



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist
Governor

George H. Sheldon
Secretary

DATE: September 16, 2009

TO: Regional Directors and Circuit Administrators

THROUGH: Peter G. Digre, Assistant Secretary for Operations *measured by*
David L. Fairbanks, Assistant Secretary for Programs *Refer*

FROM: *A.R.* Alan Abramowitz, State Director, Office of Family Safety

SUBJECT: Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008,
Public Law (P.L.) 110-351 – De-Linking Provisions for Adoption Eligibility

PURPOSE: This memorandum provides guidance on the de-linking provisions from P.L. 110-351. It also announces a training opportunity for staff involved in adoption services, and processing eligibility for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance (also known as “IV-E Maintenance Adoption Subsidy”). The purpose of the training is to ensure that your program office or agency is ready to implement provisions that “de-link” certain adoption assistance eligibility criteria for children over a span of time.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: On October 7, 2008, the President signed Public Law (P.L.) 110-351, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. One significant change this law makes is to section 473 of the Social Security Act. It removes the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) requirements from the Title IV-E adoption assistance program. The revised IV-E adoption assistance eligibility criteria will be phased in over a nine year period starting October 1, 2009.

The general effect of these provisions is to increase the number of special needs children for whom the state can use federal funds to provide financial support (including Medicaid) to adoptive families. It does not change most underlying criteria for receiving adoption assistance (such as, still must be special needs children). This is a positive change, as state resources that have been paying for some children ineligible for Title IV-E adoption assistance will now be freed up for other child welfare uses. In return, states are to use the state's savings for child welfare services.

New Policy. The program office convened a small group of content experts (including CBC, circuit, and ACCESS staff) to develop guidelines for applying the changes in federal law within the policy framework and existing FSFN capabilities. The attached Desk Reference includes information about the changes, new forms for use beginning October 1, 2009, and basic process steps to help circuits define their local approaches to implementing the changes.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

Training Opportunity. The Office of Family Safety will provide online training with necessary guidance for implementation. The following webinar sessions are available to Department and Community Based Care staff:

Session 1: Central and Suncoast Regions
Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2009 Time: 10:00 AM -12:00 noon

Session 2: Southeast and Southern Regions
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2009 Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 noon

Session 3: Northeast and Northwest Regions
Date: Thursday, September 24, 2009 Time: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

To participate in one of these events, please register via the following link:

<https://www.livemeeting.com/lrs/8000362188/Registration.aspx?pageName=bbt6r8vs59xww50b>

In addition, for audio please call 1.888.808.6959; and when prompted, enter 9281369#.

We expect these events to be of broad interest, so whenever possible please coordinate group participation in a shared location. You may register for a session outside of your home region if your schedule requires. A recorded version will also be available through the Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice after the live sessions.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please disseminate this memorandum to all Department and Community Based Care staff involved in case management, adoptions, ACCESS Florida Child in Care, revenue maximization, legal services, quality assurance, independent living, training, and any other interested parties.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you need additional information or wish to submit a specific question regarding the “applicable child” and delinking provisions, please contact Mukweso Mwenene at 850.922-0510 or via electronic mail at Mukweso_Mwenene@dcf.state.fl.us or Becky Lyons at 850 488-4110 or via electronic mail at [Becky_Lyons @dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Becky_Lyons@dcf.state.fl.us).

Attachment: Desk Reference: De-Linking Title IV-E Maintenance Adoption Subsidy From Aid to Families with Dependent Children (Effective October 1, 2009)

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency