

**PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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Meeting Date: October 27, 2020

Department: Department of Public Safety
Submitted By: Department of Public Safety
Submitted For: Division of Victim Services

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I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Title: Intimate Partner Violence and Child Abuse Considerations During COVID-19 in Palm Beach County.

Summary: At the July 14, 2020 Board of County Commissioners meeting, Commissioner McKinlay requested a workshop from Palm Beach County Victim Services on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on victims of intimate partner violence and child abuse. With the COVID-19 pandemic, our community continues to see consequences from this devastating event. Major economic devastation from job loss, disconnection from community resources and support systems, uncertainty and panic can often stimulate violence that did not previously exist in families. Oftentimes situations worsen in homes where mistreatment and violence have been a problem. Palm Beach County Victim Services gathered data from our community partners and local law enforcement agencies about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on intimate partner violence and child abuse. Since March 1, 2020, Victim Services has remained available to all crime victims and has expanded outreach services. Countywide (SF)

Background and Policy Issues: Victim Services is independent of, but works closely with, the 15th Judicial Circuit Office of the State Attorney, Law Enforcement Agencies, and other community partners. For over 40 years, Victim Services has been assisting primary and secondary victims of sexual violence, domestic violence, homicide and other violent crimes through crisis response, advocacy, therapy, and community awareness. Our services are provided in five (5) locations throughout Palm Beach County and are free of charge to all crime victims.

Attachments:
1) Presentation

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Recommended By: S Seproha 10/1/20
Department Director **Date**

Approved By: [Signature] 10/5/20
Deputy County Administrator **Date**

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact

Fiscal Years	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
Personal Services	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Operating Costs	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Capital Expenditures	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
External Revenues	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Program Income (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
In-Kind Match (County)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Net Fiscal Impact	<u>0</u>	_____	_____	_____	_____

ADDITIONAL FTE

POSITIONS (Cumulative)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
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Is Item Included In Current Budget? Yes _____ No _____

Does this item include the use of federal funds? Yes _____ No _____

Budget Account Exp No: Fund xxxx Dept. xxx Unit xxxx Obj. xxxx Prog. xxxx

Rev No: Fund xxxx Dept. xxx Unit xxxx Rev. xxxx Prog. xxxx

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this agenda item.

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: _____

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

Lisa Martin 10/7/2020
OFMB
LM
10/16

Ann J. Jacobus 10/19/2020
Contract Dev. And Control
10-7-20 TW

B. Legal Sufficiency:

Sean-Edel Williams
Assistant County Attorney

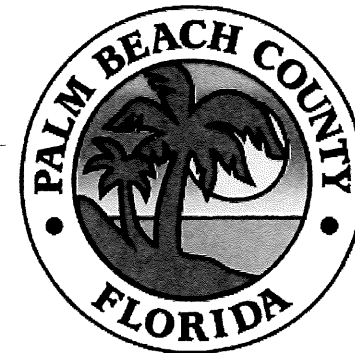
C. Other Department Review:

Department Director

This summary is not to be used as a basis for payment.

Intimate Partner Violence and Child Abuse Considerations/Trends During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Palm Beach County

NICOLE BISHOP, MSW
DIRECTOR VICTIM SERVICES AND JUSTICE SERVICES
STEPHANIE SEJNOHA
PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR

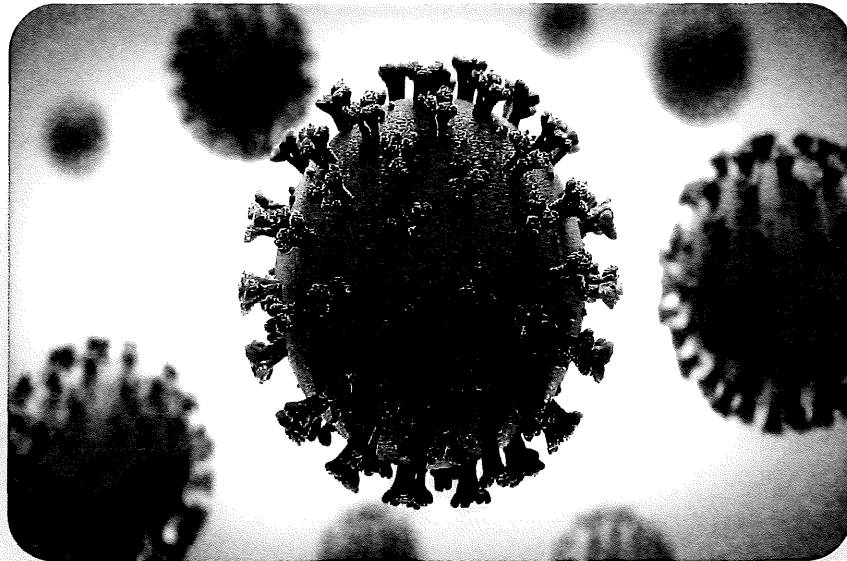


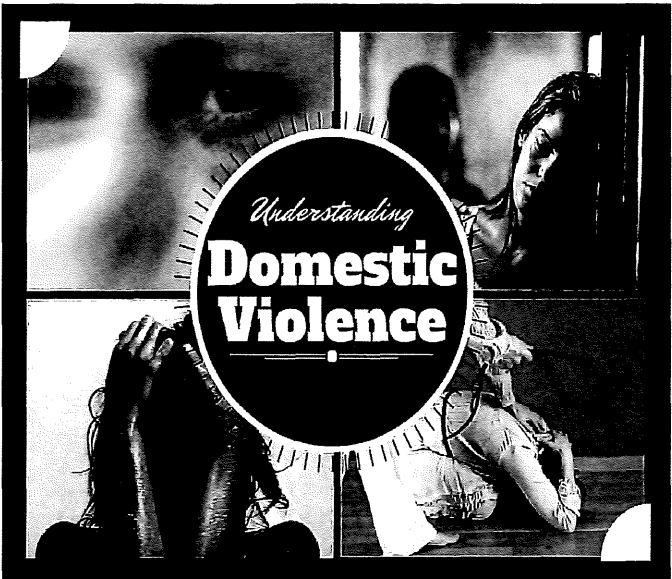
Workshop Background

- At the July PBC BCC meeting, Commissioner McKinlay requested a workshop from Palm Beach County Victim Services on the impact of COVID-19 on victims of intimate partner violence and child abuse.
 - *The topics in this workshop include:*
 - Intimate Partner Violence Trends
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Trends
 - Results of Data /Community Survey Trends
 - Outreach Activities
 - Existing Needs

COVID-19

Major economic devastation from job loss, disconnection from community resources and support systems, uncertainty and panic can often stimulate violence that did not previously exist in families. Often time's situations worsen in homes where mistreatment and violence have been a problem.





Intimate Partner Violence Trends

- Affects 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men (CDC)
- 16% (1 in 6) of homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner (US Crime reports)
- Associated with many negative mental health outcomes and high risk behaviors

• Victims confined with their abusers

• Inability to flee or seek help due to quarantine and social distancing

• Number of victims will rise dramatically due to COVID-19- however, less reports

Child Abuse and Neglect Trends

1 in 7 children have experienced child abuse an/or neglect in the past year (CDC)

Rates of child abuse are five times higher for children in families with low socio-economic status

Exposure to violence in childhood increases the risk of injury, future violence victimization and perpetration, substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, delayed brain development, lower educational attainment and limited employment opportunities

Increased stress levels of parents

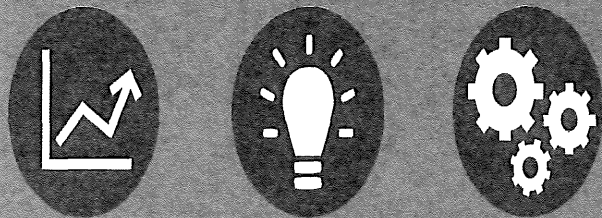
Children's lack of visibility in the community

