

Model Comprehensive Residential Services Programs and
Comprehensive Residential Group Care Services
State Fiscal Year 2005-2006

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Executive Summary

The current evaluation of the Manatee Model and the Comprehensive Residential Group Care Services Program (CRSP) was conducted by the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI) in accordance with Section 409.1679, F.S. This statute mandates that an annual evaluation of these programs be conducted by an independent third party. FMHI was contracted by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF or “the Department”) to conduct this evaluation for Fiscal Year 2005-2006 (FY05-06). The evaluation is comprised of three related sections: an evaluation of the Model on ten statutorily-defined performance standards, an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the Model, and an evaluation of CRSP on the same ten performance standards.

The philosophical and physical transition from state-run to outsourced child welfare services has been accompanied by parallel fiscal changes. Specifically, for FY 2006/07, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$165,000 for the specialized residential group care budget (Line item 360 – Special Categories), which the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families determined will fund the Manatee Model exclusively. Funding previously earmarked by the legislature for CHARLEE (the Dade model program) and the comprehensive and enhanced residential services programs have been shifted instead to the CBC appropriation category and have become part of the CBC base allocation. As such, the requirements of sections 409.1676 and 409.1677, F.S. (i.e., the performance monitoring requirements) will no longer apply and have been removed from current services contracts.

Evaluation of the Models on Performance Standards

It is evident from provider-submitted reports that the Manatee Model is successfully attaining performance standards as defined in Florida Statute (s. 409.1679, F.S.). With the one exception of runaway episodes, this program has demonstrated sustained success at meeting or exceeding programmatic expectations. Runaway prevention continues to be a challenge for the Manatee Model, and as reported in previous evaluations, this may be related to high numbers of older children and children with chronic runaway histories that are accepted into the program.

Cost-Effectiveness of the Model

Since its inception, the Manatee Model's bed capacity (60) has remained stable and the number of children served per year has ranged from 46 to 63. From FY 01-02 to FY 05-06, the Manatee Model's contract amount increased \$294,182 (24%), while its costs increased \$259,873 (21%). The Manatee Model's contracted amount per bed has increased (22%) and its expenditures per child have decreased (12%) since FY01-02. This decrease in expenditures per child appears to be due to an increase in the number of children.

Evaluation of CRSP on Performance Standards

Due in large part to fiscal changes affecting the monitoring requirements of CRSP, only four programs submitted data for this report. Some Districts (e.g., District 11) did not collect any of the requested data, while providers in others areas (e.g., the Suncoast Region) reported collecting some data, but only partial data for one provider were submitted. Based on the available data, it appears that in general, the 10 performance standards are being met. Certain challenges that have been identified in earlier reports (e.g., preventing runaway episodes and ensuring client satisfaction) have persisted for some providers, but the extent of these challenges across all CRSP projects is unclear based on the limited sample.

An Evaluation of Comprehensive Care Services and the Model Comprehensive Residential Services Programs

Background and Legislative History

Over the past decade, the state of the child welfare system, and of foster care in particular, has become a topic of increasing concern for professionals serving these children. Nationally, the foster care system has been described as being in crisis, with children experiencing excessive lengths of stay and multiple placement changes, and failing to attain permanence before aging out of the system - essentially being raised in foster care (Barrett, Dollard, Brown, & Lipien, 1999; Health and Human Services, 1998; Senate Staff Analysis and Economic Impact Statement, Florida Legislature, CS/SB 1214, 2001). In addition, findings from the research literature suggest that specific characteristics (e.g., older age, physical or emotional problems, etc.) rendered certain children less likely to receive the services and placements they need (Leslie, et al, 2000; Waldfogel, 2000).

Of particular concern was an emerging pattern of instability that permeates the lives of some children in foster care. This chronic instability, which manifests as multiple changes in living environment, caregivers, and schools, and by separation of children from their siblings, creates new mental health problems (Newton, Litrownik, & Landsverk, 2000) and hampers progress toward permanency. In response to these growing concerns, the 2001 session of the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 1214, entitled "Relating to Foster Care/Residential Group Care," as an attempt to halt this pattern of instability and reduce the risk that some children will "grow up" in foster care.

The legislation for the program under study is presented in three related Florida Statutes:

- s. 409.1676, F.S.: Comprehensive residential group care services to children who have extraordinary needs;
- s. 409.1677, F.S.: Model comprehensive residential services programs;
- s. 409.1679, F.S.: Additional requirements, effective date, reimbursement methodology, and evaluation [including outcome measures].

These statutes recognize the need for a full array of out-of-home options to be available to children and youth who have been removed from their homes. The statutes also acknowledge the heightened risk of certain children (i.e., those with "extraordinary needs") for placement,

caregiver, and academic instability and attempt to minimize that risk by establishing a well-coordinated, holistic approach to service delivery for these children.

