



Board of Directors Meeting

November 13, 2008

Information Item

Child Welfare Advocacy Update

Item VI.B.

Recommended Action:	Information Only
Issue:	Child Welfare System Update
Program:	Child Welfare Advocacy
Budget Impact:	NA
Strategic Plan Goal:	Child Maltreatment

Pinellas Children Placed Outside the County

ECA reports a total of 224 children currently placed outside of Circuit 6 (Pinellas and Pasco Counties). Looking specifically at Pinellas, 323 children are placed outside of the County (141 are in Pasco County foster homes). Following is a breakdown of Pinellas children placed out of county:

- 141 in Traditional Foster Homes
- 86 in Group Facilities with up to 12 children
- 5 in Medical Placements
- 4 in Mental Health Facilities up to 12 children
- 24 in Residential Treatment Facilities up to 12 children
- 16 in a shelter facility with up to 12 children
- 47 in Therapeutic Placements

The number of children coming back to the county varies from week to week, however, since July there have been 32 children. Although more children have been targeted for return, barriers to achieving this goal include factors that address the best interests of the child (i.e length of time in current placement, ability to bring back all siblings, educational stability, etc...). ECA continues to target more children on a weekly basis. They are also working aggressively to recruit new foster homes and will continue to bring children back as appropriate placements are identified. ECA has reported that 18 new foster homes have been licensed since July (11 in September).

ECA has initiated a weekly "critical placement staffing" in which they discuss children placed outside of the county; with a high rate of placement disruption; and those placed in a higher level of care. A primary goal of the meeting is to identify appropriate in-county placements.

Independent Living Update

Effective November 1, 2008, Camelot Community Care was awarded a contract to provide Independent Living Services for youths 13 and older within Pasco and Pinellas counties.

Camelot will coordinate the following Independent Living Services (ILS) activities:

1. Life Skills Assessments and Training for youth ages 13-17, living in a licensed foster care placement or Subsidized Independent Living.
2. Facilitate Independent Living Transition Staffing and Transitional Self-Sufficiency Plans for 17 and 17 ½ year-old eligible youth in the ECA System of Care.
3. Training for ECA Care Management, Residential Group Care Providers and Foster Care Providers on ILS and on the ECA ILS Policies and Procedures.
4. Assist in the development of ECA ILS Policies/Procedure.
5. Coordinate ILS Social, Educational and Extra Curricular Activities and Youth Advisory Board (YAB) activities.
6. Administration of the “Road to Independence” Scholarship, Educational and Training Vouchers, aftercare applications, and Transitional Support applications.
7. Act as an ILS advocate to Providers and community resources. Provider staff employed in connection with this program do not advocate for items that are inconsistent with general or specific policies of the ECA system of care or guidance from ECA.
8. Provide direct ILS aftercare services to eligible former foster care youth 18-23 who have returned to request assistance through the Independent Living program.

Number of Youths as of October 22, 2008

Pinellas

320 - 13 to 17 year olds

93 - 18 to 22 year olds

Pasco

130 - 13 to 17 year olds

43 - 18 to 22 year olds

Ready for Life –Pinellas (RFL)

A working group of community leaders has been studying successful models in Florida and other parts of the country to support aging-out foster care youth and preparing them for a successful transition to independent living. The best practices from several successful models will be integrated into the Pinellas County initiative, “**Ready for Life – Pinellas**” (RFL). RFL will be a coordinator of services, a conduit between aging-out youth and service providers, and a community-based organization focused on identifying the unmet needs of this population and obtaining the necessary resources to address their needs.

Marcie Biddleman (ECA), David Fischer (President, Community Foundation of Tampa Bay), Gay Lancaster (JWB) and other community leaders are hosting the RFL meeting on Friday, November 7, 2008. Attendees will discuss how to move forward with a coordinated and efficient effort that unites all of those who provide assistance and support for the aging-out population.