

**NATIONAL COALITION FOR
CHILD PROTECTION REFORM**

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**“PERENNIAL PANIC” PLAGUES FLORIDA CHILD WELFARE,
NATIONAL CHILD ADVOCACY GROUP FINDS
*Lake County and Orlando districts show major improvements,
Naples/Fort Myers, Miami and Palm Beach County districts deteriorate***

**THE FULL REPORT CAN BE FOUND
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THIS PRESS RELEASE.**

Much of Florida remains mired in a state of “perennial foster-care panic,” with the state’s Department of Children and Families and an assortment of privatized “lead agencies” needlessly tearing apart families, and making children less safe, according to a report released Monday.

The statewide showing masks significant improvement in some districts - and dangerous deterioration in others, according to the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform. “Once again, the data show that child removal does not equal child safety,” said NCCPR Executive Director Richard Wexler. “Once again, it was the districts that took proportionately fewer children that tended to do better at keeping children safe.”

The assessment is based on data compiled for NCCPR’s latest *Florida Rate-of-Removal Index*. The new index, released Monday, updates data first released a year ago, as part of NCCPR’s fourth report on Florida child welfare. All of NCCPR’s Florida reports are available at www.nccpr.org

According to the new report, in 2006, the number of children taken from their homes statewide declined by 3.4 percent. “But that means only that Florida went from the worst single year performance it’s ever seen in tearing apart families, to the second worst,” Wexler said. “Florida still takes children at a rate 25 percent above the national average and nearly double and triple the rate of systems nationally recognized as models, such as Alabama and Illinois.”

According to the report, District 7 (Brevard, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole counties) and District 13 (Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion and Sumter counties) made major progress, significantly reducing the number of children torn from their homes, with no compromise of child safety. But a new foster-care panic in the Fort Myers area, following the death of a child “known to the system” a year ago “never really let up. Removals soared, but it did nothing to make children any safer,” Wexler said. “Indeed, one measure of safety got worse.

“One need only compare the best and worst performing districts in the state to see that child removal does not equal child safety,” Wexler said. “The worst-performing district in the state is one that has gotten little media attention, District 1 in the Panhandle (Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties). A child in that district is more than five times more likely to be torn away from everyone loving and familiar than a child in District 11 (Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties), the district which took, proportionately the fewest children.

“But while District 1 has some of the worst safety outcomes in the state, the Miami district has the very best.

“And that should come as no surprise. The more that districts reduce the number of children needlessly taken from their homes, the more time workers have to find the relatively few children in real danger who really must be placed in foster care,” Wexler said.

“But even in Miami some of the news is discouraging,” Wexler said. “Though it still performs better than any other district, removals in Miami increased by 18 percent in 2006.”

Wexler noted that early in 2006 Chuck Hood, the district’s reform-minded District Administrator resigned under pressure. The deterioration in the district “is what happens when providers who rely on a steady supply of foster children and advocates wedded to a take-the-child-and-run approach unite against a reformer,” Wexler said.

In addition to overloading workers and making it more likely that children in real danger will be missed, needless removal of children from everyone they know and love can cause enormous, sometimes lifelong, debilitating emotional trauma to a child, Wexler said. “And there is no guarantee of safety in foster care itself, where several studies have suggested that at least one in three children is abused while in substitute care, far more such abuse than is reported in official figures, when agencies, in effect, investigate themselves. The record of group homes and institutions is even worse.”

The good news

The best news in 2006 comes from a district that has been troubled since Florida’s experiment with privatization began a decade ago, District 13. In 2005, that district took children at, by far, the highest rate in the state – a rate more than double the state average and nearly seven times the rate in Miami.

“But instead of responding to NCCPR’s report with stonewalling and false claims about how they were keeping children safe, District 13 faced its problems with candor and resolve,” Wexler said.

Wexler noted that shortly after NCCPR released its 2006 report, *The Price of Panic*, which condemned the rate of removal in District 13, Cyndi Schuler, the CEO of that district’s lead agency, Kids Central, Inc. acknowledged that “we have been a knee-jerk panic-driven district” and she pledged to work with DCF to change that. “She backed up the words with action,” Wexler said.

In one year, removals of children from their homes fell by nearly one-third – and child safety improved. The district still takes children at the third highest rate in Florida, and a case in the news last week from Ocala, in which a child was needlessly kept from a loving grandmother for two years, shows how much more needs to be done, “but the progress is impressive, and both KCI and the DCF leadership in District 13 should be congratulated,” Wexler said.