In the 2001 legislative session, Senate Bill 1214 added statutory requirements for the Department to institute comprehensive residential care pilot projects for children who have extraordinary needs as defined in s. 409.1676, F.S. Under these pilots, providers were funded to provide food, shelter, medical services not covered by Medicaid, clothing, allowances, and respite while the children are in out-of-home placements. These services were to be provided at a minimum to children in districts 4, 11, 12, and the Suncoast Region. In addition, model comprehensive residential services programs were established in Dade and Manatee counties. These programs were to be “implemented to the extent of available appropriations contained in the annual General Appropriations Act for such purpose.” This legislation also required the Department to evaluate the effectiveness of these services (s. 409.1679, F.S.). In the 2001 General Appropriations Act, a line item for these services was included in the amount of \$15.4 million, funded from General Revenue and Federal Grants Trust Fund. (Specific Appropriation 350D).

In 2002, Senate Bill 632 modified the provisions for these services by:

- Changing the program name to *comprehensive residential group care services*.
- Deleting the minimum geographic area specification of districts 4, 11, 12, and Suncoast Region. The implication was that these services were intended to be implemented statewide.
- Retaining the model site requirement, as well as the specification about implementation to the extent of available appropriations.

In the 2002 General Appropriations Act, a line item for these services was included in the same amount of \$15.4 million (Specific Appropriation 325A) and a new category for program expansion was included in the amount of \$21.9 million (Specific Appropriation 319A). Expansion of the program outside of the minimum sites was begun; however, due to many factors, the budget amendment to transfer the Approved Operating Budget amounts from control to district budgets was not approved until the end of February 2003.¹

¹ Amendment B-XX-XXX-0187-B2003-0354

In 2003 and 2004, no changes were made to the substantive legislation for the services. However, in 2003, the amount of appropriation in the category intended for these services was reduced by \$1,047,477 to a total of \$14.3 million from General Revenue and Federal Grants Trust Funds. The funds in the program expansion category (\$21.9 million) were deleted. With this reduction, the areas of service provision were again limited to the minimum required in the original legislation, as was authorized in s. 409.1676 F.S. New funding in the amount of \$10 million was appropriated to this category in Substance Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant funds for a wraparound program for residential group care statewide (Specific Appropriation 277). The \$10 million was appropriated as nonrecurring.

The appropriation for FY04-05 remained at the same level as in FY03-04 (Specific Appropriation 309). However, the funds formerly known as "wraparound" were provided from a state general revenue source rather than the Substance Abuse and Mental Health block grant, which removed some of the restrictions on use of these funds. The appropriation for FY05-06 remained at the same level as in FY04-05. However, the \$10 million in non-recurring funds were designated as recurring.

The philosophical and physical transition from state-run to outsourced services has been accompanied by parallel fiscal changes that affect the CRSP programs. Specifically, for FY06-07, the Florida Legislature appropriated only \$165,000 for the specialized residential group care budget (Line item 360 – Special Categories); the Department Secretary determined that this appropriation would fund the Manatee Model exclusively. All other special appropriations for model and comprehensive residential services funding were shifted to base funding for the CBC Lead Agencies. As such, the requirements of sections 409.1676 and 409.1677, F.S. (i.e., the performance monitoring requirements) no longer apply, as there are no specific appropriations. Thus, for FY06-07, YMCA-South will be the only lead agency with the CRSP reporting requirements remaining in its services contract.

When District 11 transitioned to Community-Based Care in March 2005, Our Kids, Inc, the lead agency in that district, assumed responsibility for all children in its care, including those with extraordinary needs. At that time, funds previously earmarked for the Model program were shifted to the CBC base, enabling Our Kids, Inc to spend them as it saw fit in order to best meet the needs of all children in its care. As a result of this transition, the Dade Model program (CHARLEE) was no longer designated a model as of July 1, 2005. Similarly, the Manatee

Model (From the Heart) was notified that it will no longer be designated a model as of December 31, 2006. A proposal specifying the future role of this agency in the Sarasota YMCA's system of care is pending. In keeping with the CBC model of lead agency-driven systems of care, funds previously earmarked for demonstration sites serving children with extraordinary needs in districts 4, 11, 12, and the Suncoast Region have been incorporated into the CBC base, and lead agencies have the discretion to use these funds as they see fit. The effect of these system changes on service provision to children with extraordinary needs is unknown at this time. Outcomes for these children will no longer be monitored separately using the 10 performance standards addressed in the current evaluation, but rather will be examined in conjunction with other child and family outcomes within the larger CBC evaluation.

Purpose of the Evaluation

Section 409.1679, F.S. requires an annual evaluation by an independent third party of the Model programs and the CRSP programs. Despite the significant changes in the funding mechanism for these programs noted above, there have been no parallel modifications to Florida Statutes. Therefore, the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (FMHI) continues to be contracted by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) to conduct this evaluation for FY 2005-2006.

Consistent with statutory requirements, the evaluation has been designed to be site specific and address each site's level of performance on ten standards set forth in the statute. As in previous years, the evaluation addresses the following specific aims:

- 1) To describe the extent to which individual programs excelled or faltered in reaching each of the 10 performance standards;
- 2) To describe each program's performance within the context of the previous year's performance on each standard; and
- 3) To provide a summary of findings across programs and performance standards that focuses on an overall evaluation of the quality of services delivered by comprehensive residential group care service providers.