Decrease support systems

Strained community resources

Increase in vulnerable children

Data Gathering



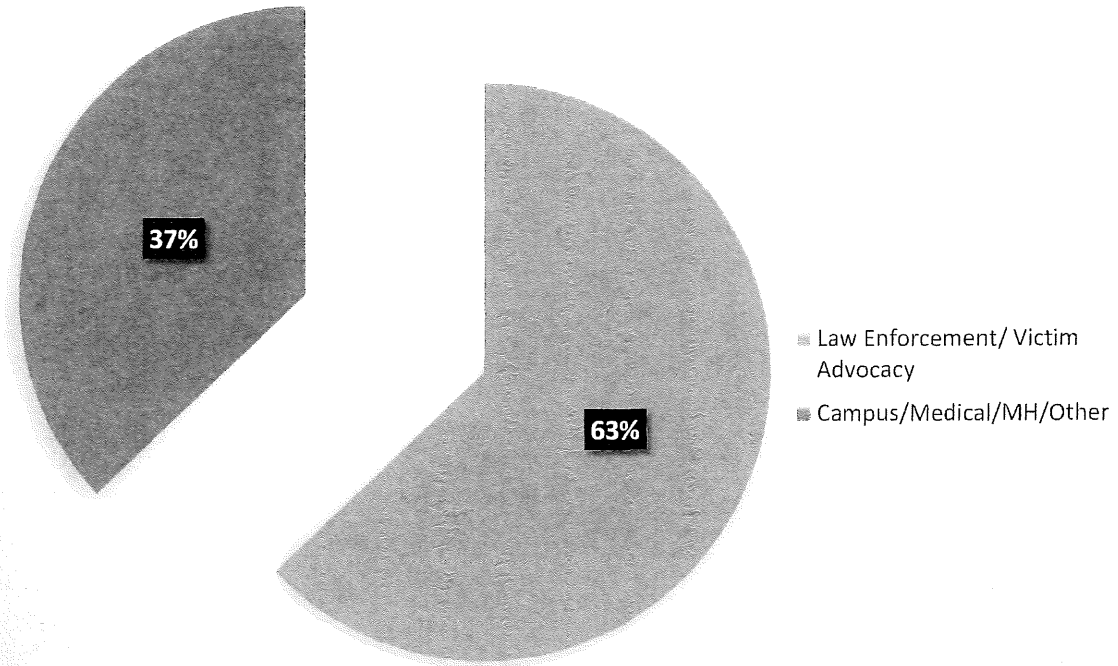
DATA → KNOWLEDGE → ACTION

- Victim Services Data
- Law Enforcement Data
- Community Partner Data
- Community Survey

Community Survey



Professionals from SART/DV Council



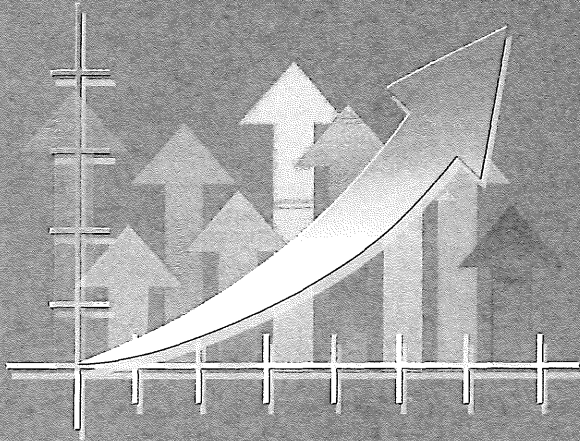
Community Survey



Of the professionals who responded:

- 89% reported the occurrence of DV/IPV, SA, and child abuse as steady or increased
- 48% described the severity of these crimes as increased during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 72% say the presence of COVID-19 has made it more difficult for victims to seek help/services
- 89% saw common effects of COVID-19 as components/causes of crime (ex. financial hardship, social isolation, etc.)

