



## CONTRACT OVERSIGHT DESK REVIEW

Families First Network – Lakeview Center

**AJ481 SOC**

As required by section 402.7305 F.S., The Department of Children and Families performed a Desk Review for Families First Network – Lakeview Center.

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## Executive Summary

Florida Statute 402.7305 requires the Department to conduct an analysis of the performance and compliance of a contracted Community Based Care (CBC) agency by means of on-site monitoring, or desk reviews if the external service provider will not be monitored on site during a fiscal year. The Department’s Contract Oversight Unit performed a Desk Review for Families First Network - Lakeview Center (FFN), Contract AJ481 SOC which focused on key performance indicators specific to the CBC agency compared to the overall statewide average performance. The categories reviewed included: CBC performance, practice model implementation, child safety after termination of services, financial viability, licensed and group care and feedback from the DCF contract manager.

FFN serves children and families in Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties in circuit one, Northwest Region. According to the U.S. Census bureau, the annual estimate resident population (from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016) in all four counties was 752,743. See chart below for breakdown by county. The removal rate per 100 children Investigated from October thru December 2016 was 5.7 which is slightly lower than the statewide average of 5.8. (Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, May 2017).

Rank	County	Population
20	Escambia County	315,187
26	Okaloosa County	201,170
30	Santa Rosa County	170,497
41	Walton County	65,889

Source: United States Census Bureau / American FactFinder. "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2016". 2016 Population Estimates Program. Web. March 2017. <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

## CBC Performance

FFN's performance shows both strengths and areas where opportunities for improvement exist. In six of the scorecard measures, FFN performed at or above the established performance standards and in six of the scorecard measures, FFN performed below the established performance standards for FY 16/17 Quarter 3.

FFN's performance consistently (last six quarters) meets scorecard measures in the following areas:

- M02: % of children who are not abused/neglected during in-home services
- M06: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months for those in care 12 to 23 months

FFN's current performance on scorecard measure four (M04: % of children under supervision who are seen every 30 days) currently meets the established performance standards for FY 16/17, Q3 and has been trending up for the past three quarters.

For the past two quarters, FFN's performance in scorecard measure three (M03: % of children who are not neglected or abused after receiving services) has been trending down which suggests a need for local level review and discussion. Additionally, the following scorecard measures experienced a recent overall dip in performance and would benefit from a local systemic level review to discuss the efficacy of current practices and make adjustments as needed.

- M05: % of children exiting to a permanent home within 12 months of entering care
- M09: % of children in foster care who received a medical service in last 12 months (trending up in FY 16/17 Q3)
- M11: % of young adults exiting foster care at age 18 who completed/are enrolled in secondary education, vocational education or adult education (FY 16/17 Q1 & Q2)
- M12: % of sibling groups where all siblings are placed together

Two performance measures represent opportunities for improvement, both of which scored below the established performance standards for the past six quarters. They are:

