

Florida Department of Children and Families  
*Handout Information Packet*

**Title IV-E Foster Care Waiver Key Facts** – A two page summary of Florida’s foster care demonstration waiver

**Caseload Trends** – Charts showing children in out-of-home care by year and children entering out-of-home care by month.

**Ratio of Expenditures on Out-of-Home Care Compared to Expenditures on Prevention, Family Preservation and In-Home Services** – An excerpt from the semi-annual progress report on the evaluation of the IV-E Waiver evaluation with information by Community-Based Care Lead Agency comparing spending ratios in state fiscal year 2005/2006 to state fiscal year 2006/2007.

**Transformation in Palm Beach County** – A three page summary describing some of the specific strategies employed in one county of Florida to use prevention and diversion strategies to remove fewer children from their homes without compromising child safety.

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**FLORIDA  
TITLE IV-E FOSTER CARE WAIVER  
KEY FACTS**

- On Friday, March 31, 2006, Florida received approval of the first statewide waiver for flexible use of foster care funds under title IV-E of the Social Security Act.
- The waiver authorizes a five year demonstration to show that flexible use of federal funds will result in improved outcomes for children and families.
- Further federal approval was obtained for the State's implementation plans and independent evaluation and the demonstration was implemented as planned on October 1, 2006.

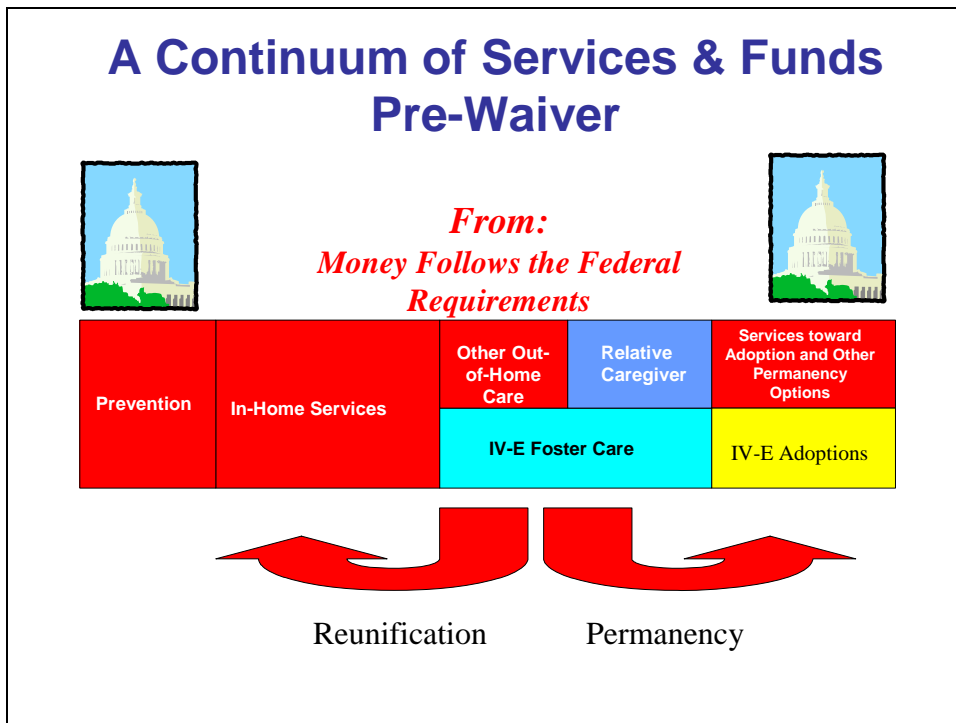
**THE WAIVER IN BRIEF**

- The waiver allows federal IV-E foster care funds to be used for a wide variety of child welfare purposes rather than being restricted to out-of-home care, as normally the case under federal law.
- This permits funds to be used for child welfare services including prevention, diversion from out-of-home placement through intensive in-home services, reunification, when this can be accomplished safely and permanency as well as for foster care.
- The State will receive a defined amount of federal funds over a five year period based on what the state would have received under IV-E rules. The funds under the waiver will increase by 3 percent per year over the amount of federal foster care funds received in the federal fiscal year that ended September 30, 2005. Adoption assistance funds will continue to be received on a federal/state matching basis.
- Savings in federal, state or local funds will be used to further provision of child welfare services.
- An independent evaluator will assess the effectiveness of the demonstration based on program outcomes.