The other district that improved significantly is District 7, which includes Orlando, Wexler said. “Under new District Administrator Alan Abramowitz, who previously helped turn around District 12, the number of children taken from their parents fell by 12 percent, to the lowest number since at least 2002, and the third lowest rate of removal in the state, with no compromise of safety.”

The bad news

The district where performance deteriorated the most in 2006 was District 8, (Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties) which includes Naples and Fort Myers.

In March of 2006, the horrifying murder of Michelle Fontanez, a child well-known to DCF, got enormous public attention “as it should have,” Wexler said. “But in the absence of strong leadership from DCF or the privatized lead agency, that kind of attention always sets off a foster-care panic. That’s exactly what happened in District 8. Fearful of being scapegoated for the next tragedy, workers rushed to tear far more children from their homes. As always, they did

it in the name of making children safe. But the new data show that one key measure of child safety in District 8 has gotten worse, and the other did not improve. They also tore apart more families in the name of preventing another tragedy like the death of Michelle Fontanez. But just such a tragedy, the death of Zahid Jones, is making news in that district right now.

“District 8 learned all the wrong lessons after Michelle died. One can only hope the district will do a better job of honoring Zahid’s memory.”

The other district where performance continues to deteriorate is District 9, Palm Beach County, Wexler said. “Removals of children in that district have soared by 60 percent in two years. Babies are being scarred, perhaps for life, as they are shipped out to shelters and ‘cared’ for by shift workers, because there is no place to put them in the county. That is institutionalized child abuse,” Wexler said.

“Two years of foster-care panic have wiped out impressive gains made in 2004, under more enlightened leadership,” Wexler said. “Because of those earlier gains, Palm Beach County still takes children at a rate below the state average, and the county has managed to maintain good safety outcomes. But Palm Beach County kept children just as safe – physically -- when it took far fewer children; all that additional removal of children, and all that emotional abuse of babies, has been for nothing.”

Though the trends are worst in Districts 8 and 9, the district which chronically performs worst of all, according to the Index, is now District 1 in the Panhandle. “Indeed, all four of the state’s northernmost districts have formed what amounts to a belt of poor practice across the top of the state,” Wexler said. . “District 14 (Hardee, Highlands, and Polk Counties) also has performed poorly for several years.

Perennial Panic

Wexler said that the state as a whole “is now in its eighth year of perennial foster care panic, a record of failure unmatched anywhere else in the nation.” Wexler said the panic was primarily the result of demands by former DCF Secretary Kathleen Kearney for a massive increase in the number of children taken from their homes.

In Kearney’s first year, “removals soared by 50 percent, and they have remained at that obscene level ever since,” Wexler said.

While other child welfare organizations in Florida and nationwide hailed Kearney as a savior, NCCPR warned in 1999 that her approach would collapse the system and leave children less safe. “Unfortunately, that’s exactly what happened. During Florida’s Years of Panic deaths of children known-to-the-system have increased, and reabuse of children has increased by 50 percent,” Wexler said. “Kearney meant well; everything she did was in the name of child safety. But no DCF chief ever did more to compromise that safety. But while Kearney is long gone, much of the state still suffers from her take-the-child-and-run approach.”

Wexler said some privatized lead agencies “try to wash their hands of responsibility for wrongful removal because, technically, they don’t make the initial move to take away a child; that’s done by DCF or a county sheriff’s office. But that’s a cop-out. DCF’s ability to avoid needless removal depends in part on how lead agencies spend their money. Do they throw it all away on needless foster care and institutionalization, especially expensive, worthless “residential treatment” - or do they use it to build an infrastructure of prevention and family preservation, giving DCF and sheriff’s offices more options when dealing with troubled, but loving families?”

“Kids Central in District 13 and Community Partnership for Children in District 12 have acknowledged that avoiding needless destruction of families is a shared responsibility. Other lead agencies should follow their example,” Wexler said.

Wexler noted that in the report issued a year ago, and available at www.nccpr.org NCCPR updated a series of recommendations for reforming Florida child welfare. “But as child

NCCPR FLORIDA RATE-OF-REMOVAL INDEX/4

welfare decentralizes, the most important recommendation is simple: Follow the leaders. Look at the districts in Florida and the states nationwide that have made the most progress, and use their best practices.”

