

## **Abstract - State of Florida's Child Report**

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Goal 5: Build, allocate and align sufficient resources and functions to meet the goals set forth by the Children and Youth Cabinet

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Goal 5c: Identify gaps and resources required to meet the health, safety, educational and support needs of children and their families.

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Goal 1: Promote increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children, youth and their families

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Goal 1a. Develop and implement a shared and cohesive vision for child and youth outcomes across state agencies, departments and programs

Starting recommendation: Create a *State of Florida's Child Report*

By producing a State of the Child document, opportunities are afforded for identifying important benchmark indicators for child well being throughout Florida, and facilitating alignment of programs and services.

Proposed solution: The Cabinet should commission a State of the Florida Child report that:

1. Uses research-based indicators of child-well being
2. Describes the status of Florida's children, the well-being indicators and compares Florida's data to national data, where available
3. Provides a basis for future development of a "results" framework that could lead to shared goals and alignment of state and local structures
4. Creates a baseline against which, moving forward, efforts can be measured, gaps identified, and resources aligned

## Recommendation

### State of Florida’s Child Report

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Goal 5: Build, allocate and align sufficient resources and functions to meet the goals set forth by the Children and Youth Cabinet

Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Goal 5c: Identify gaps and resources required to meet the health, safety, educational and support needs of children and their families.

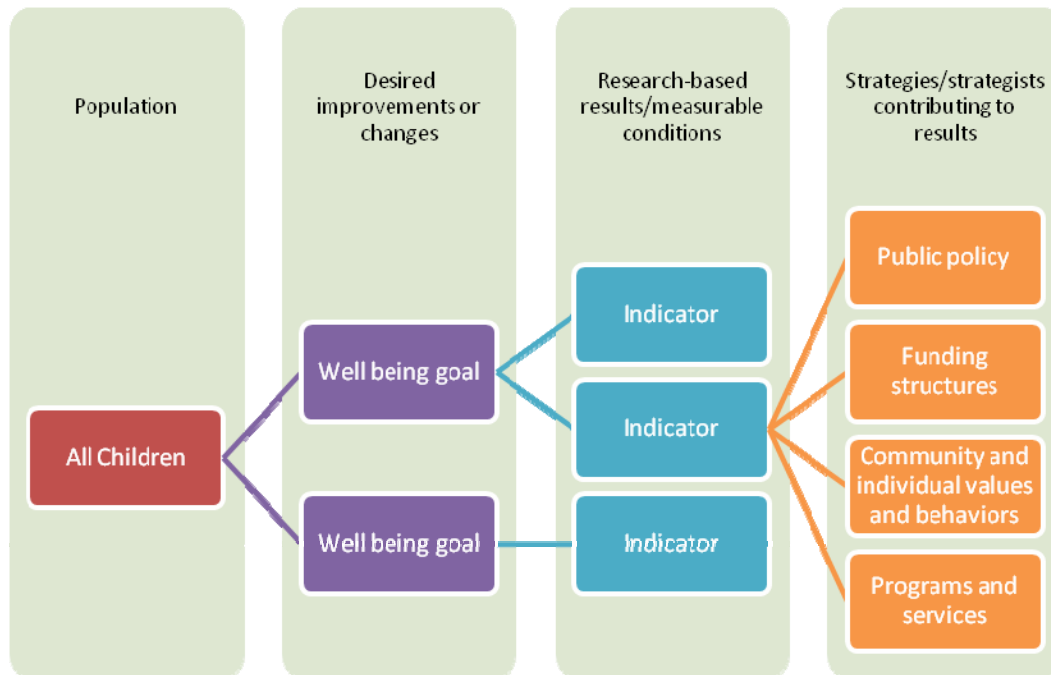
Florida Children and Youth Cabinet Goal 1: Promote increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children, youth and their families

1a. Develop and implement a shared and cohesive vision for child and youth outcomes across state agencies, departments and programs

Long-term recommendation: Institute policies, practices and stable funding levels sufficient to meet quality standards that support communities in establishing integrated services for children and their families (The Policy Group for Florida’s Families and Children Inc., 2003).