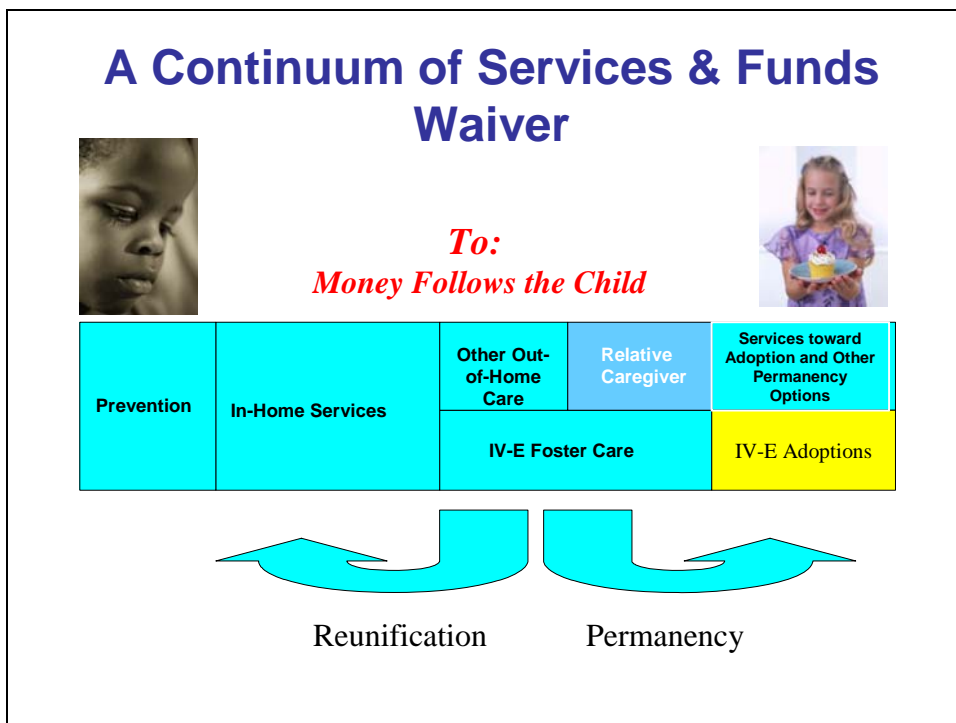
**KEY ADVANTAGES**

- The demonstration puts funding incentives in line with program goals and good practice. For children who can safely remain in their home with appropriate services or be returned home through appropriate reunification services, this can provide an alternative to children entering or remaining in expensive out-of-home care.
- For children who can not safely remain in the home or return home, the focus should be on moving the children towards permanence through adoption or other appropriate alternative.
- By reducing high cost out-of-home care, the resulting savings can be invested in additional services to families rather than resulting in a reduction of federal funding.
- Under the waiver, money will follow the service needs of the family and child, not the arcane requirements of federal regulations.

These charts illustrate the change in funding under the waiver. Prior to the waiver, IV-E Foster Care payments could not be used for services other than out-of-home care.