The *NCCPR Florida Rate of Removal Index* is calculated by comparing the number of children taken from their parents in each district in 2006 to a Census Bureau estimate of the number of impoverished children living in each district (This estimate has been updated since NCCPR issued its first such Index a year ago.) These figures then are compared to key safety outcomes available on the “Dashboard” on the Department of Children and Families website.

The full Index begins on the following page

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THE 2007 NCCPR *FLORIDA* RATE-OF-REMOVAL INDEX

Released June 18, 2007

For the past four years, NCCPR has published a rate-of-removal index which compares the propensity of *states* to adopt a “take-the-child-and-run” approach to child welfare. The index compares the number of removals of children in each state during the most recent year for which data are available to a Census Bureau estimate of the number of children living in poverty in that state. The result is the number of removals of children from their homes for every thousand impoverished children in that state.

But with Florida child welfare becoming increasingly decentralized, a statewide figure is not enough. Last year, using data obtained through a public records request, NCCPR prepared the first comparison of the propensity of districts *within* Florida to take away children. We compared these data for calendar year 2005 to key measures of child safety, available from the online “Dashboard” at the Florida Department of Children and Families website, <http://dcfdashboard.dcf.state.fl.us/>

With this report we update the *NCCPR Florida Rate-of-Removal Index*, to include data for the 12 months since the last index was published.

Once again, the data reveal a striking pattern: The districts that do the best job of keeping children safe, tend to be those which take away, proportionately, the *fewest* children from their parents. And the districts with the highest rates of child removal often have the worst safety outcomes.

Most notable is the performance of District 11 (Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties). This district has, by far, the lowest rate-of-removal and the best safety outcomes. On the other hand, District 11’s performance is slipping. During 2006, removals increased significantly, and safety outcomes worsened compared to 2005. We believe this is a consequence of the resignation of a progressive former district administrator, under pressure from “provider” interests and advocates of a take-the-child-and-run approach to child welfare.

The pattern shown in these data does not mean that one can simply reduce removals and thereby make children safer. Rather, reducing removals is a *prerequisite* for keeping children safer, because it helps free up time and resources to find children in real danger.

NCCPR also obtained month-by-month entry-into-care data for every district dating back to January, 2003. These data show a knee-jerk response to the death of a child “known to the system” can set off a foster-care panic.

Thus, in the months after the death of Michelle Fontanez made headlines in District 8, removals of children from their homes soared 50 percent. With other cases in the news throughout the year, and turmoil over who would run the privatized “lead agency” in the district, the panic continued without let-up. **In 2006, the number of children taken from their parents in District 8 soared by 28 percent, the highest one-year rate of increase in Florida.** And, just as we predicted last year, the data show that traumatizing all those additional families did nothing to make children safer.

Similarly, another district that once was doing relatively well was District 9, Palm Beach County. But removals started to climb two years ago, and they continue to soar. **The rate of child**

removal in Palm Beach County in 2006 was 20 percent higher than 2005 – and an appalling 60 percent higher than 2004. And, again, all that additional destruction of families has done nothing to make children safer.

In spite of this dreadful trend, the rate-of-removal in Palm Beach County remains below the state average, though no longer by much. That may explain why the county continues to do well on safety outcomes. But that does not justify the current panic. Palm Beach County kept children just as safe when it took away far fewer of them. And Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties take children at less than half the rate in Palm Beach County, while doing far better at keeping children safe.

But there also is some good news in these numbers. In 2005, District 13 had the worst record for taking away children, and one of the worst records for child safety. But instead of reacting defensively to NCCPR's data, or falsely claiming that taking away all those children was keeping them safe, both DCF and the privatized "lead agency" in District 13 acknowledged the problem and made a concerted effort to do better. **In 2006, District 13 cut its rate of removal by nearly one-third – and child safety improved.** The district still takes far too many children, but the improvement is impressive.

There also is good news in District 7, where new leadership has reduced removals by 12 percent, taking away fewer children than any year since 2002, with no compromise of safety.

THIS IS NOT THE "SNAPSHOT NUMBER"...

The measure of a district's foster care population usually seen in news accounts is the so-called "snapshot number" indicating the number of children in foster care in a district on one particular day each year. That is a very important number, but it is a less accurate measure of a district's propensity to remove children.

