

Hillsborough Kids Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2012 - 2015



Our vision: A safe, loving and stable home for every child

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Background on the Planning Process

The leadership of Hillsborough Kids began preparing the Strategic Plan (hereinafter called “the Plan”) for fiscal years 2012 to 2015 during January 2011. A primary focus for the planning process was to engage a wide range of stakeholders in the system of care to listen to their current concerns and ideas for future improvement.

More specifically, stakeholder opinion was solicited during February 2011 in the form of two surveys: one for youth and another for adult stakeholders (a total of 934 stakeholders completed surveys). Focus groups with key stakeholders were conducted in March to understand the survey data in greater depth and to discuss strategic issues. An overview of the Plan was reviewed with Board members in April, revised in June, and approved in August. In addition, the Plan was reviewed with stakeholders at a Town Hall meeting in July 2011.



The development of the Plan has been a highly iterative, inclusive process. Stakeholders have been updated regularly, and the summary of survey and focus group data is available on the Hillsborough Kids intranet. Of course, the Plan itself is also available on the external website. Staff at Hillsborough Kids were involved at each step as part of a Strategic Planning Project Team. On April 1, 2011 a retreat was held with Hillsborough Kids leadership, project team staff, a designated Board representative, and a provider representative.

At the strategic planning retreat, stakeholder data was reviewed, a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis was conducted, the Vision and Core Competencies for the system of care were refined, and Key Activities for each Core Competency were developed. As noted previously, these key elements of the Plan have been reviewed and revised with both the Board and stakeholders.

The purpose of the Plan is to provide a straightforward and meaningful foundation for creating the best possible system of care for children and families in Hillsborough County. The Plan provides the foundation for operational goals and metrics, as well as a template to be reviewed and adjusted each year during the term of the Plan. This Plan is intended to be a working document.

Summary of Stakeholder Data

During February 2011, Hillsborough Kids asked youth ages 13 to 17 and young adults in Independent Living Services to complete a survey designed for them. Another survey was sent to 24 stakeholder groups to provide input into the development of the Strategic Plan. A total of 934 stakeholders responded to the survey.

During March 2011, focus groups were conducted with the following key stakeholders:

- Case Management Leadership
- Case Management Staff
- Department of Children and Families Staff
- Employees of Hillsborough Kids
- Foster Parents
- Guardian ad Litem
- Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office - General Managers
- Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office - Child Protective Investigative Staff and Supervisors
- Judges
- Office of the Attorney General
- Youth (ages 13 to 17)

Overall, the data indicates that Hillsborough Kids is an organization with well functioning systems and capable employees. Significant improvements have been made over the last five years in terms of serving children and families. The system of care is effective, which provides the foundation for moving to a new level of collaboration and accountability. The following is a high level summary:

Strengths in the system of care

- Birth and adoptive parents, along with relative caregivers, see themselves and their children as part of a system of care that is effective. It is responsive to their needs and creates opportunities for their children to thrive. Very importantly, the youth and young adults in this system of care agree.
- Stakeholders in the judicial system see families and children being more effectively served under the leadership of Hillsborough Kids since 2006. In general, stakeholders value the openness and encouragement for innovation that currently exists.
- Foster parents identify support from Hillsborough Kids in the form of training and discussing difficult challenges. They also note that they want greater involvement in making decisions that impact children and families in the system of care.



Strategic challenges to address

As noted previously, an effective system of care is in place. Now the goal is to improve the quality of relationships and mutual accountability among stakeholders and the performance of all partner agencies. In addition, the following challenges are suggested by the survey and focus group data:



- An assessment of the business model, to include the contracting of services and structure of the system of care, in order to optimize resources.
- Tension among relationships in the system of care, particularly around the following issues:
 - Adversarial positioning between a few specific stakeholder groups.
 - Perception of imbalance in placements with biological relatives.
 - Roles of procedural documentation and direct services to children and families.
 - Lack of coordination/cooperation across some functions.
 - Learning to assess at deeper levels, both in case management and stakeholder roles.
- Identification of specific approaches for increasing revenue.

In Appendix C of the Plan, an overview of the current trends in child welfare in the state of Florida is briefly discussed, as a complement to this more local focus on the stakeholders in the Hillsborough Kids system of care.