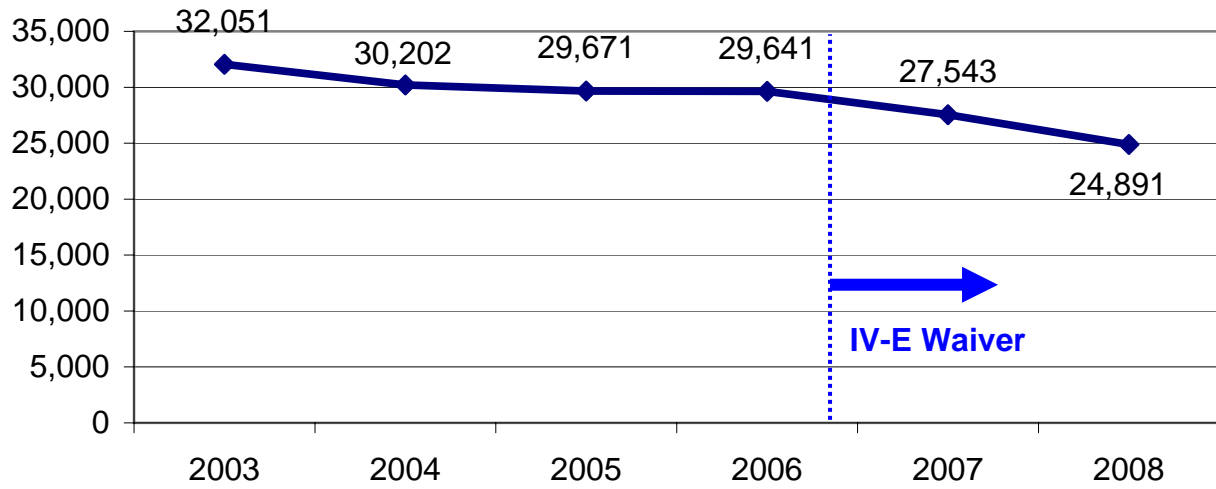


Under the waiver, the money follows the needs of the child and the family. Funds can be used flexibly for an array of services to provide services needed by the family.

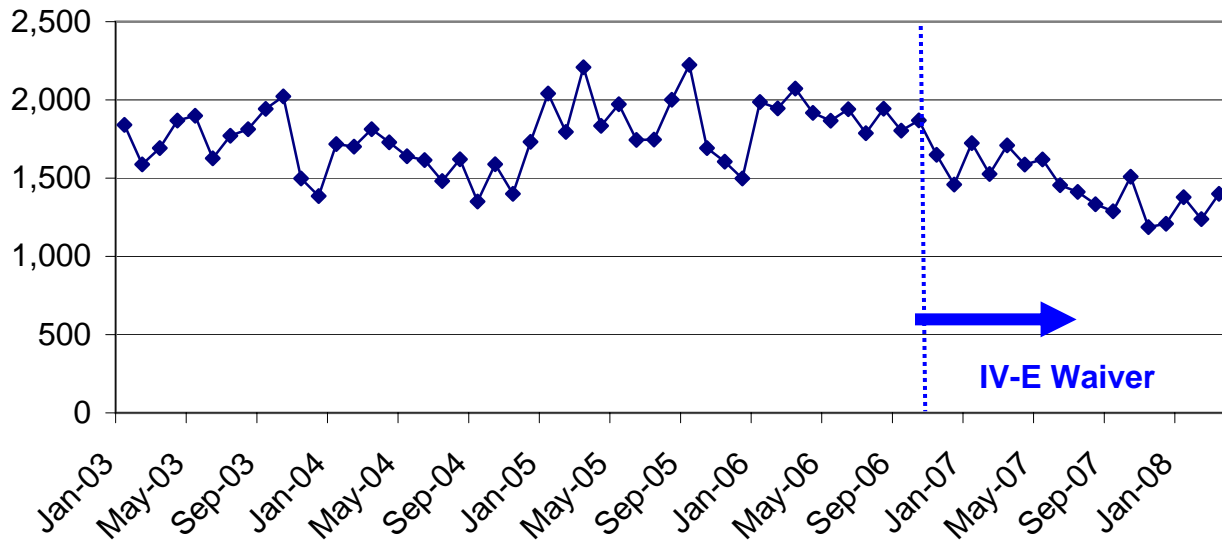


**Note:** The Relative Caregiver program is funded through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block Grant. Adoption assistance remains a federal/state matching program under the waiver

