



549 NW Lake Whitney Place Suite 204• Port St. Lucie, FL 34986
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Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

September 22nd, 2026

Agenda

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Call to Order | Kristy Conway |
| 2. Board Chair Comments | Kristy Conway |
| 3. August Minutes | Kristy Conway |
| 4. Ballot Measure – Amendment 3 | Glen Torcivia |
| 5. HB797 | Glen Torcivia |
| 6. Approval of RGC and Neighborhood Family Foster Home Contracts | Andi Poli |
| 7. Approval of Policies | Carol Deloach |
| • Rusty – Policy 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813 and 814 | |
| 8. CEO Board Report | Carol Deloach |
| 9. Quality Assurance Update | Rusty Kline |
| 10. External Affairs | Dana Anderwald |
| 11. Public Comments | Kristy Conway |
| 12. Adjournment | Kristy Conway |

2026 Schedule of Meetings

Meetings are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of the month at 3 pm. The November and December meetings usually are combined to accommodate the holiday schedule.

October 27th

November 24^{th***}

December 22^{nd***}



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Board of Directors Meeting
Communities Connected for Kids Board Meeting
August 25th, 2026
3:00 pm

August 2026 Minutes

1) Call to Order – Board Chair Conway called the meeting to order at 3:01p.

Board members in attendance: Mark Young, Michelle Miller, Vanessa Farnes, Kristy Conway, Melanie Wiles, and Gloria Seidule.

Board members absent: Dr. Angie Bailey, Pat McCoy and Leslie Kroeger.

Internal staff in attendance: Elisabeth Eugene, Nicky Smith, Caryn Toole, Jill Poole, Denise Natalizio, Rusty Kline, Carol Delaach, Holly Ives, Suzie Kulscar, Alisa Carter, Katie Vella, Lauren Hahn, Shannon Davenport, Cheri Sheffer, Lesa Sims, Sara Topmiller, Evan Hunsberger, and Dana Anderwald.

Guests in attendance: Nancy Wall, Terrence Watts, and Robert McPartlan.

2) Board Chair Comments – Ms. Conway presents:

- Ms. Conway discussed previous conversations with Ms. Deloach and Mr. Hunsberger regarding moving forward with a succession plan. Ms. Conway stated that the goal is to convene an Executive Committee meeting to further discuss succession planning and determine the appropriate process.
- Mr. Young discussed obtaining insight from individuals and organizations that have recently completed similar recruitment and succession processes.
- Ms. Deloach reported that she had already spoken with several individuals and gathered recommendations and ideas regarding the process. She will share this information with the Executive Committee.

3) Approval of July Minutes – Ms. Conway presents:

Mr. Young made a motion to approve the July Minutes, and Ms. Miller seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3) Approval of Policies – Ms. Conway presents:

Ms. Miller made a motion to approve policy 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 310, 901, 1210, 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304, 1305, 1306, 1307, and 1607, and Ms. Farnes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



