invaluable input and feedback on adolescent programming and policy. The Independent Living Services Advisory Council recommends the creation of a workgroup comprised of a young adult from each of the seven Department regions, to discuss how to improve the policies, procedures and services provided to them by the Department of Children and Families. This workgroup will be chaired or co-chaired by a current young adult ILSAC member(s).

- Youth participating in this workgroup will be requested to participate in one additional, substantive workgroup, such as the group care, employment, education, or juvenile justice workgroups.

Department Response: The Department recognizes the value of the youth voice and perspective, as well as the need for data to inform effective policy development and improve practice change. The Department will work with its statewide youth-focused and youth-driven advocacy groups on developing a youth-driven customer service workgroup. The Department will partner with this workgroup in developing a communication plan to share the youth voice with statewide partners.