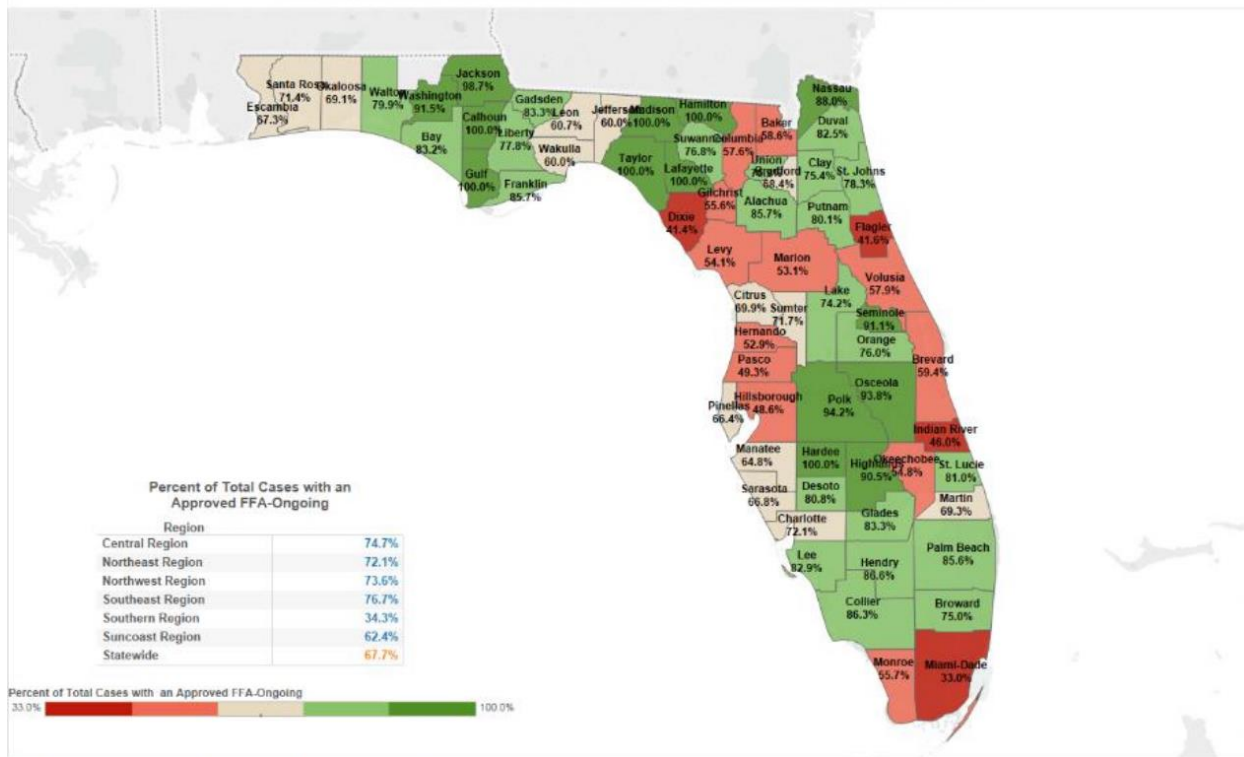
- M08: Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care
- M10: % of children in foster care who received a dental service in last 7 months

Scorecard Measure	FY 2016 Q2	FY 2016 Q3	FY 2016 Q4	FY 2017 Q1	FY 2017 Q2	FY 2017 Q3
M01: Rate of abuse per 100,000 days in foster care	10.46	10.87	8.35	7.74	8.87	8.09
M02: % of children who are not abused/neglect during in-home services	97.80	97.00	95.70	99.00	95.90	97.80
M03: % of children who are not neglected or abused after receiving services	98.40	94.80	95.90	96.40	94.20	93.00
M04: % of children under supervision who are seen every 30 days	99.70	99.70	99.60	99.20	99.50	99.80
M05: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months of entering care	54.00	47.50	39.60	40.60	41.00	33.70
M06: % of children exiting to a permanent home w/in 12 months for those in care 12 to 23 months	58.00	61.90	51.50	50.40	52.60	51.30
M07: % of children who do not re-enter care w/in 12 months of moving to permanent home	88.70	92.90	90.20	90.90	90.50	93.30
M08: Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care	4.92	5.01	5.62	5.91	6.10	6.02
M09: % of children in foster care who received a medical service in last 12 months	94.40	96.30	95.20	91.80	89.80	93.40
M10: % of children in foster care who received a dental service in last 7 months	81.60	82.90	88.60	81.20	73.60	84.00
M11: % of young adults exiting foster care at age 18 completed/are enrolled in sec. ed., voc. ed, or adult ed.	84.70	91.10	90.90	77.70	72.00	80.40
M12: % of sibling groups where all siblings are placed together	64.50	65.00	65.40	64.20	61.40	61.50

