

FLORIDA'S Early Childhood COURT


Improving outcomes for infants and toddlers in Florida's dependency court



Why does Florida need "baby courts"?

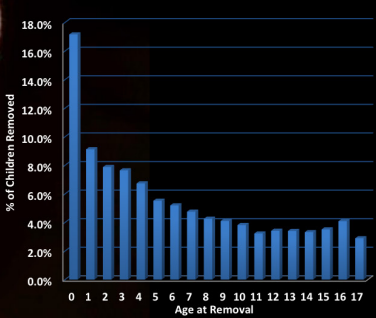
Our youngest children are the most vulnerable for safety issues and for long-term adverse effects. Maltreatment at an early age is related to poor developmental outcomes--up to 65% estimated to have delays and up to 82% have attachment problems. The majority (54.3%) of children entering out-of-home care in Florida are age 5 or under; babies are the largest age group (17.8%). The majority of Florida's tragic fatalities were under age 5. Florida's maltreatment numbers have continued to skyrocket. Many (35%-60%) of Florida's children do not reach permanency within the 12-month federal mandate.

Many children come back into the system because the root cause of maltreatment was not fully addressed. Florida's rate of re-entry into child welfare has increased while national rates have steadily decreased--in 2011 15.4% were re-abused compared to 11.8% nationally. Re-entry rates in 2014 ranged by circuit from 7-24%. Nearly one-third of foster care alumni reported being re-traumatized while in foster care. Over 80% of children aging out of foster care have received a psychiatric diagnosis prior to age 18. Florida's mandate to ensure "safety, permanency and well-being" needs improvement.



The First Year of Life is Most Vulnerable for Maltreatment & Death

54% of Florida's Child Welfare Age 5 or younger

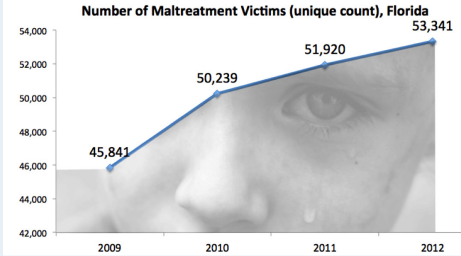


Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2014). *Child Welfare Outcomes*

FLORIDA STATISTICS At A Glance



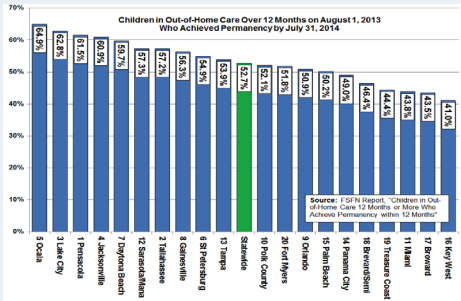
Florida's Child Maltreatment Numbers Climb



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2014). *Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data*. Retrieved July 7, 2014 from: <http://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data/downloads/pdfs/florida.pdf>

Florida Fails to Meet Federal Permanency Timeline for Many Children

35%-60% children do not reach permanency by 12 months



Source: Florida Department of Children and Families. (2014). *2014 Child Protection Summit Community Planning Sessions: Key Indicators by Circuit*.

National Rates of Re-Abuse Decrease While Florida's Rates Continue to Increase

Percent of children reunified who re-enter within 12 months



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2014). *Child Welfare Outcomes 2008-2011 Report to Congress*. Retrieved July 7, 2014 from: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo08_11.pdf

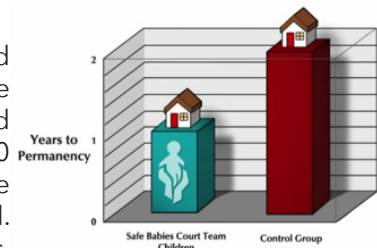
Compelling Outcomes from Baby Court



Compelling research shows this cycle of maltreatment can be mitigated with therapeutic dependency court, a reframing of the judicial system to promote healing and diminish poor outcomes, or simply, "Baby Court". **National baby court team approaches have shown significant improvements in decreasing time to permanency and dramatically reducing re-entry into child welfare.** New Orleans' Baby Court had only

five re-entries out of 266 children in almost 16 years, a substantial difference than Florida's current rate of 15% for just one year. Similarly, The Safe Baby Courts reported impressive results including achieving permanency approximately a year earlier than a matched sample. Most impressive was that 99.05% of children served did not experience re-abuse or neglect. Two external evaluations of the Safe Babies Court Teams Project have shown decreased time to permanency, reduction in recurrence of maltreatment, and improvement in child well being.