Community Data Trends



Victim Services

- Increase in referrals to DV First time Offenders Program (FTOP)
- Increase in VS new therapy clients

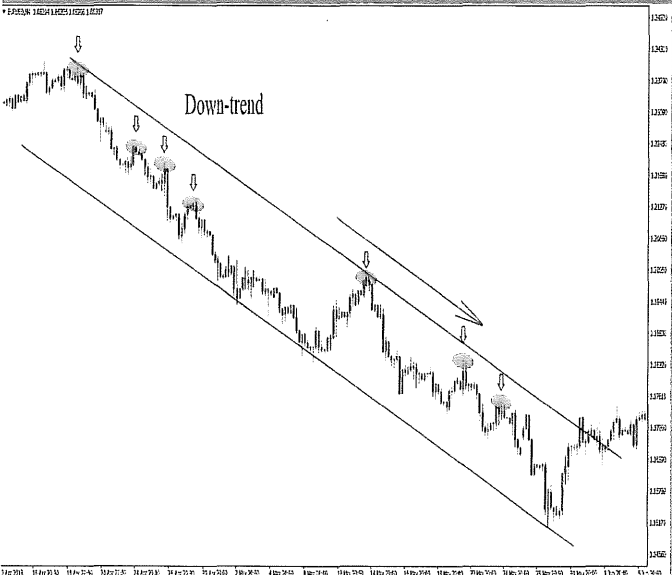
Law Enforcement

- Increase in calls for service *initially* (add information from data sheet)
- Increase in severity of abuse
- Increase in child molestation reports

Rape Crisis Center

- Increase in severity of sexual assaults (strangulation, stranger rape)
- Increase in response to Butterfly House

Community Data Trends



Law Enforcement/ Courts

- Decrease in Law Enforcement Reports
- Decrease in Restraining Orders filed

Intimate Partner Violence

- Decrease in 24 Hour Helpline Calls/Calls to shelters
- Decrease in Sexual Assault Services/Exams
- Decrease in Clients in DV Shelter
- Decrease in Victim Service New Intakes

Child Abuse and Neglect

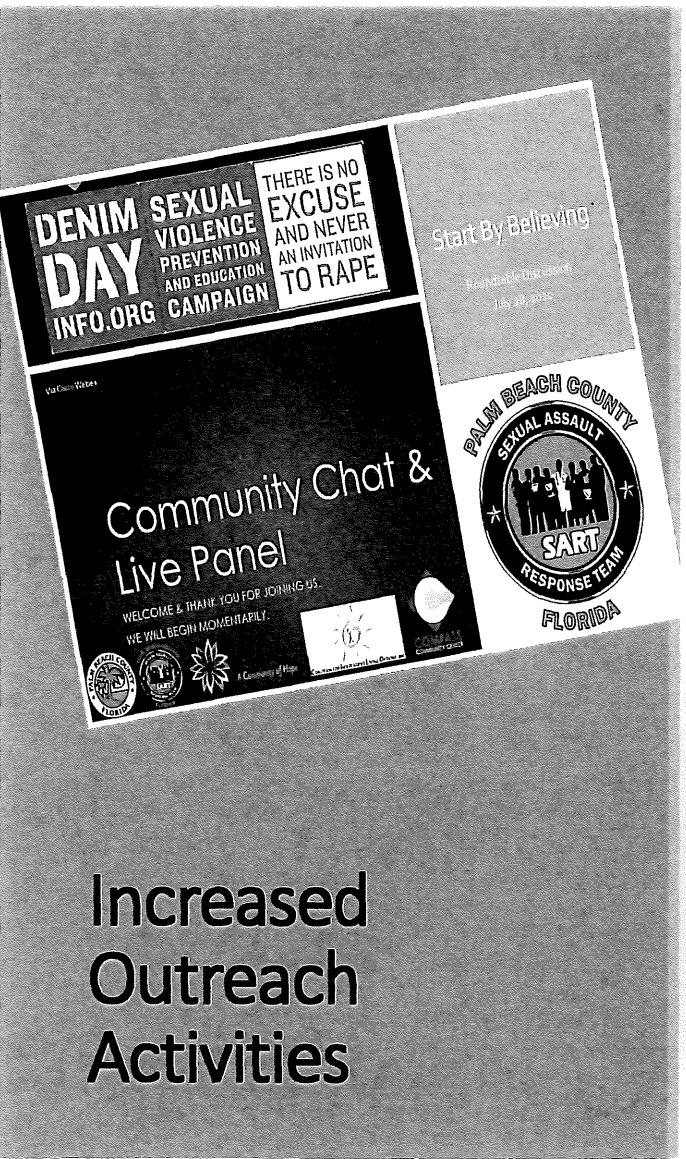
- Decrease in children removed from their homes
- Decrease in child abuse reports by school personnel

Increased Outreach Activities



Partnered with PBC Library and Youth Services food distribution sites to assemble and distribute 400 hygiene kits to adults and children in need.