In addition to reporting on the 10 performance standards, the evaluation of the Model programs is required to include an assessment of cost effectiveness and the Models' ability to successfully

implement the assigned program elements. In keeping with these requirements, the following research questions were developed:

- 1) Has the Model attained the performance standards specified in s. 409.1679, F.S.?
- 2) How cost effective has the Model been over FY 05-06?

The evaluation uses secondary data to assess achievement of programmatic and child-level outcomes for both the Model (provider-generated report) and the comprehensive residential group care programs (contract monitoring reports).

The 10 Performance Standards

Section 409.1679, F.S. describes the expectations for both the comprehensive residential group care services programs and the Models. These 10 standards, as listed below, serve as the foundation for the outcome study of this evaluation:

- (1) No more than 10% of the children served may move from one living environment to another, unless the child is returned to family members or is moved, in accordance with the treatment plan, to a less-restrictive setting;
- (2) Each child must have a comprehensive transitional plan that identifies the child's living arrangement upon leaving the program and specific steps and services that are being provided to prepare for that arrangement;
- (3) Each child must receive a full academic year of appropriate educational instruction. No more than 10% of the children may be in more than one academic setting in an academic year, unless the child is being moved, in accordance with an education plan, to a less-restrictive setting. Each child must demonstrate academic progress and must be performing at grade level or at a level commensurate with a valid academic assessment;
- (4) Siblings must be kept together in the same living environment 100% of the time, unless it is determined by the provider that it is not in the children's best interest. When siblings are separated in placement, the decision must be reviewed and approved by the court within 30 days;
- (5) Caregiver turnover rate at least 50% below the rest of the state;
- (6) Incidence of child runaway episodes rate at least 50% below the rest of the state;

- (7) Provision of comprehensive assessment on each child admitted to the comprehensive residential group care services program or Model;
- (8) 100% of services identified by the comprehensive assessment will be met;
- (9) Children served must be satisfied with the services and living environment; and
- (10) Caregivers must be satisfied with the program.

Evaluation of the Model Program

Methods.

Data addressing the 10 performance standards were requested by email from the director of the Manatee Model, the only Model program in service during Fiscal Year 05-06. The director provided the relevant data and responded to the data request in a timely fashion. Data discrepancies were clarified through follow-up telephone and email communication with the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and program director. The findings presented are a summary of this program's performance during FY05-06.

Findings

Changes in Capacity

Table 1. Number of children served by the Manatee Model

Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
68	55	63

The Manatee Model was designed with a capacity to serve 60 children annually. The 60-bed operating capacity has been maintained, with slight fluctuations in the actual number of children served each fiscal year.

Change in Living Environment

Statute dictates that no more than 10% of children served by the Model programs may move from one living environment to another unless it is to return a child to a family or move to a less restrictive environment. As shown in Table 2, the Manatee Model achieved this goal during FY 05-06, as it had for the previous two fiscal years. In FY05-06, the Manatee Model reported no unapproved moves during nine of the 12 months and only one unapproved move in each of the other three months.

Table 2. Residential Changes

Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
2-6%	7%	0-3%

Comprehensive Transitional Plan

Florida Statutes (s. 409.1679, F.S.) require that each child have a comprehensive transitional plan that identifies the child’s living arrangement upon leaving the program and the specific steps and services that will be provided to prepare for that arrangement. The Manatee Model achieved this goal during FY05-06, as it had the previous fiscal year. Only two children exited the program in FY05-06, and both had comprehensive transitional plans completed within 90 days prior to their discharge.

Table 3. Comprehensive Transitional Plans Completed

Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
Data unavailable	100%	100%

Academic Stability

Florida Statutes (s. 409.1679, F.S.) require that each child receive a full academic year of appropriate educational instruction. No more than 10% of the children may be in more than one academic setting in an academic year, unless the child is being moved, in accordance with an education plan, to a less-restrictive setting.

Table 3 reflects the success of the Manatee Model in maintaining children in a stable educational environment over the past three fiscal years. It is clear from this table that the Manatee Model consistently exceeds the performance standard for academic stability. During FY05-06 no children served by the program experienced any unapproved changes in their academic setting.

Table 4. Summary Change in Education Setting

Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
0-2%	0%	0%

Academic Progress

In addition to achieving educational stability, statutes require that each child demonstrate academic progress and perform at grade level or at a level commensurate with a valid academic assessment.

Table 5. Academic Progress (as measured by grade promotion)

Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
Not reported	100%	100%

The Manatee Model reported that all eligible children were enrolled in school and made adequate academic progress during FY05-06. The program reported that the only children or youth not enrolled in school were those who had turned 18 years of age and were in the Independent Living Program (five youth) and those who already had a GED (one youth). All school age children were enrolled in school and demonstrated academic progress.

Sibling Separation

Florida Statutes (s. 409.1679, F.S.) dictate that siblings must be kept together 100% of the time, “unless it is determined by the provider that it is not in the children’s best interest.”

Table 6. Siblings Separated (for any reason)

Admission through Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
14 of 29 (48%)	78%	88%

The Manatee Model achieved the goal of keeping siblings together 100% of the time unless it was in the children’s best interests to separate them. Of the eight sibling groups served by The Manatee Model, seven (88%) were separated (See Table 5 above). This number continues a notable trend of increasing separation of sibling groups. However, the program reports that these decisions were based on clinical guidance provided by mental health professionals and were never influenced by convenience of placement or any factors other than the children’s best interests.

Caregiver Turnover

Florida Statutes (s. 409.1679, F.S.) require that the caregiver turnover rate be at least 50% below the rest of the state. However, the caregiver turnover rate for the State of Florida is difficult to determine.

Table 7. Caregiver Turnover

Model	Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
The Manatee Model	2-10%	10%	0%

As shown in Table 7, the Manatee Model experienced no caregiver turnover during FY05-06. Clearly, the Manatee Model met this requirement, as it has in previous years.

Runaway Episodes

Florida Statute (s. 409.1679, F.S.) require that the incidence rate of child runaway episodes in the Models be at least 50% below the rest of the state. The Manatee Model has an additional contractual requirement that runaway episodes not exceed 1.6% in any given month.

Table 8. Runaways

Model	Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
The Manatee Model	6-9%	(19 of 55) 35%	5-29%

As shown in Table 8, the Manatee Model continues to struggle with the issue of runaways, with 188 runaway episodes reported for FY05-06. This is more than double the number of episodes (86) reported for FY04-05. The program averaged 16 runaway episodes per month. Program staff reported that the Model is assigned a disproportionate percentage of youth who are at high risk for running away compared to other agencies. They also reported that although these youth run away to temporarily live with friends or relatives, they almost always call their caseworkers to report where they are and that they are safe.

Comprehensive Assessment

Florida Statutes (s. 409.1679, F.S.) dictate that a comprehensive assessment be conducted for each child admitted to the comprehensive residential group care services program or Model. Further, 100% of services identified by the comprehensive assessment must be provided.

Table 9. Summary of Completion of Comprehensive Assessments

Model	Fiscal Year 03-04	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
The Manatee Model	74-88%	100%	100%

Comprehensive assessments are required for all children served by the Models. [Note: these assessments may or may not meet the requirements for the Medicaid Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment.] As shown in Table 9, the Manatee Model continues to meet this performance standard. During the current period, the program reported completion of comprehensive assessments for all of the children who had been in the program more than 30 days (100% completion).

Statutes further require that 100% of services identified in the comprehensive assessments be provided. A proxy measure for this is the attainment of goals specified in the Model treatment plans. As shown in Table 10, the Manatee Model reported that 100% of treatment plan goals were met.

Table 10. Summary of Attainment of Goals in the Comprehensive Assessments

Model	June 2004	Fiscal Year 04-05	Fiscal Year 05-06
The Manatee Model	32% met goals	100%	100%

Child and Caregiver Satisfaction

Florida Statutes (s. 409.1679, F.S.) require that children served must be satisfied with the services and living environment; and caregivers must be satisfied with the program.

The Manatee Model responded to this component of the data request by providing FMHI staff with both a tabulated summary of client satisfaction data and also the hard copy client

satisfaction measures that had been filled out by children and caregivers. According to these data, 100% of children reported satisfaction with the program for every month during FY05-06, with the exception of January 2006, when 94% reported satisfaction. Caregiver reports indicated that 100% were satisfied every month. These data indicate that both caregiver and child clients appear to be very satisfied with the service provision by the Manatee Model personnel.

Summary of Performance

It is evident from provider-submitted reports that the Manatee Model is successfully achieving performance targets as defined in Florida Statutes (s. 409.1679, F.S.). With the lone exception of increasing runaway episodes, this program has demonstrated sustained success at meeting or exceeding programmatic expectations. Runaway prevention continues to be a challenge for the Manatee Model, and as reported in previous evaluations, this may be related to high numbers of older children and children with chronic runaway histories that are accepted into the program (Vargo, Armstrong, Romney, & Kershaw (2005).

Cost Analysis

Methods

In these analyses, the total costs being reported reflect the amount of money paid by the Department to the Manatee Model (through the Sarasota YMCA) for contractually obligated services associated with the Model program. As in last year's report (FY04-05), The Manatee Model expenditures and the contracted amount were provided by the Model program.

Average cost per child for The Manatee Model was calculated using two separate denominators: (1) total number of children served and (2) total number of beds. The total number of children served is an unduplicated count of all children who received at least one day of service provision by the Manatee Model during the contract period. The total number of beds equals the maximum number of children the program has the capacity to serve on any given day. Presenting average expenditures per child using multiple measures of the number of children enables investigation of patterns across the measures. Where contract and expenditure amounts from FY01-02 are compared to those from FY05-06, these amounts have been adjusted to reflect the effect of inflation using Consumer Price Index data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Findings

Program Characteristics

Since its inception, the Manatee Model's bed capacity (60) has remained stable and the number of children served per year has ranged from 46 to 63. From FY 01-02 to FY 05-06, the Manatee Model's contract amount increased \$294,182 (24%), while its costs increased \$259,873 (21%).

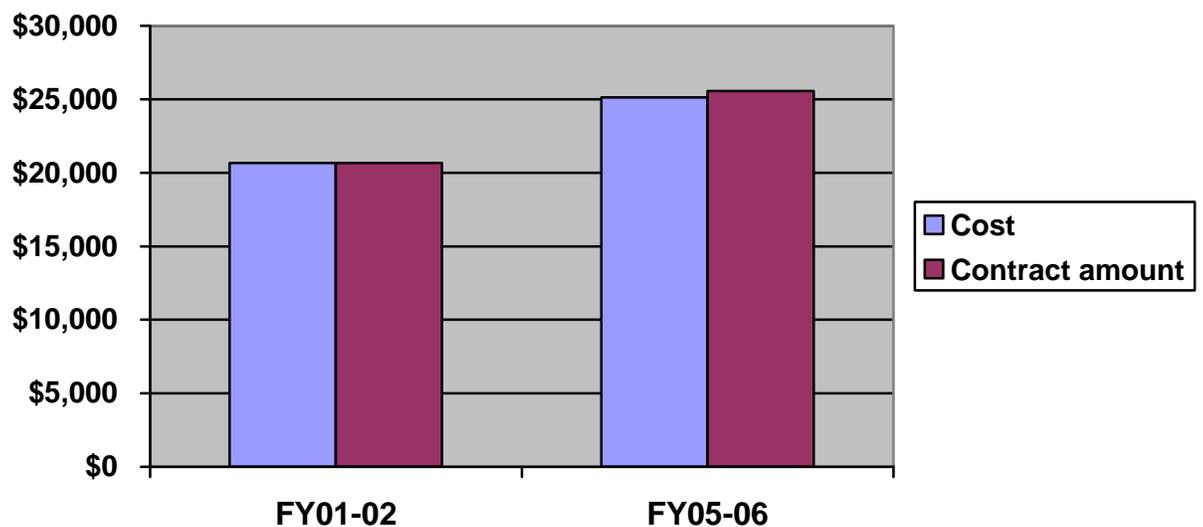
Table 11. Manatee Model Program Characteristics (FY05-06)

	FY05-06
Total Cost	\$ 1,507,494
Contract Amount	\$ 1,533,632
Children Served Annually	63
Number of Beds	60
Date current contract began	July 1, 2005

Average Cost and Contracted Amount per Bed

Figure 1 shows The Manatee Model's average cost and contracted amount per bed for fiscal years FY01-02 and FY05-06. Since FY 01-02, the average cost per bed has increased from \$20,658 (in 2006 dollars) to \$25,125 (22%), while the average contracted amount per bed increased from \$20,658 (in 2006 dollars) to \$25,561 (24%) during the same period.

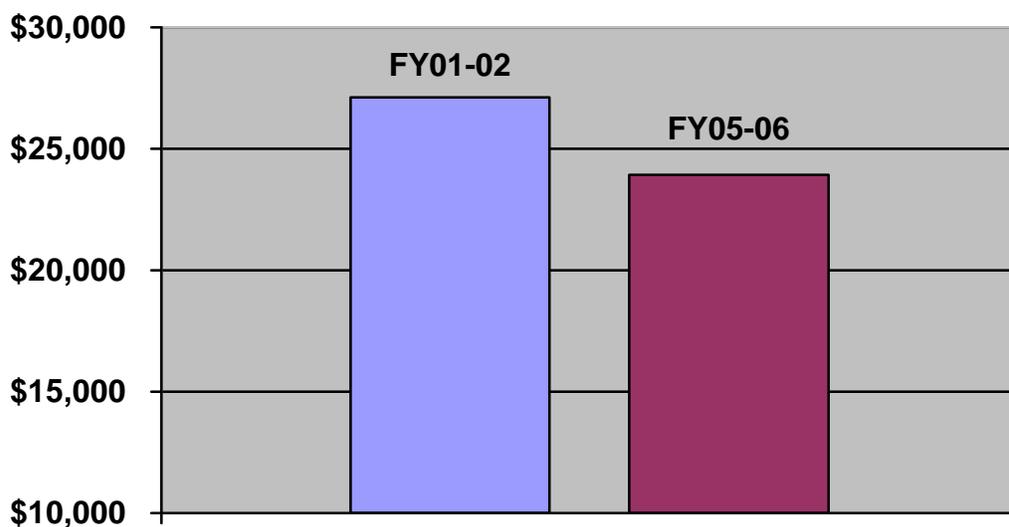
Figure 1. Average Cost and Contracted Amount per Bed (FY01-02 and FY05-06)



Average Cost per Child Served

Figure 2 shows the average cost per child served during FY01-02 and FY05-06. Between FY 01-02 and FY05-06, the Manatee Model's average cost per child decreased 12%, from \$27,122 (in 2006 dollars) to \$23,929.