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5) CEO Report - Ms. Deloach

- Ms. Deloach reported a continued increase in requests from DCF regarding fiscal matters, rate setting, residential group care, the funding model, and other statewide initiatives.
- She noted that different divisions within DCF have occasionally provided conflicting information, creating additional work and uncertainty for lead agencies.
- CCKids has requested improved internal communication within DCF so that consistent information is provided to contracted agencies.
- Ms. Deloach provided an update on Continue the Mission, which launched July 24 to support recruitment of investigators and case managers. CCKids initially received no referrals because the system responsible for releasing candidate information had not been activated. Once corrected, CCKids received approximately 24 applications.
- Several applicants did not meet degree requirements for case-management positions but appeared potentially suitable for family-support or administrative positions. CCKids shared those potential candidates with CHS, which had reported difficulty filling those positions.
- Ms. Deloach reported that activity has resumed regarding the A Home for Every Child initiative, with DCF providing additional information regarding next steps.
- The foster parent and Guardian Ad Litem recruitment campaign was scheduled to conclude August 31. CCKids had received 10 referrals, including seven foster-care referrals, one adoption referral, and two referrals still being evaluated.
- Ms. Deloach provided an extensive update on CCWIS testing, noting that staff and management continue to dedicate substantial time to identifying system issues. Significant concerns remain regarding finance, eligibility, provider management, and related processes. Ms. Deloach emphasized that these issues must be resolved before full implementation because the system must be capable of supporting provider payments and placement processes.
- Based on recent discussions with DCF leadership, Ms. Deloach indicated that an October 1 implementation delay appeared increasingly likely, although the length of any delay had not yet been determined.
- Ms. Deloach recognized Ms. Vella for her significant work coordinating testing, documenting system issues, communicating with Tallahassee, and explaining the operational impact of identified problems.
- On July 29th, Ms. Deloach, Ms. Hahn, and Ms. Sheffer traveled to Orlando to discuss opportunities to increase Title IV-E claiming. Ms. Deloach explained that federal eligibility continues to rely on 1996 financial standards, which limits the number of children who currently qualify.
- Ms. Conway, Ms. Sheffer, and Ms. Deloach met with Senator Harrell, who expressed significant interest in CCKids' prevention efforts and the ESEP program. Senator Harrell expressed interest in potentially exploring legislation supporting programs designed to prevent children from entering care while reducing state general-revenue expenditures.
- Additional legislative meetings are being pursued.
- Ms. Deloach reported that Glen Torcivia will present at the September Board meeting regarding the permissible activities of Board members and CCKids staff related to Amendment 3.
- Mr. Torcivia was also asked to review House Bill 797 and discuss any implications for nonprofit board structure.
- CCKids was notified that its grant application to the Martin County Children's Services Council was not funded. The Council indicated that it received numerous requests with limited available funding but expressed interest in potentially assisting with future matching-fund opportunities.



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- The CCKids All Hands meeting was announced for September 18 at Indian River Presbyterian Church from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Staff appreciation activities, including treat carts at various locations, were also planned.
- Ms. Deloach discussed DCF is also beginning work toward standardized contracts in areas including residential group care, licensing, independent living, and case management. CCKids representatives will participate as the initiative develops.
- Ms. Deloach acknowledged the significant workload being placed on staff by multiple simultaneous statewide initiatives and recognized staff members for maintaining service quality despite those demands.

6) QA Committee Report – Mr. Kline Reports:

- Mr. Kline reported that the Quality Assurance Subcommittee met at 2:00 p.m.
- Reported incidents decreased from 74 to 59.
- Mr. Kline clarified that missing-child incident numbers can include multiple incidents involving the same child and may include relatively brief unauthorized absences.
- Two inadvertent disclosures occurred during the reporting period. Neither involved medical information; however, appropriate notifications were made.
- Mr. Kline reviewed the performance dashboard and reported improvement from red to green in the measure concerning children exiting out-of-home care and remaining safely at home within 12 months.
- Staff attended the August 19 kickoff regarding strategies and performance expectations connected to A Home for Every Child.
- Monitoring of high-risk programs continues, and one high-risk girls' program review had been completed.
- An entrance conference had also been conducted for a Level 1 licensing program review.
- The peer-review process and review tools were substantially revised in collaboration with case-management agencies and QM staff.
- QM will prepare its year-end Annual Summary of Findings, a contractual deliverable due October 15.
- The next Quality Assurance Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for September 22.

