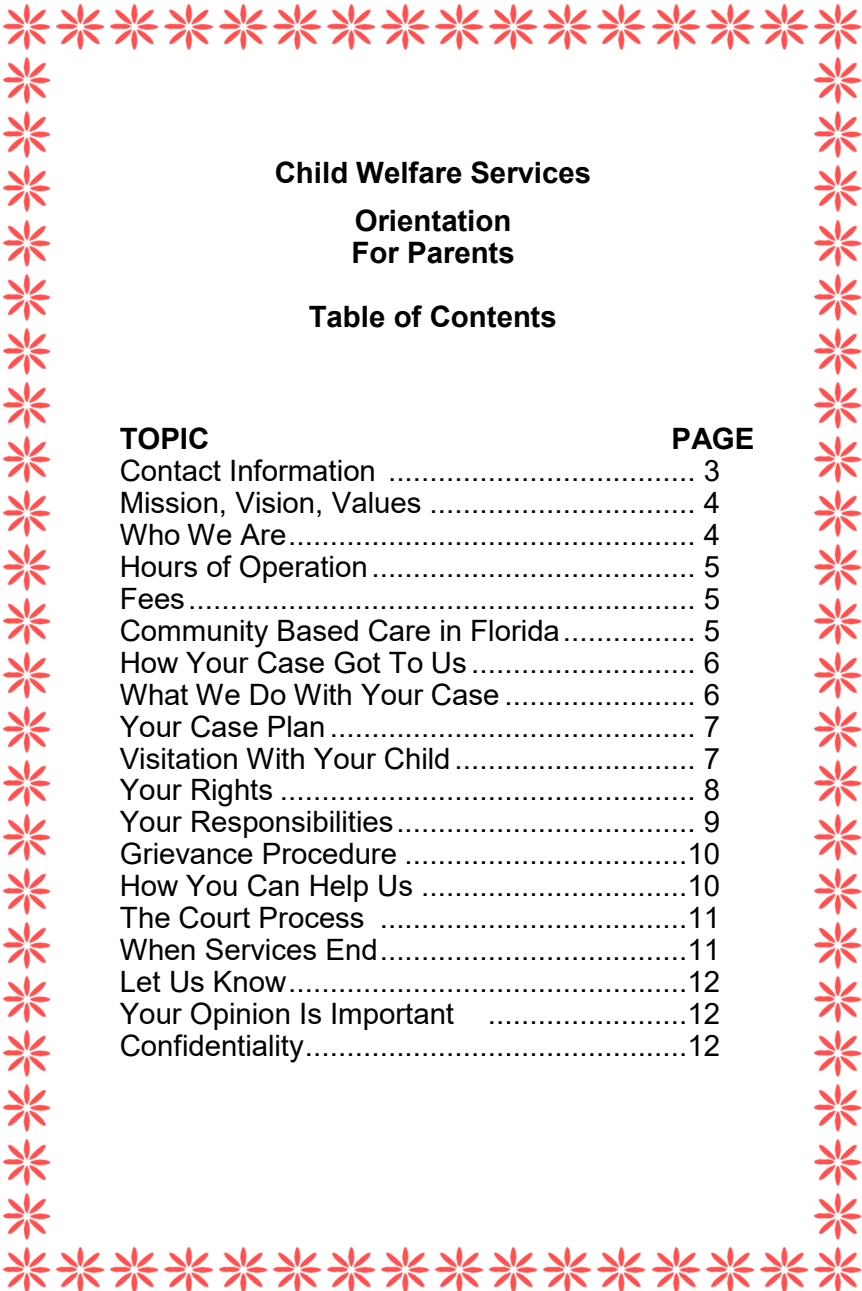




Child Welfare Services

ORIENTATION and INFORMATION

Rev 2023



**Child Welfare Services
Orientation
For Parents**

Table of Contents

TOPIC	PAGE
Contact Information	3
Mission, Vision, Values	4
Who We Are.....	4
Hours of Operation	5
Fees	5
Community Based Care in Florida	5
How Your Case Got To Us	6
What We Do With Your Case	6
Your Case Plan	7
Visitation With Your Child	7
Your Rights	8
Your Responsibilities	9
Grievance Procedure	10
How You Can Help Us	10
The Court Process	11
When Services End.....	11
Let Us Know.....	12
Your Opinion Is Important	12
Confidentiality.....	12

CONTACT INFORMATION

Lead Agency Locations: Eckerd Connects

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> West Pasco County
7235 US Hwy 19
New Port Richey FL 34652
(727) 287-9538 | <input type="checkbox"/> East Pasco County
36739 State Road 52 #201
Dade City, FL 33525
(352) 521-1266 |
|--|---|

Lead Agency Locations: Kids Central, Inc. (KCI)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3185 Premier Drive
Brooksville, FL 34604
(352) 754-1111 | <input type="checkbox"/> 301 N. Apopka Avenue
Inverness, FL 34450
(352) 344-2933 |
|--|--|

Your Case Manager is: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Your Case Manager's Supervisor is: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

MISSION

YFA is committed to working in partnership with communities and our families to create a safe, nurturing environment for children.

