

Rick Scott
Governor

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Draft Version 2
2/02/2011



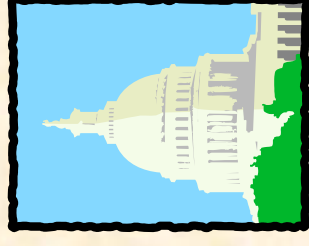
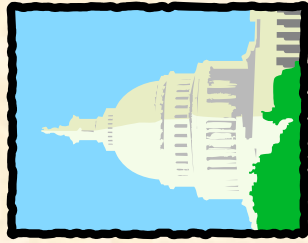
Fostering Connections. Fostering Change. Innovation. Engagement. Success.

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency¹

Overview of Presentation

- Potential non-waiver improvements to child welfare
- Implementation of Fostering Connections Act
 - Extension of foster care
 - Redesign of Services to Young Adults Formerly in Foster Care
 - Guardianship Assistance Program

A Continuum of Services & Funds Pre-Waiver



*From:
Money Follows the Federal
Requirements*

Prevention	In-Home Services	Other Out-of-Home Care	Relative Caregiver	Services toward Adoption and Other Permanency Options
		IV-E Foster Care		IV-E Adoptions



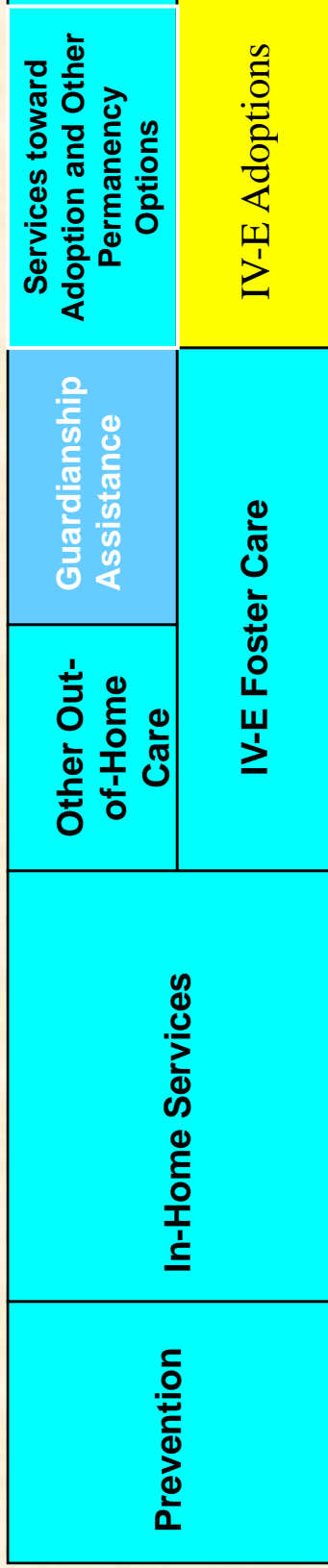
Reunification

Permanency

A Continuum of Services & Funds Waiver



To:
Money Follows the Child



Reunification Permanency

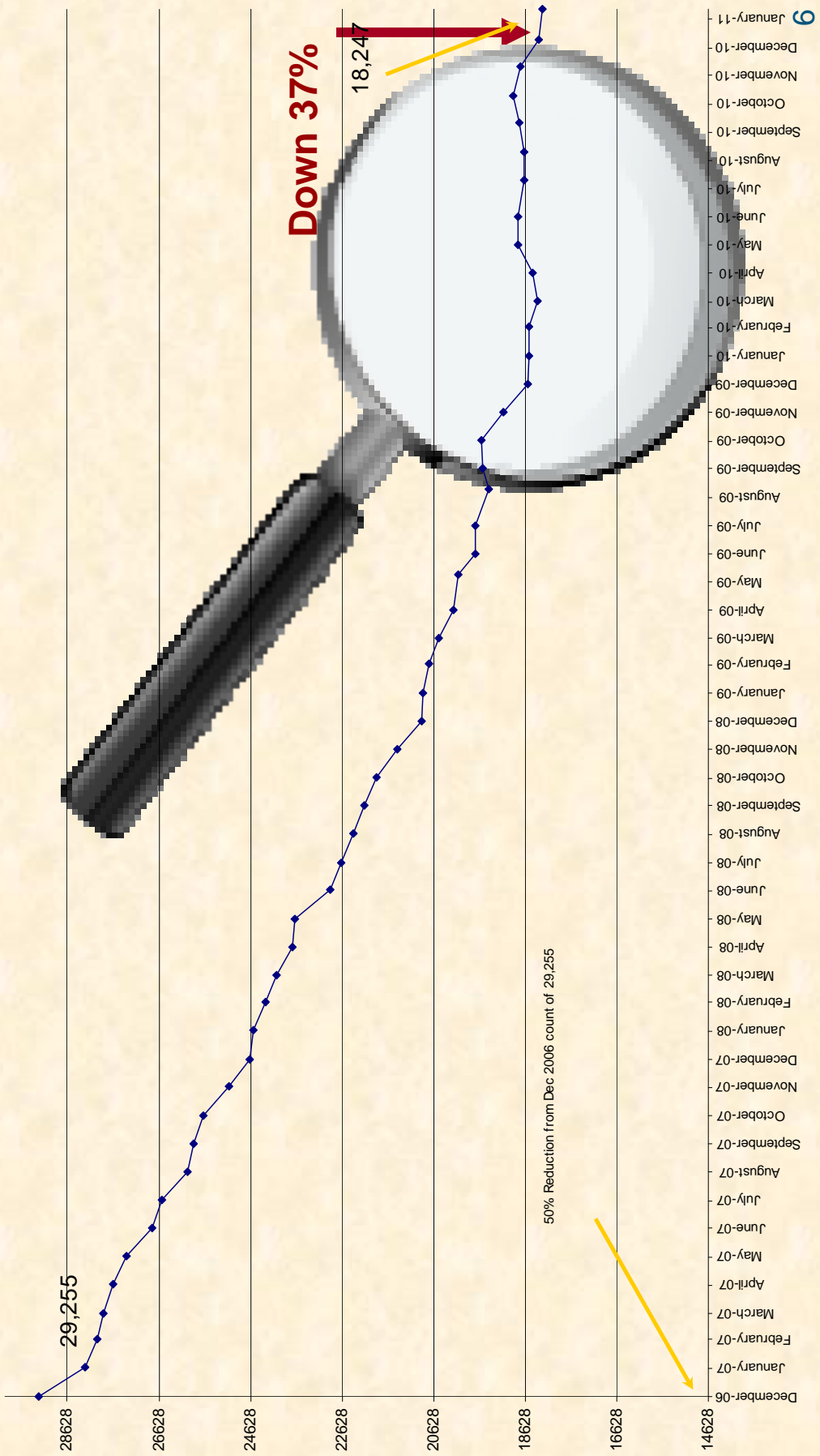
Funding

- The waiver has provided fixed, stable funding based on cost-neutrality – what the state would have spent in the absence of the waiver.
- The waiver terms established a reasonable ceiling for federal funds for adoption assistance designed to continue to encourage adoption through a matching federal/state funding arrangement.

Children in Out-of-Home Care

September 30, 2006 to January 14, 2011

Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care



Waiver Phase 2

- On November 19, 2010, Florida received approval for a 10 month extension of the Waiver through July 2012
- **Formal request to HHS requesting a 5 year extension** of the Waiver – from October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2016.
- Elements of the request include
 - Much of the same “success” data contained earlier in the presentation.
 - Request for extension under the **same terms and conditions**.
 - Statement that it is Florida’s view that any implementation of the Fostering Connections Act would be **outside the Waiver**, thus, can be charged to Title IV-E separately for **additional federal earnings**.
 - Future evaluation should focus on more detail around specific, effective services on the front end, as well as strategies for reducing specific sub-groups in out of home care.