## Practice Model Implementation

FFN has made some progress toward implementation of the practice model as shown in the chart below. As of 5/18/17, FFN's status for implementation was 67.3% (Escambia), 71.4% (Santa Rosa), 69.1% (Okaloosa) and 79.9% (Walton), exceeding the statewide average (67.7%) in some areas and not meeting the statewide average in others (Escambia). This represents the total percent of active cases with an approved Family Functioning Assessment Ongoing (FFA-O). (Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, May 2017)

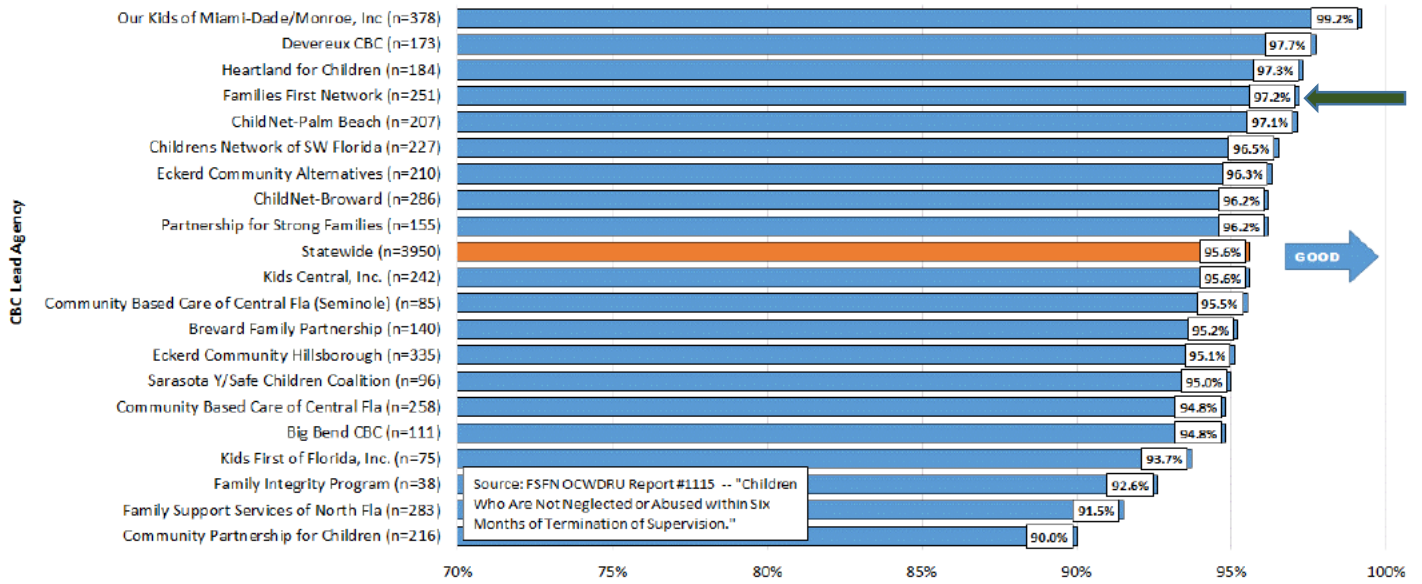
Ongoing Services Safety Methodology Implementation Status as of 5/18/2017



