

SHERIFFS' CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT

JANUARY 31, 2002

*CONDUCTED BY THE BROWARD, MANATEE, PASCO, PINELLAS, AND SEMINOLE COUNTY
SHERIFFS' OFFICES
and
THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Office of Family Safety*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The 2001 Florida Legislature mandated that the Department of Children and Families submit an annual report on the performance of sheriffs' offices receiving general appropriations to provide child protective investigations. Requirements for the program performance evaluation report include the following:

- Address quality performance, outcome attainment, and cost efficiency;
- Be based upon criteria mutually agreed upon by the sheriffs and the department;
- Be conducted by a team of peer reviewers from the sheriffs' offices performing investigations and representatives from the department; and
- Be delivered to the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and the Governor by January 31 of each year [s. 39.3065(3)(d), F.S.].

The evaluation report is a collaborative effort between sheriffs' staff of Broward, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Seminole counties, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

EVALUATION PLAN AND DESIGN

The program performance evaluation questions were based upon language in s. 39.3065(3)(d), F.S. In summary, these questions are:

1. How does the quality of performance in child protective investigations compare between the sheriffs and the department on essential investigation requirements in Chapter 39, F.S.?
2. Have the sheriffs achieved the performance standards and outcomes specified in their grant agreements, as required by the General Appropriations Act and s. 39.3065(3)(b), F.S.? How does outcome attainment compare between the sheriffs and the department?
3. Are the sheriffs performing child protective investigations cost efficiently, and how do their costs compare to those of the department?

Representatives from the sheriffs' offices and the department composed the program evaluation planning team. The team selected a comparison model design. Counties in which the sheriffs' offices conduct protective investigations (review counties) were compared on the three evaluation components (quality performance, outcome attainment, and cost efficiency), to a comparison county in which the department

conducts protective investigations. Comparison counties were selected based upon proximity to the review counties on number of initial and additional reports received. Orange County was selected as the best DCF comparison county for Broward and Pinellas counties, and Escambia County was selected as the comparison county for Manatee, Seminole and Pasco counties. In Orange and Escambia counties, the department provides child protective investigations through its state employees.

QUALITY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The methodology for the quality performance component of the evaluation called for a review of case records. A statistically reliable, randomly selected sample of all initial child maltreatment cases received after April 1, 2001 and locked between July 1, 2001, through the extract date of the sample for the five sheriffs' offices and the two comparison counties was used. The sample sizes selected were designed to yield results with an error of no more than plus or minus ten percent with a confidence level of 90 percent.

The program performance evaluation was conducted by a team of peer reviewers composed of representatives from the sheriffs' offices and the department. The approach to the peer review proposed by the department and accepted by the sheriffs' representatives is one in use for several years by the Quality Assurance Unit for child protective services. The reviews of the sheriffs' offices and comparison counties occurred from October 2nd through November 15th, 2001.

Representatives from the department and all participating sheriffs' offices developed the instruments used in the peer review during the summer of 2001. The instruments included evaluation tools for the functional areas of initial response, emergency removal and placement, and program management. Also agreed upon were sampling methodology and instrument scoring procedures.

OUTCOME MEASURES AND STANDARDS

Paragraph 39.3065(3)(b), F.S., requires that the sheriffs operate, at a minimum, in accordance with the performance standards and outcome measures established by the Legislature for protective investigations conducted by the department. Three performance measures from the General Appropriations Act for the fiscal years 2000-01 and 2001-02 apply to child protective investigations and are referenced in the grant agreements with the sheriffs. The performance measures and standards used to determine outcome attainment for the sheriffs and the comparison counties are the following:

1. One hundred percent (100%) of cases completed within 60 days.
2. One hundred percent (100%) of cases commenced within 24 hours.
3. One hundred percent (100%) of cases reviewed by supervisors in accordance with department timeframes for the early warning system.

The data for the first two measures come from routine management reports produced by the department's Family Safety Program Office data unit and taken from the database of the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System. A standard reporting period of July 1, 2001 through September 30, 2001 was selected for the evaluation. The third measure (supervisory review), is not available from current automated information systems on a statewide basis and, therefore, cannot be reported.

CONCLUSIONS

QUALITY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The total scores from the quality performance review show a significant difference between the sheriffs' and the department's operations in Orange County; however, no significant difference is noted for Escambia county. All counties received a satisfactory performance rating on the quality of protective investigations.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Examining performance on outcome measures shows inconclusive results. No county achieved the mandated standard for performance on either outcome; however, there were statistically significant differences between review and comparison counties. For the first outcome, (investigations closed within 60 days), the Manatee and Seminole Sheriffs' offices performed better than the department's comparison county, Escambia. However, the Pasco Sheriff's Office performed significantly lower than its comparison county. In contrast, the two larger sheriffs counties; Broward and Pinellas, scored significantly higher than their comparison, Orange County. For the second outcome, (cases commenced within 24 hours), there was no significant difference between the sheriffs' and the department's operations.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

All counties received a superior rating in program management with the exception of Orange County which received a satisfactory rating.