Children in Out-of-Home Care in Florida  
As of June 30 for Each Year



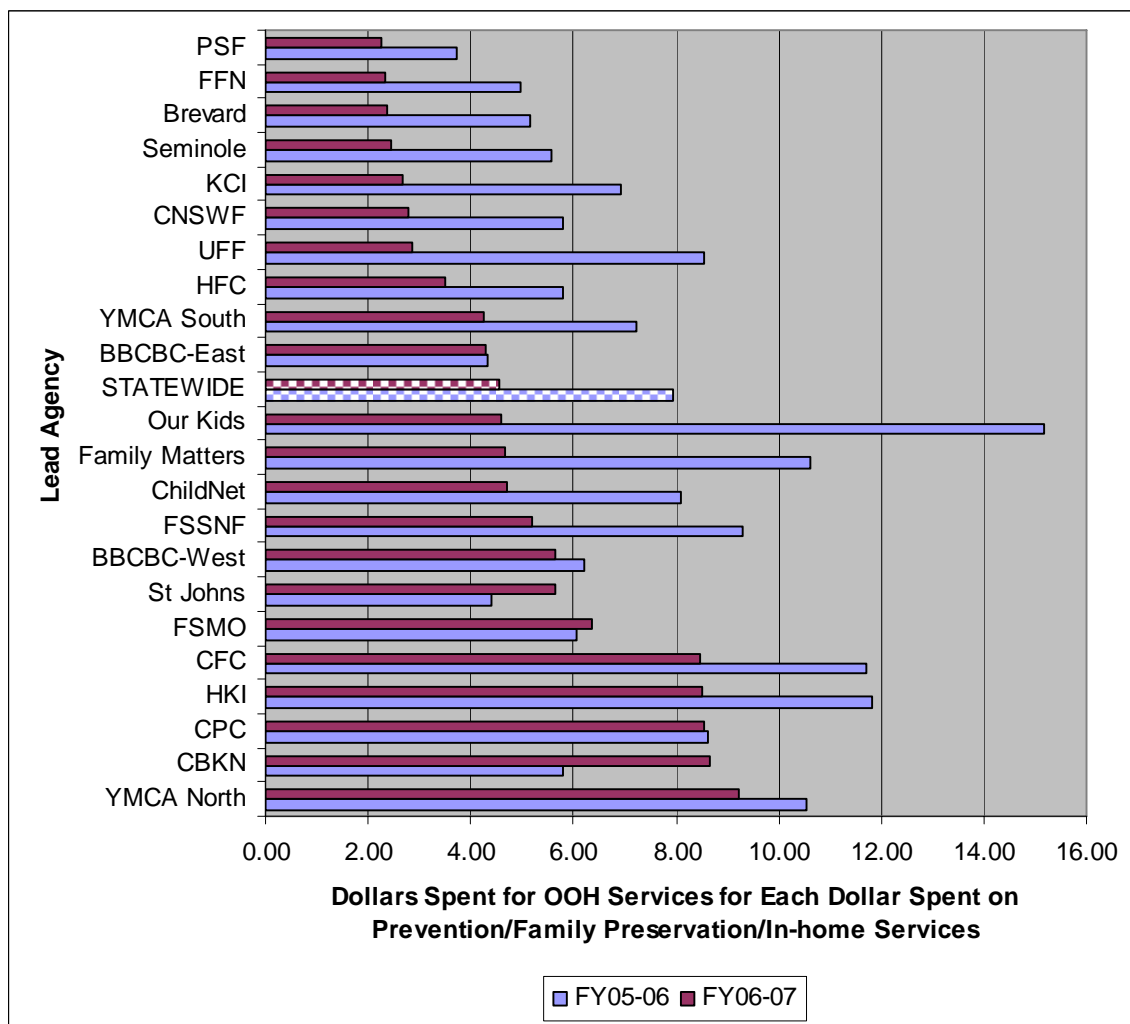
Children Entering Out-of-Home Care in Florida  
January 2003 through March 2008



### Ratio of Expenditures: Out-of-Home to Prevention/Family Preservation/ In-Home

The ratio of out-of-home care spending to spending for prevention, family preservation, and in-home services dropped substantially from SFY05-06 to SFY06-07 (see Figure 7). Statewide, lead agencies spent \$4.55 on out-of-home care services for every dollar spent on front-end services during SFY06-07. This is more than \$3 lower than the SFY05-06 statewide ratio of out-of-home care spending to spending on front-end services (\$7.96). All but 3 CBCs had lower ratios in SFY06-07 than in SFY05-06, and Our Kids and Family Matters experienced the largest year-over-year decline. The SFY06-07 ratio of out-of-home care spending to each dollar spent on front-end services ranged from \$2.26 to \$9.23.

Figure 7. Ratio of Out-of-Home Care Expenditures to Prevention/Family Preservation/In-home Expenditures, SFY05-06 vs. SFY06-07



from IV-E Waiver Demonstration Evaluation, Semi-Annual Progress Report 3 SFY07-08, University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, March 28, 2008

## Transformation in Palm Beach County

From July 1, 2007 to the present, a partnership between the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Child and Family Connections became seamless and resulted in better outcomes for children.