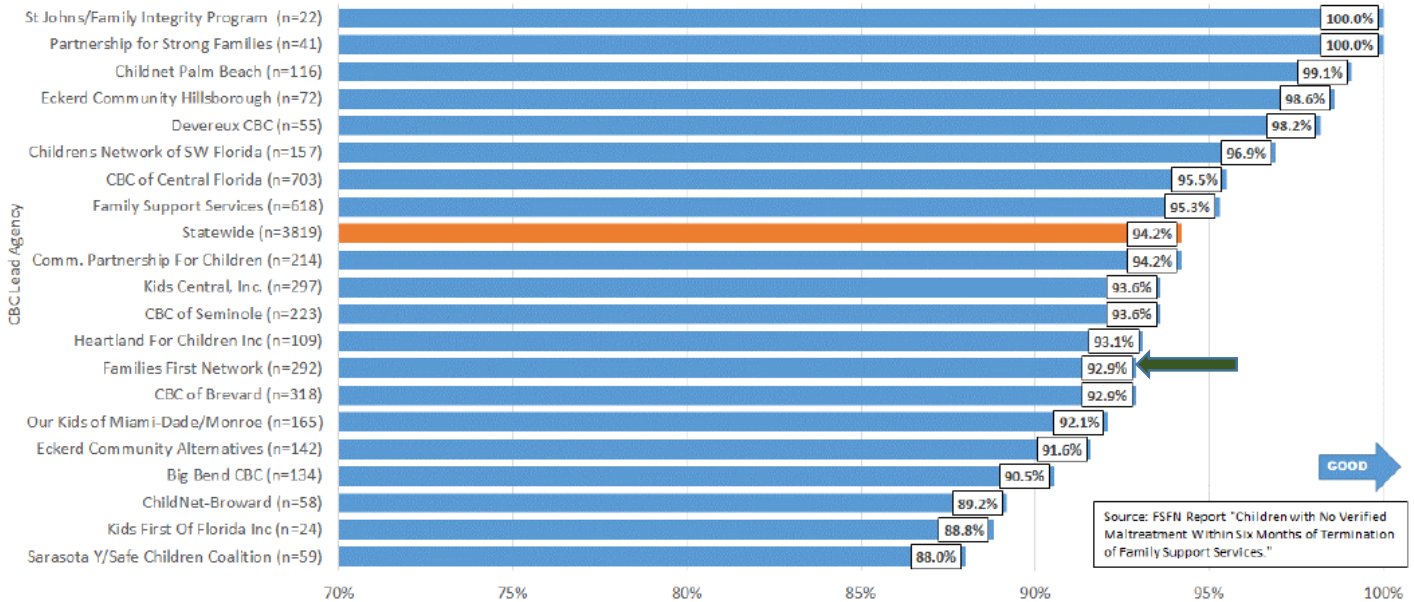
### Child Safety After Termination of Services

Ensuring children are safe and protected following case management & family support services service intervention and service delivery is a strong indicator of overall system of care performance. For this reason, post service termination re-maltreatment episodes are measured to determine the percentage of children in case management and family support services who are not re-abused or maltreated within six months of termination of services. For the most recent quarter (services terminated between April – June 2016), FFN (97.2%) was above the statewide average (95.6%) for cases with no maltreatment within six months of case management services. FFN (92.9%) was lower than the statewide average (94.2%) for family support services during the same time period. See the charts below. (Source: Child Welfare Key Indicators Monthly Report, May 2017) This data represents an opportunity for FFN to review the quality and effectiveness of family support services.

**Percent of Children Terminated from Case Managed Services in Quarter Who Were Not Maltreated within Six Months, for Children with Services Terminated April-June 2016**



**Percent of Children Terminated from Family Support Services in Quarter Who Were Not Maltreated within Six Months, for Children with Services Terminated April-June 2016**



## Financial Viability Report Analysis

The Office of CBC/ME Financial Accountability performed financial monitoring procedures based on the DCF 2016-17 CBC-ME Financial Monitoring Tool for Desk Reviews of FFN and found two areas of noncompliance. The desk review period was from July 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016. The areas of non-compliance pertained to noncompliance with Federal/State regulatory requirements as FFN reported unallowable expenditures in OCAs. FFN reclassified the expenditures and/or corrected the entries in FSFN.

## Licensed & Group Care Placement

As of May 31, 2017, 439 children were placed in licensed care which represents 31.72% of all children in out of home care in Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties. The current statewide average of children placed in licensed care versus other placement settings is lower at 29.54%. As of the same date, there were 148 children placed in group care, representing 10.69% of all FFN placements. The current statewide average of children placed in group care versus other placement settings is again, lower at 8.91%. This data represents an opportunity for FFN to review placement practices to ensure the least restrictive placement option is being utilized.