Starting recommendation: A “State of Florida’s Child” report

Background: In order to understand where gaps exist and opportunities for alignment occur, it is first necessary to have a starting point – baseline data on the status of Florida’s children. The baseline data should relate closely to indicators (or outcomes) shown by research to signify well being or improvement in child well-being. The indicators form a “results” framework leading to shared goals. It is then possible to identify public and private sector agencies, organizations and individuals who have a role to play in producing results, where gaps occur, and likely spots for alignment of actions with goals. Ultimately, the framework can and should be linked to resources and state budgets.

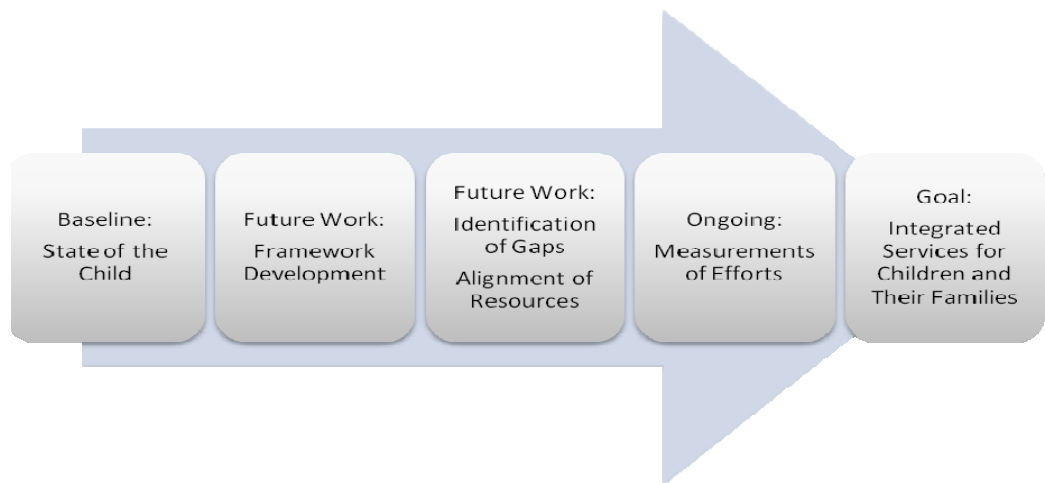


The framework, well articulated, is not simply an infrastructure for planning and accountability. It also supports the diverse work done throughout the state on behalf of children and provides a unified voice. The framework identifies, in broad, strategic terms, the context in which state and local agencies and communities pursue their own specific missions and priority goals. It provides a clearly conceptualized and articulated common basis for action that allows local and state stakeholders to effectively and efficiently collaborate, coordinate and integrate efforts to improve outcomes for children. An outcomes-based framework also facilitates agreement among stakeholders, promotes the ability to track progress, and helps clearly and realistically connect investments to outcomes.

The issue: Over the past several years, Floridians have done significant work in understanding and working toward integrated services for children and their families. The C words – collaborative, comprehensive and coordinated – are used with increasing frequency when describing these efforts. Florida’s Children and Youth Cabinet’s strategic plan seeks alignment and allocation of resources and functions, and a shared and cohesive vision, which an outcomes framework can facilitate. However, a baseline for this work needs to be established. Current agency benchmark indicators can be incorporated. By producing a State of the Child document, opportunities are afforded for identifying important benchmark indicators for child well being throughout Florida, and facilitating alignment of programs and services.

Proposed solution: The Cabinet should commission a State of the Florida Child report that:

5. Builds on existing research – state, national and international - on well-being indicators
6. Provides data on the status of Florida’s children on the well-being indicators and compares the data to national data, where available
7. Provides a basis for future development of an outcomes framework
8. Creates a baseline against which, moving forward, efforts can be measured, gaps identified, and resources aligned



References:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Children with Disabilities. (2001). *Developmental Surveillance and Screening of Infants and Young Children*. *Pediatrics*, 108 (1), 192-196.
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- The Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children Inc. (2003). *The Florida Vision: A State That Promotes the Well Being of All of its Children*. Tallahassee, FL: The Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children.