VISION

YFA is progressive and leads the way in building a bridge for children to have a stable and loving family.

VALUES

Inspiration: *We create services that are life changing and exceed expectations with a creative sense of purpose.*

Integrity: *We believe in demonstrating a strong sense of moral principles to always do the 'right thing'.*

Impactful: *We make a difference in everything we do. We leave a lifelong impression on those we serve.*

Integrated: *We join 'together' as one team to create a culture of wholeness to provide cohesive care to all.*

Innovative: *We lead the way in developing new, exciting & creative approaches in everything we do.*

WHO WE ARE

Youth and Family Alternatives (YFA) is a not-for-profit child and family services organization that was founded in 1970.

To learn more about the many services provided by YFA, you may visit us online at www.yfainc.org.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Program operates 8:00 am–5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Home visits are conducted as necessary both during and after these hours, including weekends. Home visits may be scheduled or unannounced, as is required by Florida Administrative Code (FAC).

An individual is on-call at all hours to address urgent situations that occur after normal operating hours.

FEES

YFA does not charge a fee for services provided by case management.

COMMUNITY BASED CARE IN FLORIDA

In 1996, the Florida Legislature mandated that the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) contract with Community Based agencies to provide foster care and related services. The Legislature believed that by privatizing these services, the support and commitment of communities to reunification of families and care of children and their families would be strengthened, and efficiencies and accountability would be gained.

Community Based Care is the Legislative intent and the DCF strategy to build partnerships in the community. It is believed that these partnerships will significantly impact in innovative ways the outcomes, quality, effectiveness and efficiency of services in the community.

Youth and Family Alternatives (YFA) is Community Based Care partner in Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties.

In Florida, no two communities are alike. Therefore, no two systems of care for foster care and related services will be alike.

HOW YOUR CASE GOT TO US

Your case was referred to us by your county's Child Protective Investigations (CPI) Unit. Depending on the county in which you reside, the CPI Unit may be the Sheriff's Department or the Florida Department of Children & Families.

WHAT WE DO WITH YOUR CASE

Our employees working in case management and adoption are referred to as Case Managers. The primary goal of the work that we do is the safety and well-being of your child(ren). We want to work in partnership with you to reach this goal and enable you to achieve success.

Once your case is accepted, a Case Manager will be assigned within one (1) working day. A face-to-face meeting with each child in his/her place of residence will occur within two (2) working days.

The services that are provided by the Case Manager varies in frequency, intensity, and duration based on the individual needs of each case. These are a few of the things that you can expect from the Case Manager:

- Assure to the extent possible the safety and well-being of your child (ren);
- Conduct announced and/or unannounced visits to see each child in his/her residence at a minimum of every 30 days;
- Coordinate and conduct a Case Planning conference with the family, Protective Investigator and Guardian Ad Litem and other involved providers;
- Consult with the attorneys representing the state;
- Submit a Case Plan to the court;
- Assist each person identified in the Case Plan to find needed services;
- Report all progress and events impacting the case to the court. This will be through Judicial Reviews or status reviews;
- Attend all court hearings related to the case;
- Coordinate visitation for children who were removed from their home with parents and siblings;
- Maintain regular communication with parents and/or caregivers;
- Report any new incidents or concerns of abuse and/or neglect;
- Advocate for children with safety and well-being as a priority;
- Document all services and contacts in the case record.

YOUR CASE PLAN

You will be asked shortly after the initial contact to begin developing a Case Plan. The purpose of the Case Plan is to address the conditions and/or behaviors that created the risk to your child(ren). The Case Plan will describe the responsibilities and duties of you, the Case Manager, and all other parties to remedy the problems that led to your involvement with us. Remember that the Case Plan must be consistent with court orders and statutory requirements.

The Case Plan must be filed with the court within sixty (60) days if your child(ren) was removed, or a reasonable time frame if the child(ren) was not removed.

VISITATION WITH YOUR CHILD

When a child is removed, the Judge will set visitation at the Shelter Hearing. Visitation may be either supervised or unsupervised. As the case progresses, visitation may be addressed each time you go before the Judge.

Visitation is very important and you will need to follow some basic rules:

- Confirm the visitation 24 hours in advance.
- Be on time. If you are running late, the visit will still end at the designated time.
- Dress appropriately.
- Do not come to the visitation under the influence of any substances. This would result in termination of the visit. You may be required to have a drug screen prior to the visit.
- Bring only the individual(s) whom the Judge approves. If you're not sure who is approved, don't bring anyone.
- Do not discuss the case with your child.
- Do not spend your visitation time talking to staff.
- Do not raise your voice to your child or staff. Inappropriateness may result in termination of the visit.
- Before the visit, think about things you can do with your child. For example, bring board games or cards, coloring books or simple crafts. You may want to read a book together or share a nutritious meal. Ask your child about school activities.

YOUR RIGHTS

All clients have the right to fair and equitable treatment including:

- the right to receive services in a non-discriminatory manner
- the consistent enforcement of program rules and expectations
- the right to receive services that are respectful of, and responsive to, cultural and linguistic differences.