Based on this review, it is apparent that the sheriffs' offices currently conducting child protective investigations in Florida are satisfactorily performing child protective investigations. These pilot projects have established themselves as proven models for providing child protective investigations into the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department of Children and Families should continue to contract with the sheriffs' offices in Manatee, Pasco, Seminole, Broward and Pinellas counties to conduct child protective investigations.
2. This Legislature accept the current sheriffs' models as a viable method of providing child protective investigative services and discontinue the requirement for annual reports to the Legislature on their progress.

3. The Department of Children and Families should continue to monitor its contracts with sheriffs' offices and their quality of performance, using mutually agreed upon evaluation instruments and methodology.
4. The Department of Children and Families should continue to report on the sheriffs' progress in achieving the legislatively mandated performance measures and targets.
5. The Department of Children and Families should continue involving representatives from the sheriffs' offices in identifying appropriate practice standards and performance measures for child protective investigations.
6. The Department of Children and Families should use the results of this year's quality performance review to identify and implement improvements for pre-service and in-service training of investigators and supervisors.

INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The 2000 Florida Legislature mandated that the Department of Children and Families submit an annual report on the performance of sheriffs' offices receiving general appropriations to provide child protective investigations. Requirements for the program performance evaluation report include the following:

- Address quality performance, outcome attainment, and cost efficiency;
- Be based upon criteria mutually agreed upon by the sheriffs and the department;
- Be conducted by a team of peer reviewers from the sheriffs' offices performing investigations and representatives from the department; and
- Be delivered to the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and the Governor by January 31 of each year [s. 39.3065(3)(d), F.S.].

The report that follows is a collaborative effort between the staffs of the Sheriffs of Broward, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Seminole counties and the Department of Children and Families. At the time of the performance reviews, the sheriffs' offices had assumed child protective investigations for the following lengths of time:

- Manatee Sheriff's Office 4 years, 5 months
- Pinellas Sheriff's Office 24 months
- Broward Sheriff's Office 22 months
- Pasco Sheriff's Office 20 months
- Seminole Sheriff's Office 7 months

HISTORY OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF SHERIFFS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS IN FLORIDA

The Manatee County Sheriff's Office began conducting investigations of serious cases of child maltreatment in February 1997, under legislation passed in 1993. This legislation allowed the department to enter into agreements, within existing resources, with county sheriffs' offices or local police departments to assume the lead in conducting criminal investigations of child maltreatment, as well as partial or full responsibility for conducting certain components of child protective investigations.

Legislation passed during the 1998 legislative session required the department to transfer the responsibility for all child protective investigations in Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas counties to the sheriffs' offices by July 1999. The legislation permits the sheriff to subcontract with other law enforcement officials or private agencies to conduct investigations of child neglect cases. The 1999 Legislature added the Broward County Sheriff's Office to those sheriffs authorized to conduct child protective investigations.

During the 2000 legislative session, child protective investigations in Seminole County were transferred to the sheriff's office beginning in fiscal year 2000-01. The Legislature also authorized the department to enter into grant agreements with other sheriffs to perform child protective investigations in their respective counties.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PLAN AND DESIGN

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The program performance evaluation questions were based upon language in s. 39.3065(3)(d), F.S. In summary, these questions are:

1. How does the quality of performance in child protective investigations compare between the sheriffs and the department on essential investigation requirements in Chapter 39, F.S.?
2. Have the sheriffs achieved the performance standards and outcomes specified in their grant agreements, as required by the General Appropriations Act and s. 39.3065(3)(b), F.S.? How does outcome attainment compare between the sheriffs and the department?
3. Are the sheriffs performing child protective investigations cost efficiently, and how do their costs compare to those of the department?

DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVALUATION DESIGN AND PLAN

Representatives from the department and all participating sheriffs' offices developed the instruments used in the peer review during the summer of 2001. The instruments included evaluation tools for the functional areas of initial response, emergency removal and placement, and program management. Also agreed upon were sampling methodology and instrument scoring procedures.

COMPARISON DESIGN AND COUNTIES

The program evaluation planning team selected a comparison model design. Counties in which the sheriffs' offices conduct protective investigations (review counties) were compared on the evaluation components (quality performance, outcome attainment, program management and cost efficiency) to a comparison county in which the department conducts protective investigations. Comparison counties were selected based upon proximity to the review counties on the number of initial and additional investigations received for fiscal year 2000-2001.

**Initial Abuse/Neglect Reports for Children
(FY2000-01)**

County	# of Reports	% Difference
Broward	12,376	
Pinellas	7,725	
(Average)	10,051	
Orange	9,940	1.11%
Pasco	3,356	
Manatee	2,840	
Seminole	2,645	
(Average)	2,947	
Escambia	3,158	7.16%

The mean scores for Broward and Pinellas counties and the mean scores for Pasco, Seminole and Manatee counties on the one variable were compared against scores of candidate counties. The absolute percentage difference between candidates and the review county mean was summed for each county. The county with the smallest total percentage difference across the variable from the mean of the review counties was selected for the comparison. Orange County was selected as the best comparison county for Broward and Pinellas counties, and Escambia County was selected as the best comparison county for Manatee, Seminole and Pasco counties. In Orange and Escambia counties, the department provides child protective investigations through its state employees.