In the previous fiscal year prior to July 2007, the rate of removal of children from their parent(s), also known as a shelter rate, was 78 children per month and went as high as 125 children during the prior year. During the 2008 fiscal year, up to the present day, the average rate of removal was reduced to 39 children per month. During this same time the rate of abuse calls to the hotline increased from 831 calls per month in 2007 fiscal year to 880 calls per month in the current fiscal year.

Diversion and intervention services increased through communication at each level of DCF and CFC, including the subcontractor agencies by greater communication among all those involved in child welfare. This Palm Beach partnership reduced the removal of children by 50%.

At the same time that family preservation was implemented, protective investigators were trained based on the State of Florida's approval from the federal government of a federal waiver (IV-E waiver) that allowed the state to shift dollars to follow a child and not the child's placement. Federal dollars could now be shifted to prevention, diversion and mitigating risk so children could safely remain intact. Education to investigators on the harm of removal including recent studies showing better outcomes for children whenever risk could be mitigated so the family could stay intact.

While the number of children coming in the front door of foster care decreased, CFC was able to reduce caseloads of case managers from an average of 40 to 20 children on each caseloads. In addition a reduction of children in licensed care went from 640 children to 485 children. Children in out of home care went from 1503 to 1084 which was a reduction of 28% of children away from their parent. In home care cases went from 714 children to 484 children for a reduction of 36%. The total number of children dependent dropped from 2217 children to 1538 for a reduction of dependent children of 31% in 9 months.

The **deficit dropped from a projected 3 million to a projected surplus** given the drop in licensed care and dependent children. Other changes included during the transformation to family preservation and working in partnership included the following:

1. The CBC changed the structure in Adoption and Related Services; a specialist was assigned to each case to complete adoption related tasks

only. This change in model has increased efficiency resulting in CFC exceeding the statewide adoption goal. Each case management agency was given funding allocation for an additional unit supporting reduction in case loads leading to better outcomes in permanency. Allocation for a Program Director for each Case Management Organization occurred to reduce the span of control of the existing structure leading to improved oversight and improved permanency outcomes for children.

2. Change in the structure of the Child Placing Agency contracts moved from fixed rate to unit based; this resulted in efficiency as CFC was paying for beds that were not being utilized freeing up dollars to invest in other areas of the system of care.

3. CFC worked closely with the Case Management Organizations to ensure that every child placed in out of home care was placed appropriate to their need and tracked daily. This resulted in a report generated daily entitled the Daily Log. This log allows for the CEO, CFO and key senior management staff to identify on a daily basis if their out-of-home care expenditures are rising in order that proactive countermeasures can be taken.

4. Implementation of a Rocket Docket began in July 2007. There were many cases identified that could be closed by the court, however the pending hearings was many months away. In addition, there were complex cases that required a team of individuals to determine the best case direction which may lead to closure. CFC in conjunction with the District Administrator and Managing Attorney led the Rocket Docket which allowed for a forum to review the cases and when appropriately expedite the closure of the case.

5. Bi Weekly Operations Meetings- There are currently bi weekly meetings held between the CBC's, CMO's and the District in order that operational problems and issues can be discussed and ultimately to support problem solving.

6. CFC increased the dollar amount for flex funds to support the families served by the diversion contracts. The focus of these contracts was stressed with the providers to assume moderate to high risk cases only and increased the length of time that the providers could provide services.

7. Finally, the program was co-located with the Child Protective Investigators to ensure efficiency in delivery of services.

Below is the chart of caseload reductions which occurred in Palm Beach County from July 2007 to March 2008.

**CASELOAD REDUCTION IN PALM BEACH COUNTY**

<b>CHILDREN IN LICENSED CARE</b>			
	July 2007	April 2008	Change
FOSTER CARE	352	290	-18%
EMERGENCY SHELTER	93	30	-68%
GROUP CARE	183	155	-15%
RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT	12	10	-17%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>-24%</b>

<b>TOTAL CHILDREN</b>			
	July 2007	April 2008	Change
IN HOME CHILDREN	714	454	-36%
OUT OF HOME CHILDREN	1503	1084	-28%
<b>ALL DEPENDENT CHILDREN</b>	<b>2217</b>	<b>1538</b>	<b>-31%</b>

<b>ABUSE REPORT AND SHELTERS (Monthly Average)</b>			
	FY 2007	FY 2008 Through March	Change
ABUSE REPORTS	831	880	6%
SHELTERS	78	39	-50%