Families First Network - Lakeview center		
Licensed & Group Care Placements	CBC	Statewide
Number of Children in Licensed Care	439	7,183
% of Children in Licensed Care	31.72%	29.54%
Number of Children in Group Care	148	2,166
% of Children in Group Care	10.69%	8.91%

Source: Department of Children & Families - Children in Out of Home Care by Lead Agency Report (updated 6/11/17)

## DCF Contract Manager Feedback

Survey responses were received from the assigned DCF Contract Manager who provided the following information.

### *Foster home recruitment and retention*

FFN's Foster and Adoptive Home Recruitment staff was realigned under the Director of Community Relations, approximately two years ago, to provide a cohesive team for recruiting both foster and adoptive homes. This changed the recruitment process to allow for shared materials and increased efficiencies in recruitment activities. It also introduced a marketing-based approach to recruiting families. With this key shift, efforts became more focused on modern day marketing tools and tactics, which are primarily digital in nature.

In 2014, the Foster Home Development team created an online orientation, followed by a brief questionnaire that captured a potential foster care applicant's contact information. The corresponding online orientation for families seeking to adopt went live in 2015. By providing a wide breadth of information online, families interested in becoming foster parents can see the expectations of partnership in parenting that FFN places on our foster parents upfront. The historical misnomers about how much money can be made by fostering are also addressed upfront. Additionally, families see the requirements for background screens, stable housing, self-supporting income and more that are the most common reasons for denying a license.

By providing this information digitally, families who do not qualify or are not up for the challenge of fostering may screen themselves out upfront. Families no longer have to schedule to attend an orientation; instead, they get this same information at their convenience without having to leave home. Contact information is captured electronically through a database, and follow-up information is provided to a recruiter who makes contact within two business days. Making this part of the process electronic allows for improved tracking of the time from initial inquiry to licensure and the number of families lost in the screening, training or licensing process. The process is designed so that not one qualified, quality family is lost.

This second step of the licensing process, the personal follow-up contact, is used to gather additional information about the family, allow the prospective family an opportunity to ask any lingering questions and to reserve a seat for the prospective family an upcoming Quality Parenting Pre-Service Class, whether they are seeking licensure or adoption.



Despite these efforts, FFN found that too many families were attending classes and not completing licensure, either because of voluntarily opting out or because they were not appropriate for licensure. Only about 20-25% of families in class were becoming licensed. FFN made the decision in March 2017 to shift forward some of the screening process to ensure that any family initiating training would be qualified to become licensed. Once an inquiry is completed, a licensing counselor now makes a visit to the home to ensure it is appropriate for licensure and runs preliminary background screens and FAHIS checks on the family to ensure there are no barriers. It is believed that this will result in considerably less staff time being spent on homes that will not net viable foster home placement options, while ensuring those who are both interested and appropriated are fast-tracked.

Audience targeting for FFN foster home recruitment was completed using the physical locations of current and past foster homes licensed by FFN and by employing software that identifies the characteristics of prospective foster parents by using demographic data, purchasing behavior and psychographic data all sorted by zip code. The FFN audience targeting efforts revealed that these recruitment efforts should be targeted to appeal to women ages 24-54 who reside in the four county area of Circuit One. These analytics are based on Tapestry Segmentation, which provides a snapshot of the demographics, lifestyle and behavioral habits of prospective foster families.

FFN's strategy reframed recruitment efforts using marketing-based activities to include emphasis on computer-based options and concentrating on zip code areas identified by the use of stratifying software. Using Facebook ads that direct interested users to FFN's website and other types of targeted digital ads, FFN has seen a significant increase in the number of prospective families completing inquiries. In addition, recruiters are involved in contacts with churches, community awareness activities and media requests, ensuring a multi-tiered strategy and approach.

FFN begins two new quality parenting trainings each month, one at each geographical end of the Circuit. This constitutes approximately 24 classes per year to ensure that no prospective foster parent loses interest while waiting for a class to begin.