SAMPLING METHODOLOGY AND SIZE

The methodology for the quality performance component of the evaluation called for a review of case records. A statistically reliable, randomly-selected sample of all initial child maltreatment cases received after April 1, 2001 and locked between July 1, 2001, through the extract date of the samples (September 4 and October 4, 2001) was drawn for the five sheriffs' offices and the two comparison counties. Extending the sampling period as close to the review date as possible was necessary to ensure that each sheriff's office had a sufficient number of cases referred, investigated, and locked from which to draw a reliable sample. The definition of a locked report, as used in this performance evaluation,

is an investigation that has been completed, reviewed, signed by the investigator and supervisor, and closed in the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System.

The sample sizes selected were designed to yield results with an error of no more than plus or minus ten percent with a confidence level of 90 percent. (The confidence level and error rate selected means that if 100 samples of the selected sample size were drawn from the total population of cases in an agency, in 90 of these samples the sample mean will be within ten percent of the population mean). The samples were randomly drawn from the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System database 30 days before each review, and are illustrated in the chart that follows:

County	Estimated Initial Reports Locked April 1 to October 4	Number of Cases Reviewed	Estimated Percent Error at 90% Confidence Level
Manatee	1,200	64	10
Pasco	1,100	64	10
Seminole	1,000	63	10
Escambia	1,738	65	10
Broward	4,000	67	10
Pinellas	2,800	66	10
Orange	5,408	66	10.10

QUALITY PERFORMANCE

PEER REVIEW TEAMS

Paragraph 39.3065(3)(d), F.S., requires that the program performance evaluation be conducted by a team of peer reviewers composed of representatives from the sheriffs' offices and the department. The approach to the peer review proposed by the department and accepted by the sheriffs' representatives is one in use for several years by the Quality Assurance Unit for child protective services. The case review instruments used by the Quality Assurance Unit were modified for this evaluation and included a program management instrument. The peer review process used by the Quality Assurance Unit is based upon similar procedures used by national accreditation organizations.

The definition of peer, as used in this performance evaluation, means sheriffs and department personnel who perform protective investigations and their respective quality assurance personnel, where applicable. The criteria established for peer reviewers included experience in child protective investigations; certification or, minimally, completion of child protective investigative training; supervisory level staff or above, or a staff member of the department's Quality Assurance Unit. Peer review teams ranged in size from eight members for smaller counties to nine or ten members for larger counties.

The quality performance peer review teams were organized to reflect equal membership between the review parties, including a designated co-lead. The peer review team did not have any responsibility to collect and analyze cost data for the cost efficiency component of the evaluation.

REVIEW INSTRUMENTS

Case Review

Peer reviewers assessed case files individually, on-site, using case review instruments modified for this evaluation by representatives of the department and the respective sheriffs' offices. The case review instruments address the statutory requirements for the investigator's initial response to the report of alleged child maltreatment and the emergency removal and placement of children, if this occurred. The instruments contain a number of statements or questions that address indicators used to determine how well essential steps in the investigation have been achieved. Indicators cover such areas as thoroughness of background checks, timeliness of investigations, and thoroughness of child safety assessments. In all, 18 indicators compose the initial response review form. Five indicators compose the emergency removal and placement review form.

Program Management

Representatives from the Peer Review Team rated the Department of Children and Families and each sheriff's office for program management based on an instrument that was developed by all agencies. Each program was rated according to how effectively the program was implemented and directed.

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE

To assess performance, the reviewers used a ten-point numeric scale to rate each indicator. The scale may be divided into performance categories where nine represents the highest performance possible and zero the lowest. The performance categories are as follows:

- Superior Performance (8,9)
- Satisfactory Performance (5,6,7)
- Partial Performance (2,3,4)
- Non-Performance (0,1)

Each team member determined the performance rating on each indicator. Overall performance was then based upon the sum of the indicator scores divided by the maximum possible score to produce a percentage. Using the performance categories, the derived percentages translate into the following performance levels:

- Superior Performance 89% -- 100%
- Satisfactory Performance 55% -- 88%
- Partial Performance 22% -- 54%
- Non-Performance 0% -- 21%

OUTCOME MEASURES ATTAINMENT

MEASURES AND STANDARDS

Paragraph 39.3065(3)(b), F.S., requires that the sheriffs operate, at a minimum, in accordance with the performance standards and outcome measures established by the Legislature for protective investigations conducted by the department. Three performance measures from the General Appropriations Act for the fiscal years 2000-01 and 2001-02 apply to child protective investigations. The performance measures and standards used to determine outcome attainment for the sheriffs and the comparison counties for fiscal year 2001-2002 follow:

1. One hundred percent (100%) of cases completed within 60 days.
2. One hundred percent (100%) of cases commenced within 24 hours.
3. One hundred percent (100%) of cases reviewed by supervisors in accordance with department timeframes for the early warning system.

SOURCES OF DATA AND ANALYSIS METHODS

The data for the first two measures come from routine management reports produced by the data unit at the department's Family Safety Program Office from the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System database. These data reports specifically list each sheriff's office as a protective investigation program. A reporting period of July 1, 2001 through September 30, 2001 was selected for several reasons:

- The reporting period coincides with the sampling period for the quality performance review.
- The reporting period adjusts for the variance in implementation dates for the sheriffs.
- The reporting period ensures a sufficient number of cases upon which to calculate outcome performance.