Figure 2. Average Cost per Child Served by the Manatee Model (FY01-02 and FY05-06)



Summary

The Manatee Model's contracted amount per bed has increased (22%) and its expenditures per child have decreased (12%) since FY01-02. This is due to an increase in the number of children served by the Model between FY01-02 (46) and FY05-06 (63).

Evaluation of the Comprehensive Residential Group Care Services Programs

Methods

The contract managers for all of the comprehensive residential group care services programs (CRSP) were contacted through telephone and/or email solicitation and asked to provide monitoring reports that reflected the level of attainment of each of the mandated outcomes. The request was for all quarterly reports for FY05-06. All programs responded to the data request through email, telephone, or fax. Data were obtained for St. Augustine Youth Services (District 4), Gift of Life Residential Services (Suncoast Region), and Florida Methodist Children's Home (District 12). Hillsborough Kids, Inc (HKI) reported that it "does not do a separate monitoring for 1214 eligible children. These children are monitored through service provider performance within subcontracts." Thus, no data from Tampa Bay Academy were available for this report. Data were also unavailable for CRSP providers from District 11, since these contracts were discontinued in March 2005, when it transitioned to Community-Based Care. Data were also unavailable for Carlton Manor, in the Suncoast Region.

Findings

This evaluation is required to be site specific and to address each site's level of attainment of performance standards set forth in statute (s. 409.1679, F.S.). As such, each indicator is presented in a separate table with program-specific findings.

Change in Living Environment

Of the providers for which data were available at the time of report preparation, Citrus Health Network in District 11 (contracts KJ885 and KJ887) and St. Augustine Youth Services were the only two that did not meet the performance standard for each quarter (Table 12).

St. Augustine Youth Services TRAILS program reported that one youth was discharged during the third quarter due to ongoing noncompliance with the program. The St. Augustine Pre-independent Living program reported that one resident was discharged in the first quarter following an extended runaway period. Three were discharged during the third quarter: two to more restrictive environments and one to a foster home. Other than these incidences, all residential changes in the Trails and Pre-Independent Living programs have been due to successful discharge from the program at age 18 or moving to a less-restrictive environment.

Table 12. Change in Living Environment

<i>No more than 10 percent of the children served may move from one living environment to another, unless the child is returned to family members or is moved, in accordance with the treatment plan, to a less-restrictive setting.</i>					
District/ Lead Agency	Provider	September 2005	December 2005	March 2006	June 2006
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – TRAILS/	0% changed	0% changed	0% changed	1 resident discharged
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services - Pre- Independent Living	1 resident discharged	0% changed	2 residents discharged	NA
YMCA	Gift of Life Residential Services	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	0% changed (June 2006 only)
12	Florida United Methodist Children's Home	0% changed	4% changed	0% changed	3% changed

Comprehensive Transitional Plan

Florida Statutes dictate that a comprehensive transitional plan be completed to guide placement decisions for children upon discharge from the comprehensive residential group care services program. St. Augustine Youth Services TRAILS program reported that one youth returned home to his family during the fourth quarter. Due to the unexpected nature of his discharge, a transitional plan was not completed for this youth. Florida United Methodist Children's Home provided data for only three of 12 months. These data indicate inconsistent performance on this standard.

Table 13. Comprehensive Transitional Plan

<i>Each child must have a comprehensive transitional plan that identifies the child's living arrangement upon leaving the program and specific steps and services that are being provided to prepare for that arrangement</i>					
District/ Lead Agency	Provider	September 2005	December 2005	March 2006	June 2006
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – TRAILS	100% (1) received	100% (1) received	NA (no discharges)	1 discharge without transitional plan
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services –Pre- Independent Living	NA (no discharges)	NA(no discharges)	NA (no discharges)	No data available
YMCA	Gift of Life Residential Services	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	None required (June 2006 only)
12	Florida United Methodist Children's Home	NA	48% received	100% received (1month's data)	NA

Academic Stability

Reports submitted by St. Augustine Youth Services – TRAILS indicate that the monthly census for this provider is 5-6 youth. The program reported that one resident (17-20%) was transferred to an alternative school for the third quarter due to a suspension received after getting into a conflict with his teacher. He returned to the local high school the following quarter. The Pre-independent Living program reported five new students enrolling in local schools for the first time over the course of the year. Florida United Methodist Children's Home maintained a 0-3% unauthorized academic change rate across all four quarters

Table 14. Change in Academic Setting

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>No more than 10 percent of the children may be in more than one academic setting in an academic year, unless the child is being moved, in accordance with an educational plan, to a less-restrictive setting.</i></p>					
District/ Lead Agency	Provider	September 2005	December 2005	March 2006	June 2006
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – TRAILS	0 changed	0 changed	1 changed	0 changed
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services –Pre-Ind Living	3 new students enrolled in St. John's Cty schools	0 changed	2 new students enrolled in St. John's Cty schools	No data available
YMCA	Gift of Life Residential Services	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
12	Florida United Methodist Children's Home	0 changed	2% changed	3% changed	0 changed (data for 2 of 3 months available)