Retention of foster homes has always been and continues to be a high priority for FFN. The service area is a transient one due to a large military population in all four counties. Military families are licensed on a regular basis, but are consequently lost due to normal military moves.

Currently, FFN is gathering data to establish historical and baseline retention rates. Once this information has been compiled, FFN will consider setting a percentage goal to improve retention of families lost to circumstances beyond the control of FFN (i.e. relocation out of area or closure due to adoption). Even without a numerical goal, this is a priority focus for the agency. Below are some of the actions that have been taken or are currently underway to increase the retention of quality homes.

FFN conducts an annual foster parent satisfaction survey to ascertain what areas we are doing well in and which areas might need improvement from the perspective of foster parents. All program areas are addressed, and action is taken based upon the results of the survey. A survey is also taken of foster parents after the initial licensing process is complete. Responses reveal information regarding how they felt during the licensing process and what they thought about pre-service training. As a result of the surveys, FFN added an additional class to pre-service to address trauma informed care in more detail.

FFN is very involved in the Quality Parenting Initiative. FFN has a steering committee that meets once a month and several sub committees that tackle issues that foster parents are experiencing. The sub committees are as follows:

- Communications - This group has completed the following tasks. Texting capabilities were added to all phones to ensure easier access to case managers by foster parents. Emergency numbers and backup numbers were created for after-hours emergencies. These numbers were placed on a large refrigerator magnet for easy accessibility to our foster parents. A protocol was established regarding what information should be provided to a foster parent at the time of placement. New procedure is being put



into place to have foster parent liaisons contact all foster parents when a new placement is made in their home.

- Investigations Group - This group was put into place to address the concerns of foster parents during the time that an investigation of their home was taking place. A foster parent investigation protocol was developed by FFN and DCF representatives that address all concerns. Foster parents are also given information regarding FAST (Foster Allegation Support Team) and how to contact them. A foster parent from our area is also serving on a committee in Tallahassee to address investigations in foster homes.
- Policy - This group's sole purpose was to identify what information foster parents were legally permitted to have access to and put it in our child welfare manual. In addition, they changed the language in the child welfare manual to include that foster parents must be invited to all staffings pertaining to the children in their home.
- Normalcy - This group is putting together a pamphlet of guidelines for what normalcy is, to answer some of the most common questions foster parents have regarding normalcy and prudent parenting.
- Foster Parent Support/Supporting local FAPA's - Welcome letters have been created and each respective team manager sends them out to foster parents as they become licensed. Quarterly meet and greets are being set up in each service center to allow foster parents and staff to have face time and just get to know each other. Licensing is also sending out information regarding names and contact information of FAPA presidents along with dates, times and locations for meetings. It is also a condition of graduating from pre-service training to contact a FAPA president or attend a meeting. In this way FFN can attempt to get support for our foster parents early in the process.

When foster parents are wanting to close their homes, all efforts are made to try and determine reasons for closure and make attempts to keep the families active. FAPA presidents are involved with FFN and also make contact with the families to see if there are reasons that they have not shared with staff as to why they are closing. FAPA presidents are also working to keep some of these homes open. It is a collaborative effort between the agency and the FAPA that has been working out very well.

FFN has a formal mentoring program that went into effect May 1, 2017. Each new foster parent is assigned a mentor from the time they are licensed to assist them with any questions or concerns they might have. They will also help them navigate through the child welfare process as it can be very overwhelming at first.

A new initiative currently underway will assist foster parents with completing everyday tasks that cannot be accomplished due to the number of children currently in the home. An example of this would be, the family that has 7 children placed with them and foster mom wants to go to the grocery store. This task might seem small but is almost impossible with that number of children. The group will focus on getting community and church involvement to assist in this area.

Licensing regularly seeks contributions to purchase gift cards for foster parents. When foster parents are having a difficult time, they are given a gift card for dinner and a movie to allow them some time away. In some cases, child care is also included. This is in addition to what is done for May as foster parent appreciation month. Each foster parent has been sent a coupon from Papa John's Pizza that will allow them to feed their family for one evening and not have to worry about cooking.