Increased Outreach Activities

- Expanded social media presence
 - Hosted 4 Facebook Live Community Outreach events reaching 1,756 views (as of 9/14/20)
 - Created and posted a resource guide for victims of crime during COVID
 - Posted a reminder that we are available 24/7 for sexual assault cases
 - The post was shared 32 times by agencies such as West Palm Beach PD, Boynton Beach PD, Compass, and others



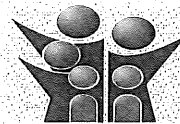
Palm Beach County Child Protective Investigation Trends March-July 2020

Palm Beach County Commission Workshop
October 2020

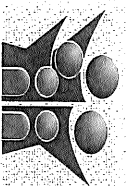
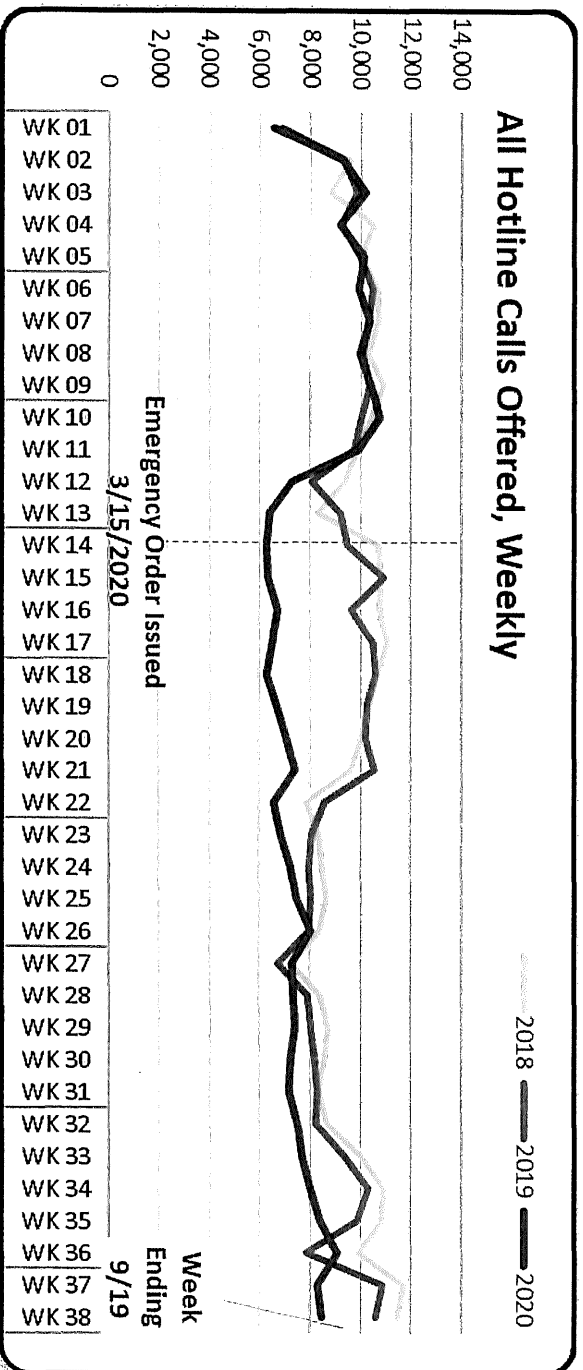
Child Protective Investigations Uninterrupted

Palm Beach County DCF has been closely monitoring Child Welfare trends during these unprecedented COVID-19 times to help ensure the well-being of the children and families in our community.