Analysis of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the Hillsborough Kids system of care have been identified, based on stakeholder data and current trends in child welfare:

Strengths to maintain:

- Diverse perspectives abound in the system of care, which creates checks and balances.
- Services for children and families have been improved and expanded over the last few years.
- Birth families, relatives, and youth perceive strong support from the system of care.
- Innovative, evidence-based practices are encouraged and promoted.
- Stakeholders in the system of care are passionate about serving children and families.

Weaknesses to reduce or remove:

- Inconsistent contractual accountability and performance of partner agencies.
- Barriers to effectiveness associated with documentation and some contract measures.
- Blaming when problems occur, rather than assuming mutual accountability.
- Insufficient integration and cooperation across some roles and functions in the system of care.
- A need for improved critical thinking and assessment skills.
- A lack of recognition for outstanding performance and high levels of accountability.

Opportunities to maximize:

- The weaknesses noted above.
- Efficiencies in the judicial system.
- Media and community relations.
- Board focus on strategic issues.
- Engaging young adults in improving the system of care.
- Developing a model of collaboration for the system.
- The Invitation to Negotiate with DCF.

Threats to neutralize or offset:

- Restrictive legislative actions.
- Reduction in state funding.
- Political pressures in making decisions.
- Liability and risk issues.
- Tensions in contractual relationships.
- Competitive environment among CBC's in the state.

Leadership and staff, using stakeholder data as the primary reference point, have identified four areas of competency that must be developed and sustained in the system of care to effectively address these strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. As will be noted in the following section, each competency has Key Activities associated with it, which will be accomplished over the three years of this plan. Of course, new activities will be added (and the current ones modified) as stakeholder needs in the system change and as the state-wide trends shift.

The Hillsborough Kids Strategic Plan

Vision for the System of Care: A safe, loving and stable home for every child.

Collaboration: To maximize joint decision making and performance based on candor and reciprocal sharing of information.

Core Competencies and Key Activities:

1) Strengthening children and families through innovative, evidence-based practices.

- Identify practices that are innovative in the system and elsewhere in child welfare.
- Analyze gaps in service provision and prevention efforts which impact the system of care.
- Explore the Family Group Decision Making concept as the method for developing policies, procedures, and documentation for the system of care.
- Research the effectiveness of current key practices, with a focus on services to parents or other care-givers and on case management supervision.
- Create learning opportunities for stakeholders and the community as part of an integrated outreach effort to increase awareness and understanding of the system of care.

2) Leveraging resources through collaborative relationships and mutual accountability.

- Become more transparent about ways in which Hillsborough Kids holds itself and its partner agencies accountable.
- Analyze the current business model to optimize resources in the system of care.
- Develop a prospective decision support model as a foundation for addressing issues in the system, with a focus on critical thinking skills.
- Increase cross-functional integration and cooperation across the system.

3) Identifying and pursuing opportunities to diversify funding.

- Define diversified funding for the system of care.
- Analyze potential revenue sources to address gaps in service.
- Identify roles of key committees/people, including the Board and Community Relations.
- Assess return on investment for a select group of potential revenue sources and pursue as appropriate.

4) Promoting professional development and outstanding performance.

- Assess effectiveness based on outcomes for all mandated training in the system of care.
- Develop a plan for training to increase effectiveness and meet needs in the system.
- Work with providers to determine the best methods for rewarding high levels of performance.
- Create a process for Board orientation, education, strategic engagement, and outreach to the community.

Creating safe, loving and stable homes for every child in the system of care can most effectively be accomplished through collaboration among stakeholders. Over the three years of this Plan, mutual accountability and high levels of performance among the partner agencies will be emphasized. As one step in that process, teams will be created for the competencies identified above to operationalize each Key Activity.



Operationalizing and Monitoring the Plan

Teams of employees, identified from a diagonal cross-section of the system of care, will begin the process of identifying operational plans for each Key Activity. These teams will be fluid, drawing in stakeholder expertise as appropriate. The following tentative schedule will be used as the foundation for operationalizing and monitoring the Plan:

Tentative Schedule: Operationalizing and Monitoring

December	2011	Operational plans for each Key Activity completed.
January	2012	Departmental plans completed.
February	2012	Staff planning sheets developed.
August	2012	Assessment of operational plans based on Key Activities.
October	2012	Assessment and updating of operational and departmental plans, review of strategic plan, in terms of needs for adjustments.