7) External Affairs/Advocacy - Ms. Anderwald presents:

- Ms. Anderwald reported that the back-to-school initiative resulted in approximately 270 donated backpacks, including approximately 100 from United Way and additional donations from community partners.
- Staff distributed backpacks to CCKids offices before the beginning of the school year.
- Grace Baptist Church in Port St. Lucie conducted its second luggage drive for CCKids. The church donated 112 new carry-on-size pieces of luggage for children. Ms. Anderwald reported that the luggage was already being distributed, with approximately 30 pieces having been taken from the Martin County inventory.
- A press release regarding the donation was being coordinated for possible publication in the TC Palm.
- Ms. Anderwald reported that discussions with Grace Baptist Church also created an opportunity for additional community partnership.
- The church expressed interest in supporting an initiative designed to ensure that appropriate textured-hair-care products are available at service centers and foster homes when needed. Discussions were underway regarding a potential partnership with the local Jack and Jill chapter in support of the initiative.
- Ms. Anderwald recognized Mr. Avilla for his continued community outreach and participation in local meetings and partnerships.



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- CCKids planned to participate in upcoming community resource events at the Kane Center on September 9 and the Fenn Center on September 16.
- CCKids also planned to participate in a Halloween community event in Okeechobee.
- Planning for the upcoming Christmas initiative was beginning.

8) Finance Report – Ms. Hahn

- Ms. Hahn provided a preliminary update regarding the June financials and explained that year-end reconciliation with DCF remained ongoing.
- Ms. Hahn reported that the overall operating position had improved significantly and was approximately \$62,000 positive when all funding sources were considered.
- The DCF contract itself reflected an operating loss of approximately \$230,000.
- Other funding sources helped offset the DCF contract deficit, including approximately \$206,000 from another contract, approximately \$78,000 in eligible interest income, and approximately \$98,000 from Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network, in addition to smaller grants and donations.
- Approximately \$156,000 in interest-related funds remained reserved and would ultimately be owed back to the Department.
- Salaries were approximately \$600,000 over budget.
- Residential group care remained the most significant financial pressure and was approximately \$2.5 million over budget.
- Ms. Hahn explained that June financials would remain subject to adjustment until DCF's year-end reconciliation process was complete, which historically may extend into November.

Ms. Farnes made a motion to approve the June CCKids Financials, and Ms. Miller seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Ms. Hahn reported that July was a strong month from a cash-position perspective.
- CCKids received both July and August advances totaling approximately \$6.4 million, approximately \$2.6 million through Back of the Bill funding, approximately \$268,000 from the risk pool, and approximately \$228,000 from Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network.
- Ms. Hahn cautioned that the improved cash balance does not resolve the underlying structural funding issue because regular DCF advances remain insufficient to cover monthly expenditures.
- CCKids intends to continue pursuing risk-pool funding and other available funding mechanisms.
- July reflected a net operating loss of approximately \$67,000, which Ms. Hahn described as generally consistent with expectations.
- July also included approximately \$560,000 in annual clothing allowances associated with children returning to school.
- The schedule of funds was amended to include additional pass-through funding related to cost-of-living increases for foster parents and adoption assistance.
- DCF is reviewing how individual lead agencies establish rates, the populations served, and the distinction between normal and high-cost care.
- Lead agencies have requested that DCF clearly define the methodology for determining a normal cost of care.



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Ms. Wiles made a motion to approve the July CCKids Financials, and Ms. Farnes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- Ms. Hahn reported that work on the KPMG funding model has resumed, with both weekly small-group meetings and larger statewide discussions underway.
- Significant concerns remain regarding proposed contract language, particularly financial penalties and performance requirements.
- Ms. Hahn noted concerns that some proposed performance metrics may be outside the direct control of lead agencies and that financial penalties could negatively affect the funding model.

9) Board Comments –

- Mr. Young provided comments regarding his experience working with the CCKids team during CCWIS testing. He complimented staff members on their professionalism, flexibility, and commitment throughout the testing process.
- Ms. Conway thanked Mark for his work and recognized his positive representation of foster families and foster homes.

10) Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 4:21



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CEO Report
September 2026
CEO Report

As expected, we have spent the last month working with CCWIS, trying to eliminate the bugs. It was apparent to the CBCs that the go-live date of October 1 was unrealistic; we kept pushing the idea of delay to DCF. Finally, on September 4th, DCF announced the delay of the go-live date until possibly after the first of the year. With holidays coming that makes sense. We will continue working with DCF on testing, training and process modification to ensure a successful launch.