The third measure, supervisory review, is not available from current automated information systems on a statewide basis and, therefore, cannot be reported.

The algorithms for calculating the outcome measures are those established by the department in consultation with the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget as well as the substantive and appropriation committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction for the department and are:

- The first performance measure (cases closed within 60 days), the numerator is the number of child protective investigations received during the period where the investigation completed date is within 60 days of the received date. The denominator is the total number of child protective investigations received during the same period as the numerator.
- The second performance measure (cases commenced within 24 hours), numerator, is the number of cases commenced within 24 hours of receipt of the report. The denominator is the total number of cases received.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

A descriptive analysis for all sheriffs except for Seminole was provided to the Legislature in the 2000-2001 report. A descriptive analysis has been included for Seminole County in this section. This year's report has the same review sites with the exception of Orange and Escambia counties, which replaced Hillsborough and Marion as comparison counties respectively. Each DCF (county) program is based on the same standards and procedures required by the department for all counties.

A review of program operating procedures, equipment and on-site operations was conducted during each review. The counties provided general descriptive information at the time of each review for comparison and analysis.

County	# Investigators with Case	# Other (leave,	# Vacancies	# Active Cases	# Avg. cases per month	# Initial and Additional
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	loads at review	training etc.)		at review	per investigator	Reports Rec'd Apr - Sept 2001
Manatee	15	4	3	799	18.8	1,693
Pasco	22	5	3	2,527	16.5	2,176
Seminole	20	2	2	533	12.9	1,544
Escambia	28	0	1	951	12.8	2,150
Broward	91	4	5	2,724	13.6	7,454
Pinellas	58	12	2	1,990	14.0	4,886
Orange	69	6	4	7,357	14.7	6,068

SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The quality performance peer review was conducted from October 15, 2001 through October 18, 2001. The Seminole County Sheriff's Office assumed the responsibility for conducting all child protective investigations in Seminole County on March 1, 2001. Although not obligated to participate in this year's review, (guidelines were set to review new programs after one year) the Seminole County Sheriff's Office elected to be reviewed.

The Child Protective Services (CPS) Division consists of four investigative units. They are staffed with 24 protective investigators who are supervised by two sworn (sergeants) and two non-sworn supervisors. The division is managed by a captain and a lieutenant and supported by four data analysts, three clerical/secretarial staff, two child service aides, one family services specialist, an information services support technician, and a human resources assistant.

At the time of program inception, two key component positions were included in our hiring process; the quality assurance administrator and a training coordinator. The quality assurance administrator has been instrumental in the development and refinement process of the peer review instrument used in this year's review. He is responsible for quality assurance initiatives that track and monitor performance measures to ensure division personnel achieve statutory compliance. The division's training coordinator is a Professional Development Center certified trainer responsible for planning and coordinating all training for the CPS Division. She participates in course development and delivery of classroom or field training, monitoring, and assists all new hires with the completion of the Professional Development Center pre-service training program. Additionally, she has been certified by the Professional Development Center as an instructor in HomeSafenet.

The sheriff's office has an analytical unit that is responsible for case receipt, assignment, and case file production to include FCIC/NCIC checks, local criminal checks, acquisition of all prior police reports, 911 and police service-related calls, mapping and FAHIS priors. The analytical unit provides this information to the protective investigator prior to case

commencement. Also included within the division, but not grant funded, is the criminal investigation unit comprised of six sworn investigators who are supervised by a sergeant.

The Child Protective Services Division is centrally located within the main Seminole County Sheriff's Office complex. Seminole County is 344 square miles with a total population of 365,196. Within the county there are seven municipalities, each with its own police department. There is a current Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all municipal police chiefs to conduct joint initial responses at the commencement of each abuse investigation.

Protective services, foster care and adoptions are still provided by the Department of Children and Families. Child Welfare Legal Services provides legal representation in cases of dependency.

Sheriff's employees are provided with civilian or standard uniforms and a variety of equipment to aid in their job performance.

1. Midsize sedans for investigators and vans for child service aides;
2. Wireless laptop computers with intranet and internet capabilities;
3. Fully functional "police" two-way radios equipped with emergency response button;
4. Cellular telephones;
5. Alpha-numeric pagers with message displays;
6. Voice mail for office telephones;
7. A digital camera for each investigator;
8. A tape recorder for each investigator;
9. Desk top computers with intranet and internet capabilities;
10. Laser printer for each two investigators; and
11. Infant and toddler car seats

Employment screening for protective investigators and supervisors include background checks, neighbor contacts, criminal history checks, driver's license checks, drug screening, physicals, and Computer Voice Stress Analysis. Investigators and supervisors complete the child protective investigator training provided by the Professional Development Center. Additional training is provided by the Seminole County Sheriff's Office in driver safety, interview techniques, evidence collection and preservation, human diversity, and computer skills.

FINDINGS

QUALITY PERFORMANCE

Teams of peer reviewers from the department and the sheriffs' offices conducted the quality performance reviews from October 2, through November 15, 2001. A summary of the performance findings is presented in the table below. The true percentages, if all cases rather than samples had been used, can be assumed with confidence to fall

somewhere within plus or minus ten percent at the 90 percent confidence level. Based upon the confidence level and estimated error rate established by the sampling methodology, there is no statistically significant difference between the department's comparison counties and the sheriffs' offices in the quality of performing child protective investigations, with the exception of the comparison county of Orange in the area of initial response.

Peer Review Results

County	Initial Response	Emergency Removal and Placement	Program Management	Overall Performance
Manatee	85.63% 6705/7830	89.58% 113/126	99.30% 429/432	Superior
Pasco	83.43% 6225/7461	88.88% 24/27	98.84% 427/432	Superior
Seminole	83.70% 6027/7200	N/A	99.53% 430/432	Superior
Escambia DCF	82.40% 6267/7605	90.74% 147/162	95.13% 411/432	Superior
Broward	83.57% 6461/7731	91.26% 115/126	100% 432/432	Superior
Pinellas	85.18% 6938/8145	90.66% 99/108	99.30% 429/432	Superior
Orange DCF	72.39% 5460/7542	84.84% 84/89	88.19% 381/432	Satisfactory

No significant differences found at $p < .10$ except for Orange County, (I.R).

MANATEE COUNTY

Overall, the sheriff's office received a superior performance rating. For initial response to maltreatment reports, the sheriff's office received 85.63 percent for a satisfactory rating. For emergency removal and placement, a score of 89.58 percent was received for a superior performance rating. For program management, a score of 99.30 percent was received for a superior achievement rating.

Summarized observations of the review team pertaining to performance follow:

Areas of Best Performance:

- The *Initial Child Safety Assessments* contained sufficient information and were updated at case closure or as new information was received.

- Victims were contacted within 24 hours. In most cases, victims were seen within the first several hours of the receipt of the report.
- Interviews were completed with victims in the report.
- Supervisors completed and documented case reviews.
- Other children in the household were seen by the investigator and in a timely manner.
- Relevant collateral contacts were documented in the files.
- Emergency removal and placement cases were well documented, alternatives to shelter placement were appropriate and services in place, where needed.
- Program management success is augmented by investigators being issued Manatee County Sheriff's vehicles, uniforms, Nextel direct connect telephones, pagers, digital cameras, as well as Dell laptop computers.
- Backlog reduction implementation plans have significantly reduced backlog.
- The 2nd party review process is being used to enhance casework within the section, and has given supervisors an opportunity for further review.
- Criminal checks are run from within the unit, and two-way communications with law enforcement and road deputies is readily available.
- Access to the detectives is also available on a daily basis through direct contact with the Crimes Against Children Unit, also housed in the same building as the Child Protection Units.
- Weekly meetings are held with all supervisors in Child Protective Investigations and include law enforcement Crimes Against Children Sergeants to collaborate on cases and practices.

Areas Needing Improvement:

Overall, the sheriff performed well in most areas. The *Initial Child Safety Assessment* should be updated prior to case closure with information that was not available in the early investigative stages.

PASCO COUNTY

Overall, the sheriff's office received a superior performance rating. For initial response to maltreatment reports, the sheriff's office received 83.43 percent for a satisfactory performance rating. For emergency removal and placement, a score of 88.88 percent was received for a satisfactory performance rating. For program management, a score of 98.84 percent was achieved for a superior rating.

Summarized observations made by the review team on performance follow:

Areas of Best Performance:

- Appropriate guidance and direction was documented by the supervisor and followed through by the investigators.

- When supervisors 'guidance and direction' was not required or followed by the investigators prior to locking the case, the supervisors would note the reasons this did not occur in the case file.
- Interviews with subjects of the reports were thorough and well documented.
- Victims were being contacted within 24 hours.
- Background checks were obtained in a timely manner.
- Relevant collateral contacts were made in a timely manner.
- Referrals to the Child Protection Team were completed, when mandated by statute.
- Investigators consistently demonstrated appropriate decision making as evidenced in the case file.
- Significant strides were made to reduce the backlog through efforts of the sheriff's staff and the Florida Task Force.
- There was documentation of frequent communication between sheriff's staff and Suncoast Region personnel.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- The *Initial Child Safety Assessment* form was completed with thoroughness; however, it was not always submitted timely for review.
- Communication and collaboration with service providers needs improvement. It should be noted that this area only pertained to seven percent of the sample size.

SEMINOLE COUNTY

Overall, the sheriff's office received a superior performance rating. For initial response to maltreatment reports, the sheriff's office received 83.70 percent for a satisfactory rating. For emergency removal and placement, no rating was assigned because there were no judicial cases available in the sample. For program management, a score of 99.53 percent was received for a superior rating. It should be noted that the Seminole Sheriff's department has only been handling cases on a full time basis for less than one year, but voluntarily offered to be part of the review process.

Summarized observations made by the review team on performance follow:

Areas of Best Performance:

- The Seminole County Sheriff's Office was one of the highest rated areas in the state for seeing victims timely.
- The files were found to be extremely well organized, through the use of type written notes and color coded labels to section the files.

