



CHILDNET STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2025

APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON 02-24-23

INTRODUCTION

Since the creation of Community Based Care (CBC) by the Florida Legislature more than twenty years ago, ChildNet and other CBC lead agencies have, with their partners statewide, dramatically and substantially improved the local, and the state's, systems of foster care and related services. That is undeniable. Equally undeniable, is the need to continue that improvement, both locally and statewide. Not surprisingly, several of the areas most in need of improvement are those that are particularly complex, challenging and ones that ChildNet, and other lead agencies, have historically struggled with. The three (3) most prominent, for ChildNet today, are stabilizing the child welfare workforce, increasing the quantity and quality of therapeutic and treatment placement options for children, and increasing and stabilizing the placement of children with their kin. Though all have, of course, received attention in the past, ChildNet believes that truly overcoming these challenges now requires making them the central, constant and formal focus of the agency's efforts. To that end, they will now be the three (3) strategic imperatives at the core of ChildNet's Strategic Plan for the years 2023 through 2025.

To successfully implement the plan presented here, we will formally and consistently review and report on our progress, and challenges, both internally and externally, to ChildNet's Board of Directors, to all ChildNet staff and, just as importantly, to our many and varied local and statewide partners, stakeholders, subcontractors, and policymakers. This acknowledges that success will only occur if we all recognize that we all must contribute to it, that we all have a role in executing its action steps and achieving its targets. This is especially true for this strategic plan where all the challenges being addressed are longstanding and systemic ones, locally and statewide. Moreover, at least one, increasing and improving the array of therapeutic and treatment placement options, is technically an area where state agencies and private organizations other than ChildNet and the Department of Children and Families have direct and primary responsibility for the funding and provision of many of the needed services.

Clearly, we have an imposing task ahead of us. ChildNet, however, is confident that together we will very successfully implement this very important Strategic Plan.

STRATEGIC GOAL ONE

#1 - Improve and sustain ChildNet's workforce by implementing proven and innovative practices.

PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and maintain a qualified workforce that will effectively support and serve children and families.
EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN ONE YEAR:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChildNet will reduce annual external voluntary turnover from 30% to 28%.
EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN TWO YEARS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChildNet will reduce annual external voluntary turnover to 23%.
EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN THREE YEARS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChildNet will reduce annual external voluntary turnover to 18%.
RATIONALE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historically, ChildNet and Florida's Community Based Care (CBC) lead agencies have focused their attention nearly exclusively on turnover among dependency case managers, based on research showing case management instability as a major barrier to children achieving timely permanence. ChildNet's experience of the last several years, however, suggests our focus must expand to the stability of our entire workforce. In 2021, the agency's annual voluntary turnover for all staff grew from 20% the prior year to 30%, where it remained in 2022. During this time, it became increasingly clear that this increased workforce instability throughout the organization was further hampering not only case management but all our child welfare operations. We, therefore, now seek to return to, and dip below, the turnover levels we experienced pre-Covid. We expect that initial progress will be slow but that the impact of our efforts will be cumulative and increasing over the next three years.
ACTION STEPS YEAR ONE (2023)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal process to regularly share, review, and respond to staff turnover and exit data. Create regular, structured, and formal programs and initiatives that enhance the experience of new hires during onboarding. Implement a regular, structured, and formal reward and recognition program for all employees.
ACTION STEPS YEAR TWO (2024):	
ACTION STEPS YEAR THREE (2025):	
QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATES:	
STAFF CHAMPION:	Chief Human Resources Officer

STRATEGIC GOAL TWO

#2 - Expand the array of appropriate placement and treatment options for children.

<p>PURPOSE:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that children in out-of-home care receive the services and supports that meet their complex social, emotional, behavioral, and physical needs and facilitate their continued well-being and success.
<p>EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN ONE YEAR:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildNet will reduce the percentage of children with stays over 14 days at SafePlace from 32% to 30%.
<p>EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN TWO YEARS:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildNet will reduce the percentage of children with stays over 14 days at SafePlace to 28%.
<p>EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN THREE YEARS:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildNet will reduce the percentage of children with stays over 14 days at SafePlace to 25%.
<p>RATIONALE:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ChildNet believes there is a need for increased and improved placement options for all youth statewide. This includes placements with kin, residential treatment placements, therapeutic and treatment foster homes, medical foster homes and homes serving those with developmental disabilities and those dually involved in the dependency and delinquency systems. Serving children in more specialized and therapeutic settings will facilitate their well-being, stability, and timely movement to permanence. The length of a child’s stay at SafePlace, ChildNet’s intake and assessment shelter, is a major indicator of the availability of these needed placement options. Shelters are intended to serve children for a short period of time while more lasting and effective placement can be identified and made for them. The Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA) limits federal reimbursement to states for shelter care to a limit of 14 days for this very reason. However, SafePlace, in both counties, is increasingly serving children with increasingly complex needs, both those first entering care and those transitioning from a prior “failed” placement. As a result, stays at SafePlace of greater length are becoming increasingly frequent. In the 2022 calendar year, 31.8% of children served at SafePlace in Palm Beach stayed longer than 14 days, and 31.4% of children served at SafePlace in Broward stayed longer than 14 days. During the next three years, ChildNet will seek to gradually reduce the percentage of children staying longer than 14 days at each SafePlace to 25%.
<p>ACTION STEPS YEAR ONE (2023)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a formal process for gathering and reviewing data about placement capacity and effectiveness and the continuing assessment of children’s placement needs. 2. Build ChildNet staff capacity that focuses on identifying the needs of complex children in out-of-home care and the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to them. 3. Create and expand new and innovative subcontracted placement options and programs. 4. Increase local and statewide advocacy efforts to increase the availability, effectiveness, and utilization of residential treatment options locally and statewide.



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ACTION STEPS YEAR TWO (2024):	
ACTION STEPS YEAR THREE (2025):	
QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATES:	
STAFF CHAMPIONS:	Chief Financial Officer and Chief Clinical Quality Officer

STRATEGIC GOAL THREE

#3 - Improve identification and support of kinship caregivers.

PURPOSE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maximize and sustain opportunities for children to live and thrive with their families.
EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN ONE YEAR:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChildNet will increase the percentage of children in kinship placements to 60%.
EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN TWO YEARS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChildNet will increase the percentage of children in kinship placements to 61%.
EVIDENCE OF GOAL PROGRESS IN THREE YEARS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChildNet will increase the percentage of children in kinship placements to 62%.
RATIONALE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ChildNet recognizes that children are best served with their families when it is safe to do so. This includes placing children in kinship settings that provide them the ability to live with people familiar to them, that support their increased connections to their parents and that promote timely permanency through reunification, permanent guardianship or adoption. During the 2022 calendar year, 54.7% of the Palm Beach children supervised by ChildNet were placed with kin, and 47.2% of the Broward children supervised by ChildNet were placed with kin. The Department of Children and Families Accountability Metrics Report Card for the current 2022-2023 fiscal year has established a target of 60% of children to be placed in kinship settings. ChildNet will, therefore, seek to meet that goal during the initial year of this plan and then exceed it in the 2024 and 2025 calendar years.
ACTION STEPS YEAR ONE (2023)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Implement, monitor, and enhance internal and subcontracted Family Finding Programs. Participate with and implement recommendations from the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government Kinship project. Implement, monitor, and enhance kinship support subcontracts to ensure the sufficiency, appropriateness, and effectiveness of supports provided to kinship placements.
ACTION STEPS YEAR TWO (2024):	
ACTION STEPS YEAR THREE (2025):	
QUARTERLY PROGRESS UPDATES:	
STAFF CHAMPION:	Chief Program Officer