The funding formula is still a work in progress, with a hard stop date of December 15th. Two hours were spent at the Summit going over various parts of the formula, with more work still to be done. DCF provided a short one-on-one opportunity for each CBC individually to meet with Chad Barrett. Cheri Sheffer was able to get Lauren Hahn and myself on the phone to participate. DCF must have their legislative budget request (LBR) to the Governor by October 15th. The preliminary funding formula bottom line figures will not be ready to share with us until the end of October at the earliest. Therefore, no new money will be included in the LBR for FY26/27. Risk pool and back of the bill will continue to be the funding vehicle. Given the elections, we have no idea who the next governor will be nor any DCF leadership changes, a very uncertain future. Since the formula is in statute, CBCs will need to work with their delegations once we know the final figures to push support of funding.

The initial kick-off of the Standard Contract committee is scheduled for September 18th. Director of Contracts, Andi Poli, will represent CCKids. There will be four sub-committees who will be looking at licensing, residential group, foster care and independent living (which we do in-house). We will have representatives on these committees as appropriate.

Our meeting with Representative Snyder is scheduled for the morning of September 22nd. Representative Trabulsy's visit had to be rescheduled due to both of us being under the weather. We are still waiting on Senator Grall for a date.

Friday, September 18th is the DCF entrance as the start to our annual child placing agency license.

Friday the 18 is the finale event to celebrate Employee Appreciation. Fun, food, and treats are on the agenda. The event will be from 9:30 to 11:30 at the Indian River Presbyterian Church, 2499 Virginia Avenue in Fort Pierce.

Departmental reports follow:



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OPERATIONS

Cheri Sheffer, Chief Operating Officer

Earlier this fiscal year, DCF's Home for Every Child Plan was approved by the Federal Administration for Children and Families. We are working internally to align our Continuous Quality Improvement processes and operational approach with the objectives of the plan, which places an emphasis on prevention, family finding, and foster home recruitment and retention.

We ended the fiscal year with a 16% increase in the total number of children sheltered over the prior year. We continue to observe a year-over-year trend of increases in the percent of shelters consisting of children ages 13-17. The percent has increased from 19% in FY 24-25 to 22% in FY 25-26. In the first two months of FY 26-27, teens accounted for nearly one-third of the shelters.

ST LUCIE COUNTY

Katie Vella, St Lucie County Director

St. Lucie Case Management:

St. Lucie County dependency case management has remained stable with a low turnover rate of below 10%. Focus on quality improvement remains the top priority given the workforce has stabilized and caseloads remain manageable. CCKids has experienced a 35% decrease in the number of children under supervision since July of 2024, from 666 to 431. St Lucie county accounts for 196 (83%) of the total reduction in the number of children under supervision.

Early Services Engagement and Preservation Program (ESEP):

The ESEP program surpassed their annual goal of 22 families served. The program has served 328 children since October 2024. ESEP served 183 children in the fiscal year 25/26.

The ESEP program has changed the landscape of case distribution across Circuit 19, reducing St. Lucie county's percent of total children under supervision from 58% to 45%.

During the Month of August, Director Vella attended the following:

- CCWIS Change Management Meeting
- CCWIS Statewide Meeting
- FCC Case Management Subcommittee
- FCC Residential Subcommittee
- C19 Surviving Sibling Staffing
- CCWIS Training



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- CCWIS UAT conversion testing

MARTIN COUNTY

Denise Natalizio, MS, Martin County Director

Martin County Case Management

CHS has one new dependency case manager in pre-service training. Caseloads continue to hold steady at around 60 children and are manageable with current staff.

Level I Licensing (Relatives and Non-Relatives)

We are currently fluctuating in the mid 30% range as we continue progressing towards 40% and above. The team is actively supporting 97 families at this time.