- The Seminole County Sheriff's Office received recognition by Quality Assurance in Tallahassee that they were the "best in the state" for the month of June 2001, in the timely commencement of cases.
- The Sheriff's office analytical unit was noted to provide complete criminal and FAHIS background information to the investigator prior to case commencement.
- Supervisory reviews were seen to be completed and well-documented in case files and on risk assessments.
- The case files were further enhanced by the presence of digital photographs that documented observations during the investigative process aiding in both verifying as well as refuting allegations.
- The sheriff's office was also noted to be proactive and innovative in their approach to backlog reduction, by showing evidence of constant supervisory monitoring and division-wide support through case "locking parties", to assist all investigators with case closure.

Areas Needing Improvement:

The *Initial Child Safety Assessments* were lacking sufficient information that would contribute to a thorough investigation. Often information that was gathered during the investigation was not updated on the risk assessment.

**ESCAMBIA COUNTY**

Overall, The department-operated comparison county received a superior performance rating. For the initial response to maltreatment reports, the county received 82.40 percent for a satisfactory rating. For emergency removal and placement, a score of 90.74 percent was received for a superior rating. For program management, a score of 95.13 percent was received for a superior rating.

Summarized observations by the review team follow:

Areas of Best Performance:

- The majority of the initial contacts with the victims were within 24 hours.
- Interviews with all victim children were completed timely.
- Documentation with adult subjects was completed.
- Case staffing with Child Welfare Legal Services was appropriate and timely.
- Supervisory reviews were documented in the files.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- The *Initial Child Safety Assessment* was completed, in most cases, in a timely manner. However, appropriate documentation and updated information were often lacking in the assessment.

- Completion of timely background checks needs improvement.
- Second Party Reviews were not always documented on the initial child safety assessment when criteria warranted that one be completed. Documentation should be clear and concise, with appropriate guidance and direction given.

BROWARD COUNTY

Overall, the sheriff's office received a superior performance rating. For initial response to maltreatment reports, the sheriff's office received 83.57 percent for a satisfactory rating. For emergency removal and placement, a score of 91.26 percent was received for a superior rating. For program management, a score of 100 percent was received for a superior rating.

Summarized observations made by the review team on performance follow:

Areas of Best Performance:

- The Broward Sheriff's Office utilizes an innovative management tool called *Powertrac* which requires the child protective investigations management staff to report every six weeks, in person, on all relevant performance indicators to senior management, including the sheriff.
- During calendar year 2001, the Broward Sheriff's Office reduced its number of backlog cases by 87 percent.
- Time frames for child safety assessments were routinely met.
- Adult subjects were interviewed in timely manner.
- Background checks were routinely completed early in the investigation.
- Almost every investigation had exemplary documentation of observations of children.
- Use of statutorily required voluntary services such as the Family Builders program has significantly increased under the sheriff.
- Supervisors routinely reviewed cases within statutory time frames providing an effective "early warning system".
- Supervisors routinely provided appropriate guidance and direction.
- Investigators routinely made appropriate referrals for services.
- Investigators routinely made appropriate investigative decisions.
- In almost all cases, investigators followed up on supervisory guidance.
- Emergency removal and placement cases were well documented, alternatives to shelter placement were appropriate, and services were in place when needed.

Areas Needing Improvement:

The Broward Sheriff's Office could improve by making additional collateral contacts and by including more explanatory comments in the child safety assessment. With respect to

the Child Protection Team, improvement could be achieved by fully documenting all referrals and by explaining those decisions to not follow Child Protection Team recommendations.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Overall, the sheriff's office received a superior performance rating. For the initial response to maltreatment reports, the sheriff's office received 85.18 percent for a satisfactory rating. For emergency removal and placement, a score of 90.66 percent was received for a superior rating. For program management, a score of 99.30 percent was received for a superior rating.

Summarized observations by the quality performance review team follow:

Areas of Best Performance:

- The strongest area of performance was "victims seen within 24 hours".
- Second strongest area was excellent documentation of interviews with adult subjects.
- Second party reviews were completed and well documented.
- Relevant collateral contacts were made timely.
- Appropriate referrals were made to the Child Protection Team.
- A strong area of performance was the supervisory reviews.
- Backlog was reduced by over 65 percent, through November 2001, during calendar year 2001.
- A three-member unit of child protective investigators handles "Out-of-town-inquiries," and "Homestudies," to help ensure prompt attention to requests from other agencies.
- A seven-member unit, comprised of six part-time former CPIs and/or retired law enforcement investigators, and one full time CPI supervisor, assist investigative units in backlog reduction.
- A fully developed "Field Training" mentoring program assures that all CPI trainees are evaluated, based on observable behaviors, and ensures trainees demonstrate proficiency before an incremental assignment of more cases per week occurs.
- To help ensure cases are properly investigated, the Child Protection Administrator conducts annual quality-assurance reviews of randomly selected closed cases of each investigator.
- A full-time "diligent search analyst" assists investigators by conducting thorough diligent searches for parents.

Areas Needing Improvement

Safety assessments need improvement. Although the content of the *Initial Child Safety Assessments* was for the most part, thorough, the timeliness for completing the form should be improved. Some assessments lacked information that would lead to an appropriate service referral.

ORANGE COUNTY

Overall, the department-operated comparison county received a satisfactory performance rating. For the initial response to the maltreatment report, a score of 72.39 percent was received for a satisfactory rating. This was significantly below the average of the other counties reviewed. For emergency removal and placement, a score of 84.84 percent was received for a satisfactory rating. For program management a score of 88.19 percent was received for a satisfactory rating.

Summarized observations of the quality performance review team follow:

Areas of Best Performance:

- Orange County completed the *Initial Child Safety Assessment* in a thorough and productive manner. Information included in the assessment allowed the investigator to assess the risk and safety factors in the home.
- Supervisor reviews were completed in most cases and included appropriate guidance and direction for investigators.
- Prior to case closure, files were updated with all required documentation.

Areas Needing Improvement:

- Additional collateral contacts with neighbors, schools, and professionals who could give information to corroborate or refute the allegations were not always made.
- Supervisor reviews were not always completed timely.
- Background checks were not always completed timely.

OUTCOME MEASURES ATTAINMENT

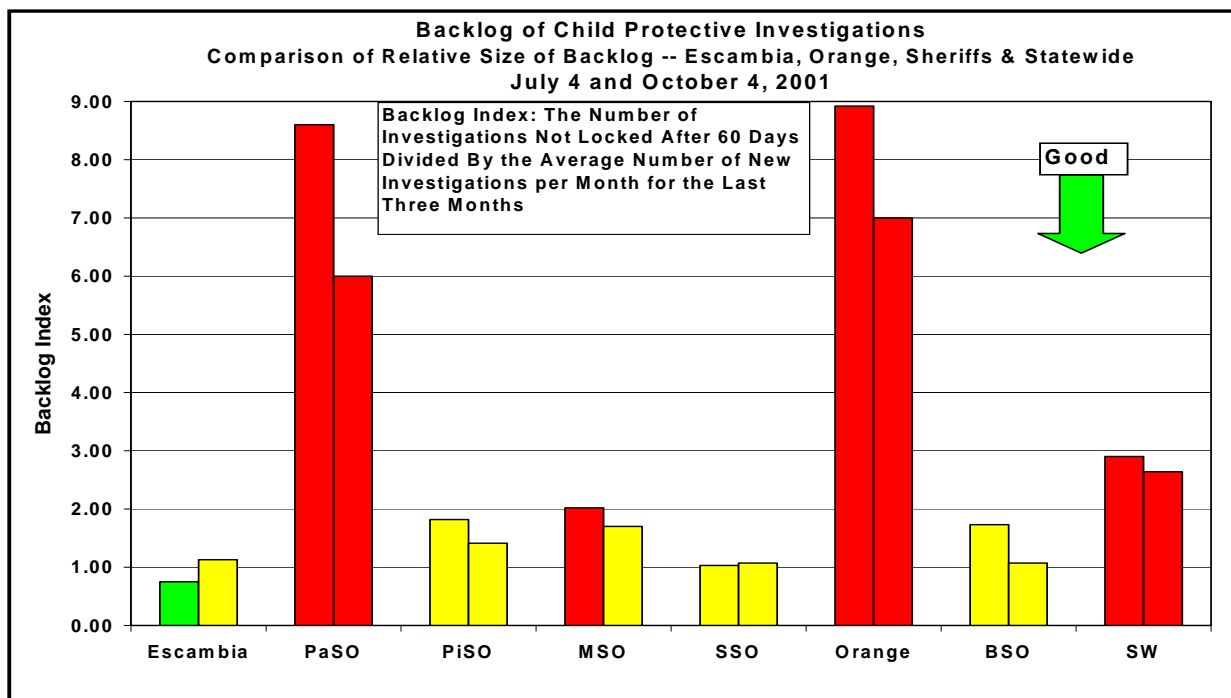
Outcome data below were from a July – September 2001 Florida Abuse Hotline Information System (FAHIS) database report. Supporting data presented in the tables below were derived from department management reports and are also based upon the Florida Abuse Hotline Information System database. Comparisons are made between each sheriff's office and its department control county by means of confidence intervals for proportions.

**Outcome 1: Percent of Cases Completed within 60 Days
(July-September 2001)**

County	Percent Completed
Manatee	49.1%
Pasco	19.3%
Seminole	51.6%
Escambia	29.87%
Broward	61.7%
Pinellas	51.6%
Orange	18.86%

(P < .001) on this measure.

With regard to the measure (investigations completed within 60 days), the small counties of Seminole and Manatee were significantly above the percentage score for Escambia ($p < .01$), while Pasco was significantly below Escambia's percent ($P < .05$). The two larger counties, Broward and Pinellas, were significantly above its department control, Orange County.



Backlogged cases, (those cases open for more than 60 days), are the inverse of completed cases and may result from a variety of factors: the number of vacant positions, the number of experienced investigators, the number of judicial cases, an increased number of reports and the rate of that increase. Collectively, the backlog in calendar year 2001 has been significantly reduced by some 20,000 cases statewide. The sheriffs' offices have been instrumental in contributing to this backlog reduction effort.

