

Citizens Review Panel

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) provides federal funding to states for child abuse and neglect prevention, treatment and training for staff who work in the child protection system. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) serves as the lead agency for the federal funding. The Advisory Council serves as a Citizens Review Panel to support DCF's efforts to refine, improve and strengthen the child welfare system.



Citizen Review Panels were included in the 1996 CAPTA reauthorization and must:

- Be composed of volunteers who are representative of the community in which they operate.
- Meet at least quarterly.
- Prepare an annual report that describes the panel's activities and includes recommendations to improve the child protection system.
- Have at least one member with expertise in child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment.

Each panel is responsible to review:

- Compliance of state and local child protection service agencies and state CAPTA plan.
- Coordination with foster care and adoption programs.
- Review of child fatalities and near fatalities (performed by the Child Abuse Death Review Team).

The Advisory Council was formally designated as a Citizens Review Panel for the Federal Fiscal Year 2019. Below are recommendations provided to the DCF:

- Work with agency partners to increase community-based services for mental health and substance abuse to provide greater accessibility for individuals and families involvement with, or at-risk of being involved with, the child welfare system.
- Expand home visiting services that target older children. These services should complement existing home visiting services that work to build protective factors and improve family functioning to prevent involvement with the child welfare system.
- Increase collaboration with the Department of Economic Opportunity, CareerSource Florida and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to offer job skill training and employment opportunities for children and families to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Increase support of local initiatives to provide community education on topics to include Adverse Childhood Experiences, Social Determinants of Health, Trauma Informed Care and Protective Factors. This education can promote action on behalf of individuals and families to reduce incidents of crisis or distress.
- Increase promotion of success stories and personal growth achieved through services and supports provided by DCF and its contractors. These services and supports change and save lives every day and can help improve the public perception of the agency.
- Increase collaboration with agency partners to have consistent messaging on safe sleep and water safety topics to reduce and eliminate preventable child deaths.