




State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Interim Secretary

DATE: May 5, 2014
TO: Deputy Secretary Pete Digre and Assistant Secretary for Programs Janice Thomas
CC: Regional Managing Directors
FROM: Interim Secretary Mike Carroll
SUBJECT: Vision for Transparency and Reporting of Child Deaths



As the department charged with protecting the vulnerable, our most important work must be to focus on keeping Floridians who cannot protect themselves safe from harm. When tragedies occur, especially those involving children, our response must be consistent, coordinated, compassionate and transparent.

To that end, I am directing you to create a position within the Office of Child Welfare to oversee reporting, data gathering and response to child deaths. This individual must have vast knowledge of our system of care and child protection practices. They must be given the authority to enact policy change, as needed. I expect that the recruitment and placement of this key staff member within our organization to be complete within the month.

I am also directing you to finalize the plan for streamlining incident reporting. This plan must ensure that leadership is informed immediately following the report of a child death to the Hotline as well as bring consistency and accuracy to these reports.

Once this vital role in our organization is filled and an improved reporting system is deployed, I expect that data on child deaths will be reported and shared with the public. All child deaths will be reviewed by the department to quickly identify the salient issues that will help inform and shape local prevention strategies. Reviews of cases with children who had prior contact with the department and/or service providers will be used to improve and strengthen child welfare practice and services provided to at-risk families through partners statewide. These reviews must be documented in a way that can be shared with the public without violating confidentiality.

Our goal is to increase awareness so communities across the state can identify where additional resources or efforts are needed to assist struggling families. With this information readily available to the public, I am confident communities will come together to meet the needs of their neighbors and join us in our efforts to protect children.

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