A district may have a high snapshot number even if it takes away very few children, if it hangs on to those it takes for a very long time. (That is, in itself, a serious problem, but not a measure of the district's propensity to take away children in the first place). Conversely, a district can have a low snapshot number and still take away many children, but take them for only a very short period of time. Thus, a district which takes away many children in January, but returns most of them by August will have a low number if the "snapshot" is taken in September.

This also is why another measure of success, average length of stay in foster care, should be viewed with caution. A district with a low average length of stay may have achieved this simply by taking away far too many children and then returning a lot of them after only a very short time in foster care – much the worse for the experience.

Also, a district which took away a great many children a decade or more ago and let them languish in foster care may have a low snapshot number now simply because those children are "aging out" of the system at 18 – hardly a testament to a system's success.

...RATHER, THIS INDEX USES REMOVALS OVER THE COURSE OF A YEAR

So instead of measuring the foster care population on any given day, the *NCCPR Florida Rate-of-Removal Index* relies on DCF data, obtained through public records requests, listing the number of children removed over the course of a given year. Both last year and this year, DCF responded to our requests promptly and thoroughly and we thank the agency for its cooperation.

HOW THE INDEX IS COMPILED

We could have simply compared the number of children removed over the course of a year to a district's total child population. But then all the districts with high rates-of-removal and high child poverty rates would complain that this was unfair because we didn't consider the single largest risk factor for actual abuse (not to mention the factor most often confused with "neglect") – poverty.

So, in order to factor that out, and come closer to an apples-to-apples comparison, we compare removals to the number of impoverished children in each district.

Last year, we did this using data from the 2000 census. This year, we are using an updated Census Bureau estimate for 2004 (the most recent year for which census data are available.) As a result, the 2005 comparison table in *this* report does not match the 2005 data in our last report, since using the more recent child poverty estimate for both years is a fairer comparison.

RANKINGS

Data for 2006 are presented in order of district number and then in order of each district's propensity to remove children, with the district that took, proportionately, the most children, ranked first. Rankings also are given on the safety outcomes. Note that in every case, the lower a district ranks, the better its performance. In this comparison, it is far better to rank 14th than first.

We've also provided the same information, without rankings, for 2005, so readers can compare the performance of their districts. (But see "important caveats" below.)

SAFETY DATA

As a group that believes strongly in family preservation, we feel that a high rate-of-removal almost always is a sign of a bad system. But a low rate-of-removal is not necessarily a sign of a good system. A low rate-of-removal can be accomplished either by embracing safe, proven programs to keep families together, or by ignoring children in real danger. Fortunately, the Florida data offer clues about this as well.

There are two primary means for measuring how a child welfare system does in keeping children safe; both are used by the federal government in evaluating state performance. One is to track how often, when maltreatment is substantiated, the child is maltreated again within six months. The other measure is foster-care "recidivism." That is, how often, when a child is returned home from foster care, must that child be placed in foster care again within 12 months? The tables on the following pages compare rates-of-removal to these outcomes in each DCF district.

TIME FRAMES

Though entry-into-care data are available through April 2007, and are included in the month-by-month chart at the end of this report, our comparison uses data only from calendar year 2006, in order to provide a closer comparison to the timeframes for the safety data.

Re-abuse data are available only through September, 2006, so the figures in the comparison tables are for the period January through September 2006. Data for foster-care recidivism are for all of 2006.

THE “PANIC DETECTOR”

The final table arranges the rate-of-removal data for each district month-by-month for each year from 2003 through April 2007. Where there is a sharp rise in removals during the same month from one year to the next for at least two months in a row, that suggests a foster-care panic. Figures that meet this criterion are in bold and the boxes are shaded. We’ve also used shading to note cases in which annual increases exceed 20 percent in single year or 50 percent over two years. The final column in the table also notes other significant increases or decreases in child removals.

COMPARING THE FLORIDA DATA TO NCCPR’S NATIONAL RATE-OF-REMOVAL INDEX

Because we have updated the child poverty figures, these data should now be roughly comparable to the data in NCCPR’s national *Rate-of-Removal Index*. So readers now can compare a *district’s* total to other states or the national average. But this still should be done with caution because it is more difficult to accurately estimate the number of impoverished children in a smaller jurisdiction. Also, the entry-into-care data in NCCPR’s national index are for the year ending September 30, 2005, so they are not as recent as the available Florida data.