Outcome 2: Percent of Cases Commenced within 24 Hours (July – September 2001)

County	% Commenced within 24 hours
Manatee	96.7% ¹
Pasco	98.3%
Seminole	96.4%
Escambia	98.2%
Broward	98.8%
Pinellas	98.6%
Orange	96.2%

¹ p<.0001

Examining the performance on outcome measures indicates a high level of achievement on the commencement of cases within 24 hours. Although no county achieved the

mandated standard of 100 percent, it can be argued that circumstances in the field may never permit 100 percent attainment.

With regard to the percentage of investigations closed within 60 days, no agency achieved the mandated standard of 100 percent. It must, however, be noted that during this evaluation period, a considerable portion of available man-hours has been dedicated to reducing the number of older backlog cases. As this backlog is reduced, we expect fewer man-hours committed to older cases and a concurrent improvement in the number of new cases closed within 60 days. There were, however, some disparities among counties. Seminole and Manatee scored significantly higher than Escambia, their comparison county. Pasco scored significantly below Escambia. Broward and Pinellas scored significantly higher than Orange County, their comparison county.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Program Management Performances

County	Percent
Manatee	99.31
Pasco	98.84
Seminole	99.54
Escambia DCF	95.14
Broward	100
Pinellas	99.31
Orange DCF	88.19

Each peer review site was evaluated on their level of performance for each of 24 specific program management criterion. These criteria addressed training, communications, transportation, backlog reduction, victim and perpetrator contacts, 24-hour operations, working agreements with law enforcement, internal management practices, operating procedures, agency goals and objectives, personnel standards, use of voluntary services and other relevant program management activities. Each site reviewed scored a superior rating in their ability to implement and direct their respective programs, with the exception of Orange which missed a superior rating by less than 9/10 of a percentage point. In addition, Broward County Sheriff's Office scored a perfect 100 percent.

COST EFFICIENCY

In contrast to the peer review process, no on-site visits were made or meetings held to compile data and complete this section of the report. The Department of Children and Families hired Competitive Government Strategies, LLC to complete an Activity Based Costing Analysis to determine the cost for directly providing these services using

department employees. Because the sheriffs' program models differ from the state (i.e., contractually sheriffs are not responsible for providing care and subsistence, follow-up services, and statewide overhead), the per-unit cost established by Competitive Government Strategies was adjusted to best approach a comparison for the costs for each agency.

It is acknowledged that the Legislature contemplated and the sheriffs required a better-resourced program at the inception of these projects and were funded to include operational enhancements such as analytical teams, laptop computers, vehicles and sworn staff.

The following table illustrates the cost comparison between services. Seminole County is not included as the period shown was transitional for their program. Department of Children and Families operations for Escambia and Orange counties were not available.

**Cost per Investigation
(July – December 2000)**

Agency	Cost per Unit
Pinellas	\$793.58
Pasco	\$761.13
Broward	\$743.19
Manatee	\$618.86
Seminole	NA
Sheriffs Avg:	\$746.90*
DCF Avg:	\$635.51**

* Based on the total contract amount for the period of July – December 2000 divided by the number of new initial and additional reports received during the same period.

** Based on the Activity Based Costing Analysis performed by Competitive Government Strategies, LLC for the period July – December 2000. The cost per unit figure has been adjusted to not include costs associated with care and subsistence, follow-up services and statewide overhead. These costs have been removed to best approach a comparison between the different program models.

CONCLUSIONS

Peer Review Results and Outcome Measures

County	Initial response	Removal and Placement	Program Management	Outcome #1 % Closed within 60 Days	Outcome #2 Commenced within 24 Hours
Manatee	85.63%	89.58%	99.30%	49.1%	96.7%
Pasco	83.43%	88.88%	98.84%	19.3%	98.3%
Seminole	83.70%	N/A	99.53%	51.6	96.4%
Escambia	82.40%	90.74%	95.13%	29.87%	98.2%
Broward	83.57%	91.26%	100%	61.7%	98.8%
Pinellas	85.18%	91.66%	99.30%	51.6%	98.6%
Orange	72.39%	84.84%	88.19%	18.86%	96.22%

Based on this review, it is apparent that the sheriffs' offices currently conducting child protective investigations in Florida are satisfactorily performing child protective investigations. These pilot projects have established themselves as proven models for providing child protective investigations into the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department of Children and Families should continue to contract with the sheriffs' offices in Manatee, Pasco, Seminole, Broward and Pinellas counties to conduct child protective investigations.
2. This Legislature should accept the current sheriffs' models as a viable method of providing child protective investigative services and discontinue the requirement for annual reports to the Legislature on their progress.
3. The Department of Children and Families should continue to monitor its contracts with sheriffs' offices and their quality of performance, using mutually agreed upon evaluation instruments and methodology.
4. The Department of Children and Families should continue to report on the sheriffs' progress in achieving the legislatively mandated performance measures and targets.
5. The Department of Children and Families should continue involving representatives from the sheriffs' offices in identifying appropriate practice standards and performance measures for child protective investigations.
6. The Department of Children and Families should use the results of this year's quality performance review to identify and implement improvements for pre-service and in-service training of investigators and supervisors.

BROWARD SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSE TO PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	A
PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSE TO PROGRAM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION	B
SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO PROGRAM EVALUATION	C