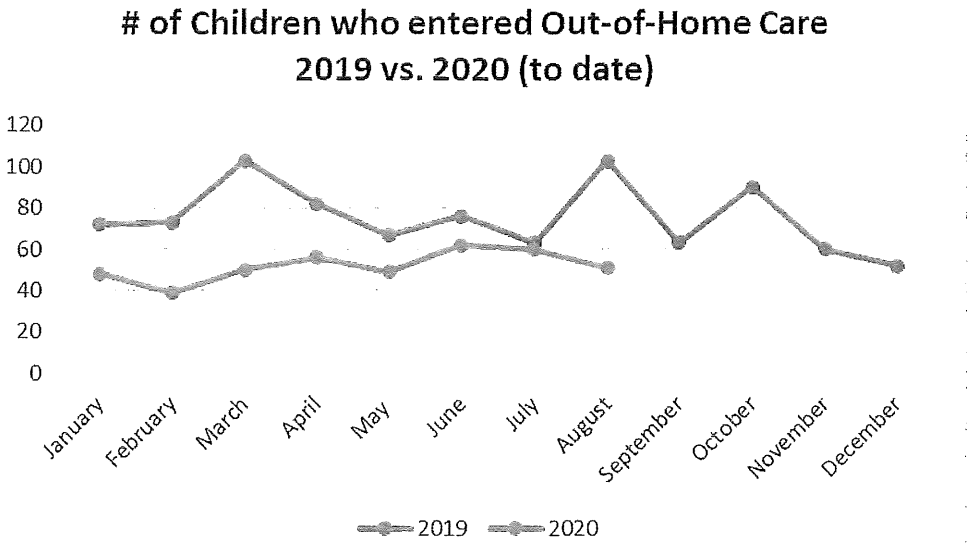
- 24-hour operations, 7 days-a-week
- Immediate response timeframe maintained
- Face-to-face, in-person child protective investigations
- PPE proactively worn by Child Protective Investigators, Family Support Workers and Case Managers
- Court hearings held remotely (virtual platforms)



Reports to Florida Abuse Hotline 2018-2020



Palm Beach County Children in Out-of-Home Care



- **Pre-COVID Prevention Focus:** There has been a decrease in the number of Palm Beach County children who entered out-of-home care since November 2019.
- **Decrease in Investigations and Removals (March-July 2020):** There was a 29% decrease in the number of Palm Beach County children who entered out-of-home care from March 2020 through July 2020, compared to March 2019 through July 2019. That is a decrease of 114 children. During the same time period, there were fewer investigations received, as well.



Palm Beach County Child Protective Investigations (March-July 2020)

Child Intakes/Investigations Received in Palm Beach			
	2019	2020	Change vs. 2019
March	882	739	16.21% ▼
April	1003	554	44.77% ▼
May	884	605	31.56% ▼
June	638	582	8.77% ▼
July	654	625	4.43% ▼
Total	4,061	3,105	23.54% ▼

- A total of **4,061** child abuse investigations were received in Palm Beach County between **March 2019 – July 2019**.
- Comparatively, there were **3,105** total child abuse investigations received between **March 2020 – July 2020**.



Primary Child Maltreatments in March-July 2020 Investigations

PB Child Investigation Maltreatments	% of Investigations Received from March 2019-July 2019	% of Investigations Received from March 2020-July 2020	Change vs. 2019
Inadequate Supervision	18.51%	18.81%	.3% ▲
Household Violence	24.43%	28.15%	3.72% ▲
Physical Injury	15.06%	11.99%	3.07% ▼
Substance Misuse	17.89%	20.03%	2.14% ▲

Child Safety and Prevention Resources

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/child-safety-prevention-resources.shtml>

Positive Parenting Guide

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/caregivers/>



Positive Parenting Guide

Concrete Supports in Times of Need
Family Resources

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/caregivers/family-resources.shtml>

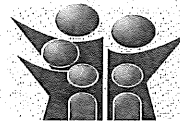
To report abuse:

1-800-962-2873

Florida Relay 711 or
TTY: 1-800-955-8771

Report Online

<https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**
MYFLFAMILIES.COM

How can you help?