Level II-V Licensing (traditional/therapeutic/medical)

-For the 26/27 fiscal year, we have a net gain of 3 homes and net loss of (3) beds.

-We received 6 referrals in August for a fiscal year total of 9, for the statewide Florida Foster Information Center (FFIC); 3 families have been licensed.

-Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) currently have approximately 22 homes in progress toward licensure.

Kinship Navigator Program

In August, we extended our services to 20 additional kinship caregiver families; our fiscal year total is 39.

In August, Director Natalizio continued her roles on the CCKids Succession Planning Team and the CCWIS Change Management Team. She maintained her community engagement through her ongoing service on the Martin County Department of Juvenile Justice Council, The Martin County Interagency Coalition, and board of directors.

INDIAN RIVER & OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

Caryn Toole, Okeechobee, and Indian River Director

Road to Success Program:

EFC = 19 (+21 EFC Out of County Services)

Aftercare/PESS =23

Under 18 minors served =66

RTS staff continue to work with our clients from 13-23 on all aspects of available programming.

Okeechobee:



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This month County Director Caryn Toole participated in the Okeechobee Children's Services monthly meeting. Ms. Toole attended the Health and Human Services meeting and the Department of Juvenile Justice Council meeting. Caryn attended the Okeechobee Sexual Assault Recovery Team monthly meeting.

Indian River:

County Director Caryn Toole is a member of the United Way of Indian River County Board of Directors, she attended her monthly board meeting. Caryn is also chairman of the Samaritan Center (a transitional living program for Homeless Families) Advisory Board and attended their monthly board meeting. Caryn participated in the Healthy Start of Indian River County Community Action team studying Infant Mortality and participated in both bi-monthly meetings. This month Caryn also participated in the IRC Children's Services Council Grant subcommittee monthly meeting, the IRC Executive Roundtable meeting, and the IRC School and Health Advisory team meeting. Caryn also attended a School District of Indian River County Community impact meeting.

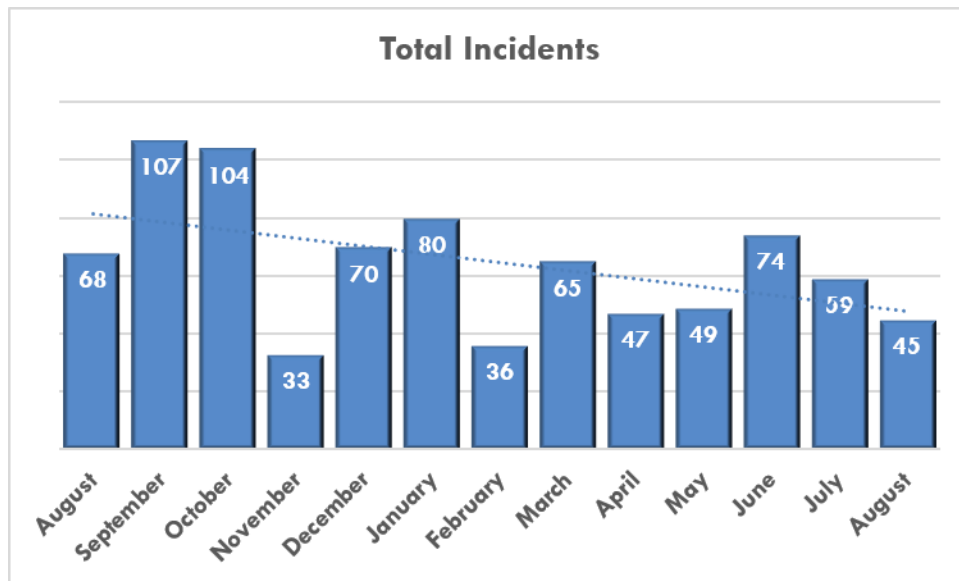
QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Rusty Kline, Director of Quality Management

Quality Management/Risk Management:

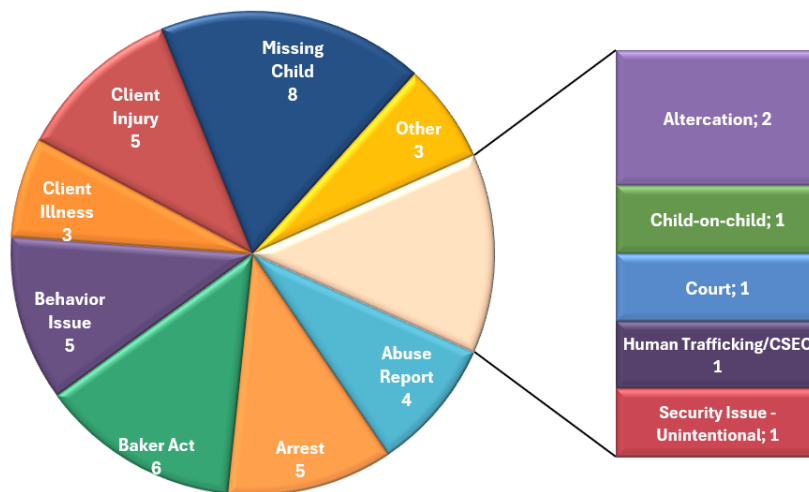
The data highlighted below represents incident reports received during the month of August 2026 and will be presented to CCKids Senior Management, County Directors, Program Directors, and Case Manager Supervisors.

45 incidents were reported during the month of August 2026. Of the 45 incidents, 6 were listed as a secondary category in conjunction with another incident. These reports listed 30 individual children and one employee as active participants. Seven of the 30 children are placed in Circuit 19 by another CBC agency and are receiving only courtesy supervision services from CCKids. Of the 30 children involved, 9 were named as participants in more than one incident report and/or incident type.



The total number of incidents decreased from July to August and is well below the average (66) for the last 12 months.

INCIDENT REPORTS BY CATEGORY





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TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Nicky Smith, Director of Training and Development

The training team continues to provide individual mentoring and coaching support for recent graduates who are working to attain their case manager certification. The training team continues to prepare for the upcoming roll-out of the new Florida Academy training curriculum. Training for qualified evaluators took place on September 16 & 17, 2026. The first Academy class started on September 21, 2026. The training team is navigating the new FCB database as we prepare for the 2026 certification renewal cycle and the additional documentation required for the Title IV-E pilot.

CCKids CCWIS end-user training started on August 24, 2026, additional roll-out training has been paused in response to a decision by DCF to delay the original implementation date. Staff will be provided with additional opportunities for virtual navigation practice as we await more information on the revised implementation timelines. .

I continue to participate in the monthly meeting with representatives from DCF, and the Florida Certification Board to discuss collaboration and share information about training issues across the state. I continue to participate in the monthly collaborative forum and bi-annual training managers meeting as we plan for the roll out of the new Academy and CCWIS. I continue to participate on the Florida Certification Board Advisory Council and on the ethics sub-committee, we meet monthly to review ethics complaints from across the state. I continue to facilitate the monthly FCC Training Sub-committee and participate in the monthly FCC Systems Operations meeting. The FCC Conference planning Committee meetings started meeting again to plan the 2027 conference.

The CCKids Compliance Committee met on July 27, 2026. The quarterly unaudited financial statements were submitted on 8/24/26. The CCKids third party annual attestation was submitted on 9/11/2026. There have been no incidents of FWA or positive sanction screening results to report. The next CCKids Compliance meeting will take place on October 26, 2026.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Dana Anderwald, Director of Community Relations

As we move into the final quarter of the year, Community Relations has shifted its primary focus to our annual Making Christmas Bright campaign. Planning is well underway, and we are pleased to report that many of our longtime community donors and partners have already committed to supporting children in care again this holiday season. Our case management team is currently finalizing wish lists for the children and youth on their caseloads so we can begin matching sponsors with children and ensuring every child experiences the joy of a memorable Christmas.