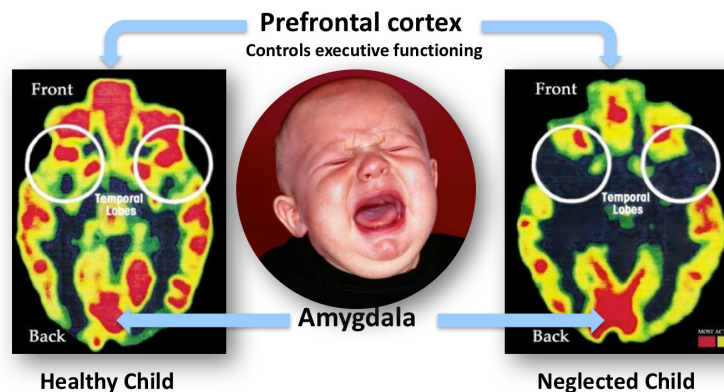
Impressive Cost Benefit. *Economics for the Public Good* evaluated the cost effectiveness of the Safe Babies Court Teams on the basis of one positive outcome: expedited permanency. Short-term savings generated by the earlier exits from foster care are estimated at an average of \$7,300 per child. In other words, the Court Teams' reduced costs of foster care placements alone cover two-thirds of the average cost of \$10,000 per child. The Court Teams are also able to leverage substantial in-kind resources.



For more information, see: www.zerotothree.org/our-work/safe-babies-court-teams

Lifelong Costs of Maltreatment. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Study) found a multitude of lifelong negative consequences stemming from early adversity. The cost of child abuse has been estimated at \$1.8 million per victim.* Early Childhood Court targets this pivotal time for early development to repair neurobiological damage and heal trauma for both parent and child.

Trauma, Toxic Stress & Neglect Interfere With Brain Development



Courtesy of Dr. H.T. Chugani, Children's Hospital of Michigan, Wayne State University

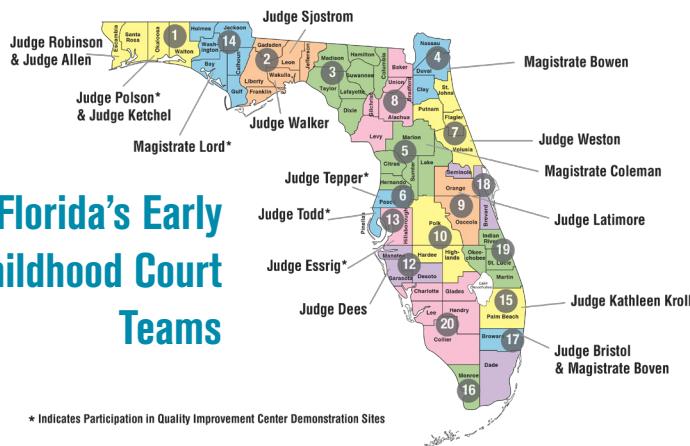
- The Perryman Group. (2014) An Assessment of the Economic Costs of Child Maltreatment. Available at http://www.perrymangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/Perryman_Child_Maltreatment_Report.pdf



FLORIDA'S Early Childhood COURT

Florida Early Childhood Court Initiative (ECC), fondly called “baby court” is an innovative approach to therapeutic jurisprudence aimed toward improving children’s safety, permanency and well-being. Early Childhood Court has fundamentally shifted the focus from “managing the case” to “healing the underlying source of maltreatment” and changing the trajectory for the child and family. The potential to alter the intergenerational cycle of trauma has engendered wide-spread support from grassroots communities to the Florida Supreme Court for rapid expansion of baby courts.