Each team will report to the Board annually on accomplishment of Key Activities and on needs for adjustments in the Strategic Plan.

Appendix A: Company Profile

The mission of Hillsborough Kids is to ensure the safety and permanency of abused and neglected children in Hillsborough County by providing comprehensive services that promote strong families. The following Core Values are the foundation for accomplishing this Mission:

- Integrity
- Family Preservation
- Fiscal Stewardship
- Community Partnerships
- Commitment to the Hillsborough Kids Team

As the lead agency for Community Based Care, Hillsborough Kids holds the contract through the Department of Children and Families for child protection and administrative services in the county. Direct case management for children and their families is provided through a network of local agencies. The Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office oversees child protective investigations.

The network of local agencies contracted by Hillsborough Kids provides the following services:



- Child abuse prevention
- Family crisis intervention, to keep families intact
- Diversion services, to avoid unnecessarily removing children from their homes
- Independent living guidance for teens in foster care and those aging out of foster care
- Case management, to assure children are in a safe and stable environment
- Dependency court supervision
- Foster parent recruitment and training
- Adoptive parent recruitment and placement
- CBC Partnership/Magellan Mental Health Services

Company Profile continued

During the years of the previous Strategic Plan (2009-2011), Hillsborough Kids accomplished:

- Goal 1: Improvement in Board functioning
- Goal 2: Collaborative planning with community stakeholders
- Goal 3: Expedited Council on Accreditation (COA) accreditation
- Goal 4: Increases in the number of family connections for children and in adoptions
- Goal 5: Quality Parenting (Fostering) Initiative

The current Strategic Plan continues to focus on improvement in the areas noted above, as well as increasing mutual accountability and performance among partner agencies.



Appendix B: Managerial and Board Leadership

Executive Management Team:

Jeff Rainey, President/CEO

Karen Maziarz, Senior VP/ Chief Financial Officer

Sunny Hall, Senior VP/Chief Operating Officer

Judy Wichterman, VP Program Administration

Nancy Newkirk, VP Operations

Mordecai Dixon, VP Quality Management

Pam Norris, VP Management Information Systems

Paula Dubuc, VP Finance and Contracts

Board of Directors:

Officers

Mindy Murphy, Chair

Mary Ellen Gillette, Vice Chair

Constance Trojanowski, Treasurer

Melanie Hall, Secretary

Liz Kennedy, past Chair

Directors

Reynolds Allen

Tammy Bracewell

Carolyn Bricklemyer

Renee Dabbs

Dr. Steve Freedman

Charlie Ketchey

Sandra Murman

Kenya Reddy

Dr. Shawn Robinson

Dr. Monica Rosenthal Sams

Alisha Slater

Ryan Weeks



Appendix C: Child Welfare Trends and Issues in Florida

The purpose of this overview of child welfare trends and issues is to provide a high level understanding of the context in which the Plan will be implemented. Current governmental and economic issues in the state of Florida have been taken into account in the Plan, along with local needs. Of course, if the direction in which these issues develop is significantly different than the trends identified here, the Plan itself will need to be adjusted.

Community Based Care has provided a system-wide redesign of child welfare over the last ten years in the state of Florida. Significant improvements have been made, based on local community partnerships and the integration of evidence-based, innovative practices into the system of care. Both at the state level and within Hillsborough County, the number of adoptions has increased significantly over the last five years, and caseloads have dropped. However, in this economic downturn, these trends are shifting.

Family-centered practice has facilitated children remaining safely in their homes or being reunited with their families in a relatively short period of time. Florida has drawn national attention, based on the comprehensive improvements that have occurred in Community Based Care.

Even in light of the systemic improvements that have been implemented, there are also increasing concerns about the viability of the Community Based Care (CBC) organizations in the state. Both in Florida and nationally, a serious economic downturn has resulted in a range of legislative reductions in funding for social service programs. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is now encouraging the CBC's throughout the state to begin to develop additional sources of funding beyond the contract with DCF. In addition, legislators have focused on the need for effective collaboration among system of care partners, as a means for optimizing resources and improving performance throughout the system.

There is pervasive agreement across the state, and nationally, that the child welfare system in Florida has improved significantly over the last five years. At this point, the goal is to move the system to a new level of performance and success for families and children.



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