One of the highlights this month was the positive media attention surrounding our partnership with Grace Baptist Church. The TC Palm featured a wonderful article about the church's successful luggage drive, which provided more than 100 new suitcases and duffel bags for youth in care. The exposure helped raise awareness about the unique needs of children entering foster care and the importance of preserving their dignity during



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placement transitions. We are especially grateful that Grace Baptist Church has already committed to making the luggage drive an annual project, ensuring ongoing support for children served by CCKids.

Community outreach efforts continued through participation in both the Martin County Interagency Coalition (MCIAC) Resource Fair and the Council of Social Agencies (COSA) Showcase of Services. Both events provided valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships with fellow service providers and community organizations throughout the Treasure Coast. In addition to networking with other agencies, several attendees expressed interest in learning more about becoming foster parents, allowing us to connect them with information and resources about the licensing process.

The Tresses of Texture initiative also received positive feedback from attendees at both resource fairs. Several individuals expressed interest in sharing information about the program with local hairstylists and salon professionals, helping us expand awareness and support for this important initiative.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on securing sponsors, donors, and community partners for the Making Christmas Bright campaign. The continued generosity of our community makes it possible to meet the needs of local children in care, and we are grateful for the many individuals and organizations who continue to support our mission.



AT-A-GLANCE

Scorecard/Contract Performance Measures		July	August	Target	% Change
SAFETY	Children Not Abused in OOHC	0.00	0.00	9.07	0.00
	No Abuse during In-Home Services	100.00%	98.39%	98.00%	▶ -1.61%
	Children with No Recurrence of Verified Abuse within 12 Months	97.44%	96.49%	90.30%	▶ -0.94%
WELL-BEING	Kids Seen Every 30 Days	99.72%	100.00%	99.50%	▶ 0.28%
PERMANENCY	Placement Moves per 1000 Days in OOHC	4.95	4.72	4.50	▶ -0.23
	Kids Exiting OOHC to a Permanent Home w/In 12 Months of Removal	88.24%	55.77%	35.20%	▶ -32.47%
	Kids in OOHC 12-23 Months who Exit to a Permanent Home	66.22%	69.62%	44.00%	▶ 3.40%
	Kids in OOHC 24+ Months who Exit to a Permanent Home	38.71%	39.68%	37.30%	▶ 0.97%
	Kids Who do Not Re-enter OOHC within 12 Months of Exit*	97.59%	97.65%	94.40%	▶ 0.06%
	Percentage of Children in OOHC Placed with Relative/Non-Relatives	46.33%	45.48%	60.00%	▶ -0.84%
	Sibling Groups Placed Together in OOHC	61.90%	62.90%	65.00%	▶ 1.00%
	Number of Finalized Adoptions (YTD)	7	22	63	▶ 15

**CFSR Desk Review Data
2026-2027
Qualitative Metrics**

	CFSR items	Quarter 1 July 1, 2026 - September 30, 2026	Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027	Fiscal Year July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026
	Number of Cases	17 6: In Home 11: Out of Home	17 6: In Home 11: Out of Home	60 13: In Home 47: Foster Care
Safety	Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment Purpose of Assessment	100.00%	100.00%	90.91%
	Item 2: Services to prevent removal	77.78%	77.78%	75.86%
	Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management	47.06%	47.06%	66.67%
Permanency	Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement	72.73%	72.73%	91.49%
	Item 5: Permanency Goal for the Child	90.91%	90.91%	91.49%
	Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	63.64%	63.64%	61.70%
	Item 7: Placement with Siblings	25.00%	25.00%	84.21%
	Item 8: Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	14.29%	14.29%	46.43%
	Item 9: Preserving Connections	54.55%	54.55%	40.43%
	Item 10: Relative Placement	81.82%	81.82%	67.39%
	Item 11: Relationship of Child in Care with Parents	33.33%	33.33%	27.27%
Well-Being	Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents	29.41%	29.41%	33.33%
	Item 12A: Needs Assessment and Services to Children	76.47%	76.47%	70.00%
	Item 12B: Needs Assessment and Services to Parents	16.67%	16.67%	17.07%
	Item 12C: Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents	63.64%	63.64%	77.78%
	Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	28.57%	28.57%	41.07%
	Item 14: Caseworker Visits with the Child	47.06%	47.06%	55.00%
	Item 15: Caseworker Visits with Parents	16.67%	16.67%	14.63%
	Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child	75.00%	75.00%	67.57%
	Item 17: Physical Health of the Child	38.46%	38.46%	63.27%
	Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	55.56%	55.56%	39.39%
	Is an Immediate Child Safety Action Required?	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