Sibling Separation

According to Florida Statutes, siblings must be kept together in the same living environment unless it is determined that this would not be in the children's best interest. The St. Augustine Youth Services TRAILS program reported that two residents had siblings. For one, the siblings resided with the youth's parents. The other had a sister living in a group home and a brother who was too young for the TRAILS program living in a foster home. The St. Augustine Youth Services Pre-independent Living program reported that two residents had siblings over the age of 18, one had nine siblings ranging from newborn to adult, and one sibling had a brother and sister (age unspecified). It is unclear from these data whether siblings are separated because it is in their best interests or due to other reasons.

Table 15. Sibling Separated (Not Determined to be in Children’s Best Interests)

<i>Siblings must be kept together in the same living environment 100 percent of the time, unless that is determined by the provider not to be in the children’s best interest.</i>					
District/ Lead Agency	Provider	September 2005	December 2005	March 2006	June 2006
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – TRAILS	NA (see explanation in the text)	NA	NA	NA
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – Pre-Ind Living	NA (see explanation in the text)	NA	NA	NA
YMCA	Gift of Life Residential Services	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
12	Florida United Methodist Children’s Home	100%	100%	100%	100%

Caregiver Turnover

Seven programs reported on caregiver turnover (Table 16). Children’s Home Society in District 11 reported no caregiver turnover. The Florida United Methodist Children’s Home in District 12 has established a standard of 12.7% turnover over a 24-month timeframe. It met this standard in the first half of the fiscal year but faltered during the second half, resulting in an inconsistent performance on this indicator. St. Augustine Youth Services reported staff turnover, which is the only indicator similar to caregiver turnover that is relevant for that program. However, this program provided only raw numbers, so the staff turnover rate for this program cannot be calculated.

Table 16. Caregiver Turnover

<i>Caregiver turnover rate at least 50 percent below the rest of the state.</i>					
District/ Lead Agency	Provider	September 2005	December 2005	March 2006	June 2006
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – TRAILS	1 staff member resigned	0 staff turnover	1 weekend staff member resigned	1 weekend staff member resigned
Family Support Services	St. Augustine Youth Services – Pre-Ind Living	0 staff turnover	1 houseparent resigned	0 staff turnover	No data available
YMCA	Gift of Life Residential Services	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
12	Florida United Methodist Children’s Home	Caregiver turnover 5%	Caregiver turnover 7%	Caregiver turnover 75%	Caregiver turnover 44%

Runaway Episodes

As shown in Table 17, there is some variability regarding the ability of programs to prevent runaway episodes. The extent of the problem is difficult to quantify due to partial and missing data from some of the programs.

Table 17. Runaway Episodes.

<i>Incidence of child runaway episodes rate at least 50 percent below the rest of the state.</i>					
District/ Lead Agency	Provider	September 2005	December 2005	March 2006	June 2006
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – TRAILS	0 episodes	0 episodes	0 episodes	0 overnight episodes
Family Support Services of North FL	St. Augustine Youth Services – Pre-Independent Living	0 episodes	1 episode (10 days)	1 episode (6 days)	No data available
YMCA	Gift of Life Residential Services	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	3 reports (June 2006 only)
12	Florida United Methodist Children's Home	18%	9%	13%	6%

Comprehensive Assessment / Service Provision

Statutes require that each child admitted to the comprehensive residential group care services program be provided a comprehensive assessment and that 100% of services identified by the comprehensive assessment be met. No data were provided by St. Augustine Youth Services or Gift of Life Services regarding the comprehensive assessments or provision of services. As noted in previous reports, the majority of programs have included comprehensive assessments as contract expectations and do not monitor them as performance outcome measures. An exception is the Florida United Methodist Children's Home in District 12, which reported 100% comprehensive assessment completion and 100% provision of identified services.

Child Satisfaction / Caregiver Satisfaction

Measuring child and caregiver satisfaction continues to be a challenge for the comprehensive residential group care providers. No data were available for Gift of Life Residential Services but Florida United Methodist Children's Home and St. Augustine Youth Services provided summaries of satisfaction data.

Last year, Florida United Methodist Children's Home reported that it was developing a satisfaction survey but that it did not have any data available yet. This year, the agency provided data on child satisfaction for eight of 12 months. It achieved 100% child satisfaction for every reported month except April 2006, when it achieved only 25% child satisfaction. The agency also reported caregiver satisfaction for seven of 12 months. It achieved 100% caregiver satisfaction for all reported months except September 2006, when it achieved 92% caregiver satisfaction.

The St. Augustine Youth Services TRAILS program reported that 95% of clients were satisfied, with 77% of responses being "good" or "great". Three negative responses were received related to the quality of the food, staff consistency, and people being caring. No client satisfaction data were submitted from the Pre-independent Living program.