IMPORTANT CAVEATS

- **The child poverty estimate has a relatively wide margin of error. Therefore, the rankings cannot be used to suggest that a district is better or worse than one with a similar rate-of-removal. Rather, this index can be used to spot the outliers - those doing particularly well or particularly poorly, and to detect trends. Similarly, small differences in safety outcomes among districts or small changes from year to year are not significant; they easily can result from random chance. That is particularly true in smaller districts and when looking at foster-care recidivism, where the raw number of children is likely to be relatively low.**

- The data in the tables don’t reveal trends over time except from 2005 to 2006. A district that still has a rate-of-removal at or a little above the state average, but has been steadily and safely reducing needless removal of children may be a better “role model” than a district which removed proportionately fewer children in 2006, but now is in the midst of a foster-care panic. Trend data back to January, 2003 are available in the “panic detector” table.

- One cannot say, based on these data, that district X “took Y percent of its poor children from their parents in 2006.” That would be inaccurate because, while the overwhelming majority of children taken from their parents are poor, not all of them are. Thus, we are comparing a pool of children – those removed from their parents – which is mostly poor, to a general population that is entirely poor. One can say only that, for example, according to this index, in 2006, DCF in District 1 appeared more than five times more prone to resort to foster care than their counterparts in District 11 – and District 11 has far better safety outcomes.

TABLES BEGIN ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

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NCCPR FLORIDA RATE-OF REMOVAL INDEX, CALENDAR YEAR 2006

District	Children living in poverty, 2004	Children removed from their Homes, 2006	Rate of removal (per thousand impoverished children)	Rank	Reabuse, Jan.-Sept. 2006	Rank	Foster care recidivism, 2006	Rank
1	26,178	1,679	64.1	1	13.3	2	14.5	3
2	26,839	1,296	48.3	4	12.9	3	16.2	1
3	22,809	992	43.5	6	13.4	1	13.7	5
4	46,712	2,301	49.3	2	10.1	8	11.1	11
7	83,978	2,085	24.8	12	11.7	6	13.6	6
8	30,633	810	26.4	11	8.9	11	12.1	9
9	40,886	1,083	26.5	10	8.4	13	10.1	13
10	70,004	1,393	19.9	13	8.7	12	12.8	8
11	139,235	1,670	12.0	14	7.3	14	9.5	14
12	18,601	607	32.6	9	9.2	10	11.4	10
13	31,822	1,549	48.7	3	11.6	7	12.9	7
14	31,493	1,431	45.4	5	12.9	3	14.0	4
15	17,919	715	39.9	7	9.6	9	15.9	2
Suncoast	112,175	3,976	35.4	8	11.8	5	10.3	12
Statewide Average	699,284	21,587	30.9		10.9		12.5	

NCCPR FLORIDA RATE-OF REMOVAL INDEX, CALENDAR YEAR 2006, BY RANK

District	Children living in poverty, 2004	Children removed from their Homes, 2006	Rate of removal (per thousand impoverished children)	Rank	Reabuse, Jan.-Sept. 2006	Rank	Foster care recidivism, 2006	Rank
1	26,178	1,679	64.1	1	13.3	2	14.5	3
4	46,712	2,301	49.3	2	10.1	8	11.1	11
13	31,822	1,549	48.7	3	11.6	7	12.9	7
2	26,839	1,296	48.3	4	12.9	3	16.2	1
14	31,493	1,431	45.4	5	12.9	3	14.0	4
3	22,809	992	43.5	6	13.4	1	13.7	5
15	17,919	715	39.9	7	9.6	9	15.9	2
Suncoast	112,175	3,976	35.4	8	11.8	5	10.3	12
12	18,601	607	32.6	9	9.2	10	11.4	10
State Average			30.9		10.9		12.5	
9	40,886	1,083	26.5	10	8.4	13	10.1	13
8	30,633	810	26.4	11	8.9	11	12.1	9
7	83,978	2,085	24.8	12	11.7	6	13.6	6
10	70,004	1,393	19.9	13	8.7	12	12.8	8
11	139,235	1,670	12.0	14	7.3	14	9.5	14