Foster parent Ambush squads have also been created as a joint effort of the Foster Home Development and Placement teams to surprise and recognize foster parents in our community. They are selected by a committee and a group of FFN employees will either surprise them at work, church or some other public place with flowers, balloons and a gift card. This has been very uplifting for the foster parents and staff alike. Placement Team Staff have also provided meals and paper goods to support FAAPA meetings.

### *Placement Process*

The FFN Placement Team requires a completed Placement and Identification Request Form be received prior to beginning the search for a new placement or a change of placement. This provides information related to the individualized needs of the child for which placement is sought and helps to ensure appropriate placement matching. The information required covers reason for removal (with thorough description), whether or not there was an unexplained injury, the case plan goal, the individual child's needs and history, the child's strengths, any sexual abuse history and explanation, identified or suspected CSEC history, the child's primary care provider, a list of current medications, the relative and non-relative searches completed, sibling information and anything else relevant to identify an appropriate placement.

Placement staff can assess if specialized care may be required and will complete specialized referral packets to submit to the Placement Team manager for approval. This may include specialized behavioral foster care providers, specialized therapeutic foster homes and even higher levels of care. If placement in a Therapeutic Group Home or SIPP residential facility is sought, the Placement Team Manager works with the Care Coordination Unit to request and schedule a Suitability Assessment with a Qualified Evaluator. In the case of children with CSEC history, Placement Resource Counselors will call each of the in-state CSEC providers to locate an appropriate placement where possible.

It is also a primary focus for staff when identifying placements for sibling groups to keep the children together. The availability of traditional foster homes in the county of removal is always considered the most desirable placement. When traditional foster homes are unavailable for sibling groups, Children in Crisis is contacted. This provider specializes in foster parent model group homes for larger sibling groups in a neighborhood setting. Although this placement may not be in the county of removal, the importance of the sibling group relationship is paramount in considering placing children.

The Placement Unit Managers are tasked with facilitating routine staffings for those siblings who could safely be placed together but for whom capacity issues have precluded this effort. Taken into consideration are those newly licensed homes willing to accommodate larger groups of siblings, any children in the process of transitioning to adoptive placements and those who can be reunified when conditions for return have been met and the placement is considered to be safe. FFN also offers an enhanced board rate to facilitate placement into behavioral homes when the child is the sibling of a child who has significant behavioral issues. Placement of additional siblings in therapeutic foster homes may also be approved provided there is appropriate space available and treatment needs of the therapeutic child are not compromised.

Placement resource counselors and Unit Managers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via an on-call emergency number. Placement offices are located in Pensacola, Milton, Crestview and Ft. Walton Beach FFN offices. On call staff, including a placement resource counselor and Unit Manager, is available from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. daily and on weekends and holidays to locate licensed placements on a crisis basis. Placement support workers can also be accessed, as needed, to transport children for whom placement has not been located within the four-hour required timeframe set forth by the Department.

### *Group Care*

To continue to improve group care, FFN maintains contracts with local providers for the provision of emergency shelter and residential group care throughout the Circuit. The providers include Children in Crisis, Florida Baptist Children's Home, Lutheran Services of Florida and United Methodist Children's Home. Performance of subcontractors is monitored by the contract monitoring team made up of the FFN contract managers and the Lakeview Center, Inc. finance department. Each monitoring includes a detailed evaluation of each contract and the provider organization as a whole in the areas of Environment of Care, Case Review, Administrative, Financial, Quality/Risk Management and Personnel. Any monitoring visit that renders findings in violation of contract standards or reveals poor quality of care will result in a required corrective action plan and a follow-up review to ensure its effective implementation.

In order to ensure accountability for performance of residential subcontractors, FFN performs at least quarterly monitoring visits to each facility. During the review, the environment of care and a sampling of client and personnel files are inspected and reviewed. Interviews are also conducted with staff and residents. All contracts are subject to corrective action and/or termination based upon noncompliance with performance measures or quality of service issues.