The Future

IV-E Waiver Extension with full implementation of Fostering Connections options

Extended Foster Care (up to age 21)	Guardianship Assistance and Adoption subsidy to age 21
Matched funding outside of defined federal cap.	Matched funding outside of aggregate cap.
Foster Care	Adoption Assistance
Defined federal funding	Matched funding for each state dollar with aggregate federal cap.
Savings invested in child welfare	

Future

Current

Incentives and assistance for adoption

Fostering Connections

- **De-link adoption assistance from Aid to Families with Dependent Children**
 - Over 9 years beginning October 1, 2009, and starting with 16-17 year olds, income requirements are ignored for purposes of determining IV-E Adoption Assistance eligibility.
 - Bottom line – Title IV-E penetration rate will increase, so will federal earnings. The Act requires that these additional earnings be invested in services.
- **Extension/expansion of adoption incentives**
 - Extended Adoption Incentive Award (which was set to expire) and updates baseline year. Will this mean more bonus for Florida?
- **Informing parents of the adoption tax credit**
 - Requires states to inform any individual who is adopting, or whom the state is made aware is considering adopting, a foster child of their eligibility for the adoption tax credit.

Extended Foster Care

Fostering Connections

- Extend foster care to 21st birthday.
- Extend Guardianship Assistance payments to 21st birthday.
- Extend Adoption Subsidy payments to 21st birthday.
- Includes potential to draw down **additional federal funds** by repositioning existing state funds.

Extended Foster Care

Tenets for Supporting Older Youth Independent Living Workgroup

Recommendations from the workgroup are consistent with the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act and laid the foundation for change:

- Young persons accepting support means accepting expectations.
- Transition planning and self sufficiency must both be based on the individual's personal needs.
- Service delivery must be driven by quality assessment – expectations and obligations for both providers and youth must be clear.

Extending Foster Care

Fostering Connections Eligibility

Independent Living, Guardianship Assistance and Adoption Subsidy

The Act extends foster care starting at age 18 and can continue to the 21st birthday for youth who are

- completing high school or equivalent,
- attending post-secondary or vocational education,
- participating in an activity designed to promote employment, or
- attending school part-time and working part-time.

Extending Foster Care

Independent Living Services Overview

- Pre-independent living services start at age 13
- Independent Living services are individualized and voluntary.
- Young adults may shift between three services: Foundations, Pathways and Jumpstart as life plans change.
- The young person may only receive supports from one IL service component at a time.
- Independent Living services are portable.

Extending Foster Care

Independent Living Services

Independent living services available to assist young persons leaving foster care are

- **Foundations to Success,**
- **Pathways to Success, and**
- **Jumpstart to Success.**

Extending Foster Care Independent Living Services Foundations for Success

Young adults meeting eligibility and making progress towards independence by following transition plan may receive

- Monthly case management,
- Room and board, and
- Allowance (based on needs assessment)

Level of independence is tailored to the youth

Extending Foster Care

Independent Living Services

Pathways to Success

Pathways to Success supports students attending post-secondary or vocational institutions:

- Students are working full-time to complete college or vocational program and begin a career.
- Services available to students who have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent and completed the Needs Assessment and Transition Plan include:
 - Support services
 - Transition Planning
 - Stipend based on need up to \$1,256 monthly

Extending Foster Care

Independent Living Services

Jumpstart to Success

Jumpstart to Success helps eligible young persons who need temporary assistance to live on their own as they leave foster care.

- Young adults may apply for Jumpstart at any time until their 21st birthday.
- Jumpstart is limited to a total of 12 months.
- If Jumpstart is offered for over 30 days, a transition plan must be developed.
- The young person may be denied continuation of services if he/she is not complying with the transition plan.