You have a right to the most thorough and detailed assessment possible of your current situation and linkages with services most appropriate to your situation.

You have a right to participate in decisions regarding the services that are provided to you.

You have the right to receive services in a manner that is non-coercive and that protects your right to self-determination.

You have the right to be treated with professionalism and by a Case Manager that is trained to assist you.

You have a right to refuse services, but if you are court ordered to participate in services and you refuse services, YFA is required to inform the court of your refusal to participate in services.

You have a right to expect that your information will be treated as confidential:

- The verbal and written release of information shall be done in conformity with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.
- Informed consent must be obtained from each parent/guardian prior to the releasing information to another individual or organization.
- The Agency will make every effort to protect children, with or without permanent family ties, and persons who are particularly vulnerable from making inappropriate decisions about the release of information.
- Legal counsel will be consulted when special or unusual information is requested.

- Under Florida Statute, all employees of the Agency are required to report suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults or children. No releases of any kind are required in order to file reports of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- We will report to appropriate entities if a danger to oneself or others is suspected.

You have a right to have an attorney represent you in your dependency case. The court will appoint an attorney to represent you at the hearing if you cannot afford to hire an attorney.

You have a right to be notified of all court hearings.

You have a right to file a grievance if you are dissatisfied with the services you receive or if you believe you have been discriminated against for any reason.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You have a responsibility to treat your Case Manager, and any other staff working with you, with respect.

You have a responsibility to discuss your concerns and difficulties as honestly as you can with your Case Manager.

You have a responsibility to provide timely information, as honestly as you can.

You have a responsibility to keep scheduled appointments, and to contact us as soon as possible to reschedule appointments that you are unable to keep.

You have a responsibility to become actively involved in developing a plan of services that meets your needs and the needs of your child.

You have a responsibility to work on your Case Plan so that we may assist you in reaching a successful outcome for your family.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

During your initial contact, you will be given a copy of the YFA grievance policy and procedure.

All individuals served by YFA are treated with respect and dignity and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and YFA policies. All complaints and grievances are handled in a timely, efficient and courteous manner, hoping to resolve your concerns at the first level. YFA employees are strictly prohibited from retaliating with any kind of penalty or punishment against anyone who files a grievance.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US

- √ If the court places your child(ren) outside your home, please share necessary information about your child(ren), such as medical problems, dietary needs, behavioral problems or fears your child may have and any other information that you believe would be helpful.
- √ Sign the medical and health release forms so that your child can receive health care without any delay.
- √ Communicate any concerns you have with your Case Manager. We don't know how to help if we don't know you have a problem.
- √ Keep your appointments.
- √ Give us information and certificates that help to demonstrate your progress in meeting your Case Plan goals.
- √ Please give us two working days to return your phone call. Case Managers spend the majority of their time out of the office attending court hearings and doing home visits. Please include your phone number on your voice mail. Sometimes we are out of the office when returning phone calls and may not have your number available.
- √ We have an "urgent" after hours contact number. This is not intended for you to call to obtain general information that can wait until the next business day.

THE COURT PROCESS

We recognize that the court process can be intimidating and challenging to understand. If your case is involved in the court system you may hear terms such as Shelter Hearing, Arraignment Hearing, Adjudicatory Hearing, Disposition Hearing, Status Reviews, Six- month Review Hearing or Judicial Reviews, and Permanency Hearings. We encourage you to ask your Case Manager to explain the meaning of court hearing which may be applicable to your case.

WHEN SERVICES END

When the court is involved, only the court can terminate or end services. Throughout the court process, the Judge will make decisions based on your cooperation and progress you have made. If a child was removed, the court will continue to have us monitor your case for a minimum of six months after the child(ren) have been returned to you. We do not have the authority to close a case without court involvement.

With voluntary cases, the length of time we are involved is much shorter than those that are monitored by the court. We will work closely with you and the decision to close your case will be a mutual one based on changes in the conditions and/or behaviors that brought you to us.

In the event that we do not agree on closing your case, we will have a honest discussion about it. If we have significant concerns regarding the safety of your child(ren), we may explore whether or not to file the petition with our attorneys.

LET US KNOW

We believe in open and honest communication. We encourage you to speak to your Case Manager at any time if you have a question and/or a concern. If you are not comfortable with this, you are welcome to speak to the Case Manager's supervisor.

YOUR OPINION IS IMPORTANT

YFA is interested in your opinion of the services that you receive, the professional environment of the facilities, and methods by which we may improve service delivery. Please discuss any suggestions you may have with your Case Manager. You may also send a suggestion to YFA via our website,

www.yfainc.org

Click on "Contact Us", then the "YFA Suggestion Box" link. Submissions can be anonymous.

All suggestions are reviewed by YFA Administration to help make our programs better.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information in case records is confidential and may be released only under specific circumstances as outlined in Florida Statutes. YFA will not release information except as required by law.

These services are sponsored by:

- * Florida Department of Children & Families
- * Family Support Services of Pasco and Pinellas (FSS)
- * Kids Central, Inc.