Quarterly Network Provider Forums are held in an effort to keep the providers up to date on the administrative, financial, quality/performance outcomes and legislative happenings that affect community-based care. It gives them an opportunity to discuss problems, issues and share best practices within the system of care. These forums also provide an opportunity for training on various relevant topics to the group as a whole. Providers also participate in the FCC Residential Group Care sub-committee and its associated calls.

#### *Relative and Non-Relative Caregiver Support*

FFN provides direct case management to relative/non-relative placements. Upon placement, the dependency case managers ensure the placement provider has all necessary information and phone numbers for crisis situations. The non-relative/relative caregiver funding is discussed and assistance (if needed) is provided to ensure appropriate referrals are completed and submitted timely. A relative caregiver orientation guide is provided and used by our agency to ensure relatives have information necessary to work through the dependency system. In June 2015, FFN developed a family finder unit that completes relative/non-relative home studies to ensure the families are thoroughly assessed and specific needs are identified to best assist the placement. In addition, FFN ensures the family is provided with the appropriate therapeutic referrals and assistance. Since placing in enhanced focus on family finding, more than 100 new relative/non-relative placements have been made.

#### *Extended Foster Care*

Our agency reaches out to current foster homes regarding their interest in providing placement for those over the age of 18. If a child aging out is currently in a foster home, FFN develops plans with the current foster parent to maintain the child in EFC. FFN has worked with local providers (such as Children in Crisis, a neighborhood-style cluster of foster homes licensed as a group care provider) who developed apartment living in their foster care neighborhood.

FFN has also reached out to previous foster parents who have closed their home, in good standing, regarding their interest in this age group.

The Young Adult Services team begins services with prospective EFC youth once they turn 17 years old. This enables them to work with the youth during their transition and complete any home studies or visits on potential placements that the youth recommends (ex., friends' families, teachers, coaches, etc.)

In addition, our agency has worked with local apartment managers in order to enhance relationships and develop living opportunities for these youth.

## Conclusion

Based on the limited review of Families First Network – Lakeview Center, contract AJ481 SOC several strengths and opportunities for improvement were found.

This desk review highlights the CBC's positive performance on some of the Scorecard measures. In the past six quarters, FFN met the established performance target 53% of the time which is below the average statewide cumulative scorecard performance. FFN's status toward implementation of the practice model is below the statewide average in Escambia county and above the statewide average in the other three counties. Case Management services provided to children and families have yielded rates of re-abuse which higher than the statewide average. However, family support services provided to children and families in have yielded re-maltreatment rates which are lower than the statewide average. Additionally, the percentage of children in group and licensed care is higher than the statewide average.

The Department's Contract Oversight Unit finds the following areas to review:

1. Continue to monitor all contract and performance measures and take immediate corrective action by initiating local review and discussion of any measure which falls below the established performance target.
2. Review and discuss current practice related to the following measures and implement immediate actions to monitor and improve performance in these areas.
  - a. Placement moves per 1,000 days in foster care
  - b. Percent of children in foster care who received a dental service in the last seven months
  - c. Percent of sibling groups where all siblings are placed together
  - d. Percent of children in foster care who received a medical service in the past 12 months
  - e. Percent of children exiting to a permanent home within 12 months of entering care
  - f. Percent of young adult exiting foster care at age 18 who completed/are enrolled in secondary, vocational or adult education
  - g. Percentage of children who are not neglected or abused after receiving services
3. Continue efforts to fully implement the practice model.
4. Review and discuss re-maltreatment episodes for children with family support services terminated within six months. Evaluate causality and patterns by identifying referred service providers, length of care and any other common factors that could be addressed & remedied during local level provider contract negotiations.
5. Follow all fiscal and reporting recommendations as outlined in Financial Accountability reports.
6. Review and discuss cases involving children currently placed in group and licensed care for possible step down to a less restrictive placement option.
7. Continue efforts to recruit and license quality foster home caregivers.