Fostering Connections

Guardianship Assistance

- Guardianship Assistance is like Maintenance Adoption Assistance for permanent guardians who are kin.
- States have options to **define kinship** relationships (including “fictive” kin).
- Would **gradually replace** current TANF-funded Relative Caregiver Program.
- Requires **licensure** of kin.

Fostering Connections

Guardianship Assistance

What the Act Says

States may receive federal reimbursement for guardianship assistance payments made on behalf of children who exit foster care to live with a relative. To be eligible, a child must:

- Reside with the relative for **at least six consecutive months** and be eligible for IV-E payments while in the relative's home (i.e. the relative must be licensed).
- Meet the criterion of "being returned home or adopted are not appropriate permanency options for the child."

The guardianship assistance payment "**shall not exceed the foster care payment** which would have been paid on behalf of the child if the child remained in a foster family home."

Fostering Connections

Guardianship Assistance

What the Act Says

- Includes **case plan requirements** that require states to document "the steps that the agency has taken to determine that it is not appropriate for the child to be returned home or adopted" and "the efforts the agency has made to discuss adoption by the child's relative foster parent as a more permanent alternative to legal guardianship."
- Youth age 14 or older **must be consulted** before being placed in the kinship guardianship arrangement.
- Children receiving **kinship** guardianship assistance under title IV-E are eligible for Medicaid.
- Permits placement of a **sibling(s)** of an eligible child in the same kinship guardianship arrangement and to make guardianship assistance payments on behalf of those siblings.

Fostering Connections

Guardianship Assistance

What the Act Says

Foster care licensing standards

- States may waive **non-safety-related** foster care licensing standards on a case-by-case basis for kin seeking to become foster parents.
- States that the non-safety standards are "**as determined by the state.**"
- Clarifies that neither the Act nor any previous legislation or regulation prohibits states from using unlicensed kin to care for children in state custody. However, states using unlicensed kin may not seek federal reimbursement under Title IV-E for children placed in such care.

Guardianship Assistance Program

Florida's Design Proposal

- Think of GAP as **Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS)** for relatives, or GAP/MAS.
- Existing Relative Caregiver Program (RCG) eliminated (except for attrition), funding shifted to new program, primarily for match to federal funds.
- As soon as child is placed with relative, work will begin towards licensing so that relative can receive foster care payments regardless of ultimate disposition of case.

Guardianship Assistance Program

Florida's Design Proposal

GAP or MAS may be available to a young person who was either placed with a permanent guardian or was adopted between ages 16 and 17 and who is

- Completing high school or equivalent,
- Attending post-secondary or vocational education,
- Participating in an activity designed to promote employment, or
- Attending school part-time and employed part-time

Guardianship Assistance Program

Florida's Design Proposal

- If relative does not wish to be licensed, **child only** payment is still an option through ACCESS/TANF
- If child is not reunified, relative will have likely met 6-month requirement and be eligible for GAP/MAS.
- To receive monthly payments the relative is required to be a licensed family foster home

Guardianship Assistance Program

Florida's Design Proposal

Licensing of Relatives as Family Foster Homes

Licensing requirements for family foster homes that want to care for a specific child or sibling group, are:

- Streamlined and nearly identical to the current requirements for placement in the homes of relative caregivers
- Built upon the home study and screening completed during removal and placement

Provides waiver authority for non-safety and non-health related standards when licensing a child-specific home

Gives local flexibility in support of local licensing practice

Relative Caregiver Current	Guardianship Assistance Proposed
Case Management	Case Management
Home Study	Home Study for licensing
Case Plan	Case Plan
Monthly Visits	Monthly Visits
Permanency Options	Permanency Options
Court and Judicial Reviews	Court and Judicial Reviews
TANF as fund source	IV-E as fund source
Eligibility by ACCESS/FLORIDA	Aligns with Maintenance Adoption Subsidy process

Opportunities for Feedback

- Steering Committee
 - Policy Development
 - Finance Committee
 - Marketing / Communication Committee
 - Comprehensive Project Plan
- Program Office Policy Committees
- Program leadership continuing to consult with stakeholders