Summary and Conclusion

Due in large part to fiscal changes affecting the monitoring requirements of the comprehensive residential group care services program (CRSP), only four programs submitted data for this report. Based on these data, the 10 performance standards are generally being met. Certain challenges that have been identified in earlier reports (e.g., preventing runaway episodes and ensuring client satisfaction) have persisted for some providers, but the extent of these challenges across all CRSP projects is unclear based on the limited sample.

Florida's transition to a Community-Based Care (CBC) model of child welfare service provision and its recent accompanying fiscal modifications have greatly affected the Model and CRSP programs. Last year's report recommended that the Department review whether the Model programs conform to the philosophical intent of community based care. Since the intent of CBC is to provide local flexibility in designing the system of care to meet the needs of local communities and families, the evaluation suggested that it may be inconsistent to require certain lead agencies to address the prescriptive requirements of s. 409.1679, F.S. when this is not required of others.

In keeping with this recommendation, the requirements for sections 409.1676 and 409.1677, F.S. (i.e., the performance monitoring requirements) were deleted from provider services contracts for fiscal year FY06-07. While the former models and demonstration sites will likely continue to serve children in some capacity, these providers will no longer be funded through a

special appropriation earmarked for children with extraordinary needs. Although the Manatee Model received \$165,000 for the pilot in FY 06-07, these funds were expended in the first two months of the fiscal year.

In FY 06-07, all CBC lead agencies have assumed complete responsibility for identifying, screening, and providing appropriate residential group care services to children in their care who have extraordinary needs. Suggestions for improving services to this specialized population have been provided in an earlier report (Romney, Vargo, Armstrong, Yampolskaya, & King-Miller, 2006) but warrant highlighting again. We recommend that lead agencies consider employing the following four strategies to ensure optimal service provision to children with extraordinary needs:

- 1) Ensure that children with extraordinary needs transition into appropriate next placements (i.e., move appropriately along the continuum of care)
- 2) Take steps to facilitate the transition process for them
- 3) Take steps to prepare biological, foster, relative, and adoptive families to care for them
- 4) Make efforts to improve communication among the multiple systems serving them.

In summary, the Model and CRSP interventions have been successful in providing comprehensive services to children with extraordinary needs. It is also evident that the complex mental health, academic, and stability needs of this population will persist beyond the life of the Model and CRSP programs. Lead agencies are therefore encouraged to not only design and implement programs for the current generation of children with extraordinary needs, but to also allocate front-end resources to prevent the needs of the next generation of child welfare clients from becoming “extraordinary.”

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NOTICE OF FILING

Reporting Agency:	Department of Children and Families
Recipient Agency:	GOVERNOR, SENATE PRESIDENT, HOUSE SPEAKER,
Subject:	Evaluation of the Model Comprehensive Residential Services Programs and Comprehensive Residential Group Care Services State Fiscal Year 2005-2006.
Report Due Date:	01/31/07
Statutory Requirement:	s. 409.1679, F.S.
Abstract:	<p>In response to growing concern over the pattern of instability for placement of some children in foster care, the 2001 session of the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 1214, entitled Relating to Foster Care/Residential Group Care, as an attempt to halt the patter of placement instability and reduce the risk that a subset of children will “grow up” in Foster care.</p> <p>The legislation for these programs is presented in three related statutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• s. 409.1676, F.S.: Comprehensive residential group care services to children who have extraordinary needs;• s. 409.1677, F.S.: Model comprehensive residential services programs;• s. 409.1679, F.S.: Additional requirements, effective date, reimbursement methodology, and evaluation (including outcome measures). <p>These statutes recognize the need for a full array of out-of-home options to be available to children and youth who have been removed from their homes. The statutes also acknowledge the heightened risk of certain children for placement, caregiver, and academic instability and attempted to minimize that risk by establishing a well-coordinated, holistic approach to service delivery for these children.</p> <p>This evaluation is comprised of three sections: an evaluation of the models on ten statutorily-defined performance standards, an evaluation of the cost effectiveness of the models, and an evaluation of the comprehensive residential group care services programs on the same ten performance standards.</p> <p>The report provides information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality Performance• Outcome Measure Attainment• Cost Efficiency <p>Copies of this report may be obtained by contacting:</p> <p>Dept. of Children and Families Family Safety Program Office 1317 Winewood Blvd. Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700</p> <p>Attn: Frank Platt (850) 922-2860, email frank_platt@dcf.state.fl.us</p>

LEGISLATIVELY MANDATED REPORT – STATUTORY REQUIREMENT

REPORT TITLE	STATUTORY REFERENCE	SPECIFICATIONS
Evaluation of the Model Comprehensive Residential Services Programs and Comprehensive Residential Group Care Services Fiscal Year 2005-2006	s. 409.1671(4)(a), F.S. s.409.167(2), F.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• quality performance,• outcome measure attainment, and• cost efficiency