Florida’s Early Childhood Court Teams

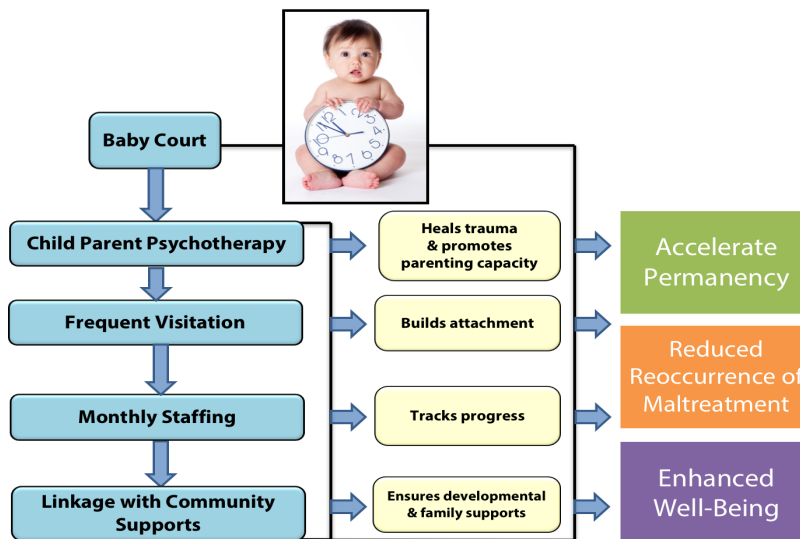


How are baby court teams funded? Early Childhood Court Teams have been established without allocation of new dollars by leveraging existing community resources utilizing Title IV-E Waiver dollars and general revenue funds.

Components of Florida’s Early Childhood Courts


- Judiciary leadership brings together child welfare, universities and early childhood programs to create system change to focus on trauma and integrate services.
- A multidisciplinary team and community coordinator prioritize child and family needs with monthly case reviews to rapidly link to appropriate services & ensure families don’t fall through the cracks.
- An infant mental health clinician has a predominant role in assessing the child-parent relationship, providing therapy and reporting progress to inform decisions toward permanency.
- The key intervention is Child-Parent Psychotherapy (a Medicaid billable service), a powerful evidence based intervention designed to repair the child-parent relationship and heal trauma to enable successfully parenting.
- Placement stability avoids disruptions in the child’s attachment.
- Special emphasis is placed on frequent contact between parent and child which either promotes reunification or accelerates termination.
- A sense of urgency is fostered to achieve reunification, adoption or termination of parental rights.
- The Office of Court Improvement maintains a data tracking system to determine success in decreasing time to permanency and recurrence of maltreatment.


Babies Can’t Wait: Baby Court Achieves Permanency Faster and Reduces Re-entry




Impressive Preliminary Outcomes

Florida's Early Childhood Court began in 2014 with two small pilots and rapidly expanded across the state serving 225 children to date. Florida's Office of Court Improvement has tracked outcomes for 2105 calendar year. The comparison is for children ages 0-3 in out-of-home care in Early Childhood Court versus statewide numbers.

 **Time to Permanency** The median number of days from removal to reunification for children 0-3 in out-of-home care statewide was 276 days compared to 172 days for children in Early Childhood Court. This **104 fewer days**, a little more than 3 months less time to permanency. The median number of days from removal to closure (which is usually six months post reunification or adoption) statewide was 510 days versus 393 days for children in Early Childhood Court, or 117 fewer days.

 **Re-Removal** A total of 69 children ages 0-3 statewide were re-removed after the case was closed. **No children in Early Childhood Court were re-removed** after their case was closed; however, 7 children were removed between reunification before closure. Either way, it is a 10 fold difference.

 **Potential for Cost Savings** Early Childhood Court cuts 3-4 months off of out-of-home care costs. This would save between \$11-15 million per year just in the foster board rate alone. This is only the tip of the iceberg of costs as Florida currently spends more than **\$2BILLION** annually on child welfare. However, the costs of child maltreatment is lifelong to the children who suffer as evidenced by the ACE Study for mental health treatment, health costs, substance abuse treatment, court expenses and all the societal cost of early adversity.