RATE-OF-REMOVAL AND SAFETY INDICATORS, CALENDAR YEAR 2005

District	Children living in poverty, 2004	Children removed from their Homes, 2005	Rate of removal (per thousand impoverished children	Reabuse, Jan.-Sept. 2005	Foster care recidivism, 2005
1	26,178	1,473	56.3	12.5	13.2
2	26,839	1,328	49.5	13.6	16.1
3	22,809	1,014	44.5	11.7	11.1
4	46,712	2,356	50.4	9.7	9.8
7	83,978	2,371	28.2	11.6	12.3
8	30,633	635	20.7	8.4	9.4
9	40,886	897	21.9	9.9	9.8
10	70,004	1,315	18.8	9.2	10.4
11	139,235	1,455	10.4	6.3	6.2
12	18,601	606	32.6	13.0	11.4
13	31,822	2,241	70.4	12.0	16.8
14	31,493	1,455	46.2	14.2	12.3
15	17,919	822	45.9	9.3	19.2
Suncoast	112,175	4,418	39.4	11.8	11.4
Statewide Average	699,284	22,386	32.0	11.1	11.8

See following page for month-by-month entry-into-care data from January 2003 through April 2007

NCCPR FLORIDA RATE-OF-REMOVAL INDEX/12

Year	District	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	
2003	11	202	161	158	224	258	211	189	185	171	191	132	144	2226	
2004	11	116	109	127	123	165	143	92	95	95	131	113	113	1422	-36%
2005	11	97	111	181	113	113	135	104	107	149	113	96	103	1422	
2006	11	156	158	136	112	116	143	158	162	159	156	112	102	1670	+18%
2007	11	97	140	183	92										
2003	12	69	91	79	63	82	61	43	66	67	70	28	27	746	
2004	12	58	45	46	57	34	38	38	43	32	36	38	40	505	-32%
2005	12	46	44	69	31	63	52	51	41	66	63	42	38	606	+20%
2006	12	56	32	55	56	62	60	45	46	42	68	44	41	607	
2007	12	58	34	30	28										
2003	13	137	95	130	106	140	96	132	98	127	144	135	110	1450	
2004	13	138	161	166	180	158	150	218	169	132	130	121	192	1915	+32%
2005	13	231	226	224	182	236	157	189	207	187	180	136	86	2241	+17%
2006	13	139	182	167	140	167	120	89	133	101	112	100	99	1549	-30%
2007	13	101	104	136	119										
2003	14	156	92	109	142	117	95	141	115	135	150	87	108	1447	
2004	14	137	114	139	96	93	76	100	56	61	87	127	149	1235	-15%
2005	14	129	132	160	150	116	133	126	130	119	84	90	86	1455	+18%
2006	14	109	91	87	150	142	158	130	117	121	117	100	109	1431	
2007	14	116	109	85	82										
2003	15	53	57	53	58	63	62	66	61	58	72	46	65	714	
2004	15	69	75	81	58	38	34	53	64	22	49	92	78	713	
2005	15	90	75	98	62	61	44	54	88	74	50	63	63	822	+15%
2006	15	75	71	50	53	65	55	50	65	45	68	55	63	715	-13%
2007	15	38	46	60	49										
2003	Suncoast	381	323	345	414	395	318	451	354	420	391	342	255	4389	
2004	Suncoast	317	344	380	358	329	376	277	308	328	359	226	332	3934	-10%
2005	Suncoast	344	328	419	374	441	349	377	409	504	320	244	309	4418	+12%
2006	Suncoast	380	369	385	378	337	328	341	329	325	315	289	200	3976	-10%
2007	Suncoast	307	254	244	224										
2003	State Total	1840	1596	1690	1871	1915	1648	1777	1820	1948	2026	1497	1394	21022	
2004	State Total	1724	1696	1823	1730	1642	1621	1488	1633	1355	1592	1413	1738	19455	
2005	State Total	2052	1806	2213	1830	1971	1740	1750	1995	2223	1683	1598	1492	22353	
2006	State Total	1957	1931	2030	1854	1833	1923	1754	1830	1772	1800	1544	1359	21587	
2007	State Total	1614	1469	1659	1505										

Sources:

Children removed from their homes: Florida Department of Children and Families response to NCCPR public records request.

Safety measures: Florida Department of Children and Families "Dashboard" available online at <http://dcfdashboard.dcf.state.fl.us/>

Impoverished children: Census bureau U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates: Estimates for Florida

Counties, 2004, available online at: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/county.html>