



Board of Directors Meeting

April 14, 2011

Child Welfare Advocacy Report

Item V.E.

Recommended Action:	Information Only
Issue:	Child Welfare System Update
Strategic Plan Goal:	Child Maltreatment

Dependency Court Improvement Committee

Based on input from brainstorming sessions held in December 2010, the Dependency Court Improvement Committee (DCIC) has developed a Circuit 6 Action Plan. The DCIC Circuit 6 Action Plan 2010-2011 includes goals and action statements that committee members will work to implement over the next 6 months. Following are the six major goals identified in the Action Plan:

1. To effectively address substance abuse issues impacting Circuit 6
2. To reduce child abuse investigation removal rates for Circuit 6
3. To standardize practices for the use of permanent guardianship as a viable permanency option
4. To standardize practices regarding the filing of updated case plans (case plan extensions)
5. To increase the number of supervised visitation resources for Pinellas & Pasco Counties
6. To ensure every child placed in out-of-home care has the benefit of normalcy

A subcommittee/action team has been formed for each goal. Each team includes a leader and at least five DCIC members. The teams are expected to work on the identified goal and provide an update to Judge Day prior to the next DCIC meeting. The target date for completion of all the goals is August 31, 2011.

Everybody's a Teacher Initiative

“Everybody’s a Teacher” is a Department of Children and Families (DCF) statewide initiative focused on improving educational outcomes for children and youth in the child welfare system. On December 1, 2010, DCF kicked off the first of several community meetings that will be held across the state to address obstacles to the educational success of children and youth in foster care and find ways to ensure that they receive a high-quality education. Data indicates that in the aggregate, children in foster care are not making educational progress at the same rate as their peers. This initiative encourages communities to collaboratively address the local barriers and issues that are negatively impacting the educational outcomes of children in care. The premise behind the initiative is that everyone who comes into contact with a child or youth in care has the ability to positively impact that child’s educational outcomes. “We are all teachers, teaching the children around us by our actions and our example.”

A local planning team that includes representatives from DCF, JWB, Eckerd Community Alternatives, Pinellas & Pasco County School Systems, Sherriff’s Office Child Protective Investigations and other community

partners is meeting to plan two Community Conversations, one in Pasco and one in Pinellas County, with the goal of developing an action plan for each county to improve the lives and education of children in care.

Tentatively the Community Conversations are scheduled as follows:

- Pinellas- May 11, 2011 from 9:00-12:00, location to be confirmed
- Pasco - May 18, 2011 from 9:00-12:00, location to be confirmed

A video, Everybody's a Teacher "Backpack", and more information about the initiative is available on the web site: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/initiatives/everybodysateacher/index.shtml>

The "Backpack" provides suggestions on how to be involved in the initiative to help all children succeed in school.