Stopping the Flow of Multigenerational Maltreatment

Early Childhood Court addresses the root cause of maltreatment to stop the multigenerational transmission of trauma and

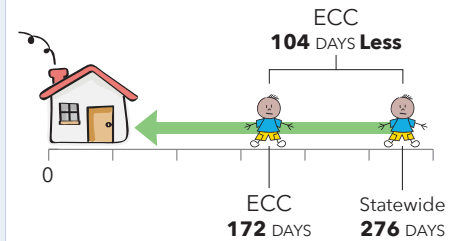
adversity. We can pay now or we can pay much more later. **Florida is paving the way for investing early, which economists, judges, scientists, politicians, and parents can all agree is the most effective time for investment!**

Endnotes

- 1 U.S. HHS, ACYF, Children's Bureau. (2014). Child Welfare Outcomes 2008-2011 Report to Congress. Retrieved July 7, 2014 from: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo08_11.pdf
- 2 Florida DCF. (2014). 2014 Child Protection Summit Community Planning Sessions: Key Indicators by Circuit.
- 3 Jackson, L.J., O'Brien, K., & Pecora, P.J. (2011). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among foster care alumni, Child Welfare, 90(5), 71-93.
- 4 Salazar, A.M., Keller, T.E., Gowen, L.K., & Courtney, M.E. (2013). Trauma exposure and PTSD among older adolescents in foster care. Social Psychiatry & Psychiatric Epidemiology, 48(4), 545-551. doi: 10.1007/s00127-012-0563-0
- 5 U.S. HHS, ACYF, Children's Bureau. (2014). Child Welfare Outcomes 2008-2011 Report to Congress. Retrieved July 7, 2014 from: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo08_11.pdf
- 6 McCombs-Thornton, K.L., & Foster, E.M. (2012, January). The effect of the ZERO TO THREE Court Teams initiative on types of exits from the foster care system. Children and Youth Services Review, 34(1), 169-178.
- 7 Hafford, C., & DeSantis, J. (2009, October). Evaluation of the court teams for maltreated infants and toddlers: Final report. Retrieved from http://www.zerotothree.org/maltreatment/safe-babies-court-team/court-team-maltreated-infants-and-toddlers_final-report_jb.pdf
- 8 ZERO TO THREE (2014). The Safe Babies Court Teams project. <http://www.zerotothree.org/maltreatment/safe-babies-court-team/sbct-in-continuum-v5-jml-1.pdf>
- 9 Foster, E.M., & McCombs-Thornton, K.L. (2012, June). Investing in our most vulnerable: A cost analysis of the ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Court Teams. Birmingham, AL: Economics for the Public Good, LLC.
- 10 Florida board rate for children 0-5 is \$439.30 per month multiplied by 3-4 months less time would save approximately \$1318-\$1757 per child multiplied by the 8482 children 0-3 currently in out-of-home care which would save an estimated \$11-\$15 million. 8/25/16

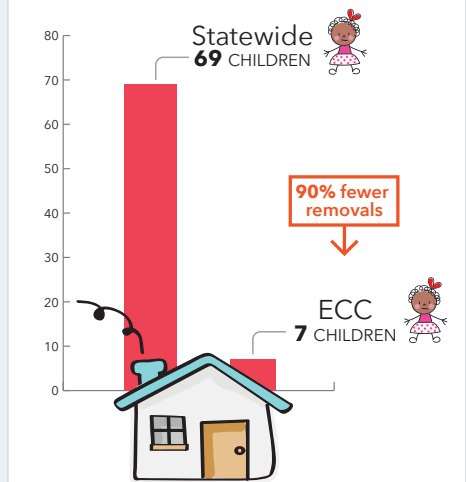
FLORIDA OUTCOMES At A Glance

Florida's Early Childhood Court Reduces Time in Out-of-Home Care



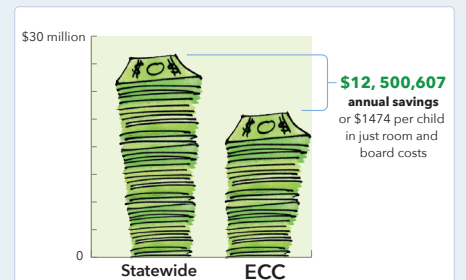
Florida Statewide Outcomes vs Early Childhood Court Cases Ages 0-3 in 2015

Re-abuse Decreased 10-fold in Early Childhood Court



Florida Statewide Outcomes vs Early Childhood Court Cases Ages 0-3 in 2015

Millions of Dollars of Potential Cost Savings



Currently Florida has 8482 children under age 3 in out-of-home care. If all got ECC court with a median of 104 fewer days of out-of-home care at \$14.17 per day, the State would save **\$12,500,607** or **\$1474** per child, just in foster parent board rate. Not to mention extensive systemic savings in Florida's \$2 BILLION expenditures for child welfare.