ST LUCIE COUNTY

Grace Baptist Church St. Lucie donates 112 pieces of luggage to CCKids

Dana Anderwald Communities Connected for Kids

Sept. 13, 2026, 5:01 a.m. ET



Terrye Branch, Grace Baptist Women's Ministry president and Alida Beckman, chairperson for Comfort in a Case with some of the suitcases that will be distributed to children and teens served by CCKids throughout the region. *Provided By MaryAnn Ketcham*

PORT ST. LUCIE — Thanks to the generosity of [Grace Baptist Church St. Lucie, FL](#), 112 children in foster care will have a safe and dignified way to carry their belongings during times of transition.

Organized by the church's Women's Ministry, led by Terrye Branch, the community-wide luggage drive exceeded expectations, resulting in the donation of 112 brand-new carry-on suitcases to [Communities Connected for Kids](#) (CCKids).



Joye Richardson; Grace Baptist Women's Ministry President Terrye Branch; Frank Avila, Communities Connected for Kids; and Alida Beckham, chairperson for Comfort in a Case. *Provided By MaryAnn Ketcham*

For many children entering foster care or moving between placements, personal belongings are often packed in trash bags. The Women's Ministry at Grace Baptist Church recognized this need and rallied their congregation and community to help provide children with luggage that offers a sense of dignity, comfort, and self-worth during difficult transitions.



The community-wide luggage drive exceeded expectations, resulting in the donation of 112 brand-new carry-on suitcases to Communities Connected for Kids. *Provided By MaryAnn Ketcham*

The suitcases will be distributed to children and teens served by CCKids throughout the region. Each piece of luggage represents more than just a place to store belongings. It serves as a reminder that children facing uncertain circumstances are seen, valued, and supported by a caring community.



Dana Anderwald, Communities Connected for Kids, arrives with the U-Haul to pick up the luggage. *Provided By MaryAnn Ketcham*

"These suitcases will make a meaningful difference in the lives of children who are already experiencing significant change," said Dana Anderwald, community relations director for Communities Connected for Kids. "We are incredibly grateful to Terrye Branch, the Women's Ministry, and everyone at Grace Baptist Church who contributed to this effort. Their generosity will help ensure that children entering foster care or moving between homes can do so with greater dignity and the knowledge that their community cares about them."



Committee and church members with Dana Anderwald and Frank Avila of Communities Connected for Kids.
Provided By MaryAnn Ketcham

CCKids extends its sincere appreciation to Grace Baptist Church, the Women's Ministry, and all of the community members who supported the drive. Their compassion and commitment will have a lasting impact on children in foster care, providing them with not only a practical resource but also a powerful message of hope and belonging.

Communities Connected for Kids (CCKids) is the nonprofit lead agency responsible for coordinating child welfare services in Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie counties. Working with a network of community partners, caregivers, and service providers, CCKids is dedicated to ensuring the safety, well-being, and permanency of children and families throughout the Treasure Coast and Okeechobee regions. For more information about Communities Connected for Kids, visit www.cckids.net.



The donation will help ensure that children entering foster care or moving between placements have a safe and dignified way to transport their belongings.
Provided By MaryAnn Ketcham