I. Introduction
The Southeast Region includes Circuit 15 (Palm Beach County) and Circuit 17 (Broward County). In Circuit 17 Child Protective Investigations are conducted by the Broward Sheriff’s Office under a grant from the Florida Legislature. The Sheriff’s Office is not required to submit a Quality Assurance Plan.

In Circuit 15, Department of Children and Families staff conduct Child Protective Investigations. There are 15 Child Protective Investigations units in the county with one new unit in the process of being created. During 2008-2009 substantial program redesign occurred and “hoteling” was implemented. All unit supervisors are co-located in the Circuit headquarters facility. One child protective unit is designated as the Receiving Unit. All but three protective investigators and the supervisor were deployed to other units and this unit was staffed with administrative support personnel. This unit accepts all Palm Beach County abuse/neglect reports, completes the required background checks, prepares files and assigns the cases. This unit is also responsible for completing the initial review of the Prevention reports as received from the Florida Abuse Hotline. Belle Glade, in the western portion of the county, has one investigative unit and was not centralized due to geographical constraints. Three Program Operations Administrators (POA’s) provide guidance and support to the unit supervisors.

Circuit 15 is one of the areas of the state to keep Child Protective Investigations Specialists despite programmatic cutbacks. Currently there are three Circuit specialists, two who support the investigative units’ programmatic needs and one who serves as a Data Analyst. There is also a Regional Child Protective Investigations Specialist who interfaces with staff and the other specialists in both Circuit 15 and 17 and also serves as Data Analyst. Administrators, specialists and supervisors participated with Regional Quality Assurance in the development of the original plan.

II. Mentoring and Modeling Quality Child Protective Investigations (Supervisory Qualitative Discussions)

The Mentoring and Modeling process has been implemented within the Circuit.

1. Selection Process:
   Supervisors will randomly select 3 cases per Child Protective Investigator (CPI) each month and have a face-to-face supervisory discussion regarding an investigation.
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Supervisors will be encouraged to distribute the supervisory discussions throughout the month. For instance, if a supervisor has 6 investigators (the norm in Circuit 15) in the unit she/he will be asked to complete one case per CPI during the first part of the month, another case for each CPI the middle of the month and the third case per CPI toward the end of the month. This will assist with workload issues while discussing investigations that occur at different points in time during the month.

2. Review Process:
Training on the Mentoring and Modeling process will be provided to new CPI unit supervisors by the Regional CPI Specialist who has completed the statewide train-the trainer process. On-going technical assistance to supervisors on the mentoring and modeling process is provided by the CPI specialists as well as Quality Assurance staff.

The supervisors will meet with all new unit investigators, prior to beginning the process of supervisory discussions, and provide a copy of “Mentoring and Modeling Quality Discussion Guide.” The investigators will be responsible for familiarizing themselves with the practice areas that will be discussed. There is no expectation that the protective investigators complete any documentation on the guide in preparation for the meeting, only come prepared to discuss their investigations.

The supervisor will complete the Initial Child Safety Assessment review prior to meeting with the protective investigator for the face-to-face discussion utilizing the “Mentoring and Modeling Quality Discussion Guide.” The face-to-face review should occur within the first week after review of the Initial Child Safety Assessment. This will enable the CPI to follow-up with supervisory directions in a timely manner resulting in a thorough investigation and closure within 60 days.

The supervisor will use the guide as a visual cue to ensure all relevant practice areas are addressed. As the discussion progresses, the supervisor will enter a summary of the discussion into FSFN. As the investigation progresses, the protective investigators will be able to review the documentation in FSFN to refresh their memory on pending issues.
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3. Tracking Log:
The Circuit developed a supervisory discussion tracking log using
Microsoft Excel. Each workbook covers one quarter within the fiscal year.
Each supervisor is assigned a worksheet in the workbook. This log is
placed on a share drive that is accessible to all supervisors and Circuit
/Regional Administration. As supervisors complete their discussions they
will enter the following information into the log within 24 hours of
completing the discussion:
- Investigation number and child’s last name;
- Unit number;
- CPI name;
- Date of review;
- Issue needing follow up and date for completion; and,
- Date follow-up completed.

In order to track trends identified by the supervisor during their
discussions, a comments section is provided to enter brief notes.
Comments could be in reference to observations about the case in
general or issues surrounding the investigator’s work. For instance, prior
investigation or Community Based Care (CBC) services closed just prior
to receipt of the current investigation; specific guidance provided to the
investigator related to observations of the home environment or
interactions with the children; etc.

4. Validation:
Circuit and Regional Protective Investigations Specialists and Regional
Quality Assurance Specialists will share the validation process. After each
month’s supervisory discussions are completed the specialists will equally
divide the supervisors and sample one case per supervisor to assess the
thoroughness and appropriateness of the documented discussion. If any
major issues arise regarding the thoroughness of the discussion, content
discussed or quality of documentation an additional investigation may be
sampled. Prior to the onset of the validation process, the specialists will
meet to discuss the expectations for the review to ensure inter-rater
reliability during the validation. Each validation will be documented in a
brief narrative describing the strengths and opportunities for improvement
identified. Validation review assessments are documented by the case
name in the Excel workbook.
5. Quality Improvement:
Subsequent to completing the validation review, each specialist will contact the supervisors for whom they completed the validation, discuss with them the validation findings for their case, and provide them with the strengths and opportunities for improvement identified. If training is needed on global trends and issues, the Circuit specialists will provide this at monthly supervisory meetings.

6. Reassessment:
Specialists completing the validation reviews will meet periodically to assess the process and recommend modifications if necessary.

7. Reporting:
A verbal report of findings and progress will be provided to Circuit Administration upon request.

III. Regional Comprehensive Child Protective Investigations Reviews
Semi-annual Child Protective Investigation Reviews will be conducted during FY 2010-2011. The reviews are currently planned to occur in September 2010 and March 2011.

**Review Activities:** One Regional Quality Assurance Specialist will be assigned to lead each review. Reviewers will be selected from a pool of trained and certified Regional and Circuit Family Safety Program Office staff. The number of reviewers participating may vary based on the number of cases being reviewed.

The Quality Assurance lead reviewer will query the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) for a list of investigations closed within 60 days of the 30 days preceding the on-site review. “No Jurisdiction,” “Special Conditions,” and Institutional Abuse investigations will be eliminated from the universe of cases. The state sample size calculator will be used to establish the number of cases needed to reach a 90% confidence level with a 10% confidence interval. This means statistically, the review finding, give or take 10 percentage points, should be the same in 90% of all investigations conducted in the same time period. The number of investigations meeting the 90/10 sample size will be divided in half. The review lead will randomly select the cases for review but must ensure each investigative unit is represented in the sample and the number/percentage of shelter cases required by Headquarters is represented in the sample. Emergency Removal cases will be included as part of the sample based on statewide requirements. The lead will also identify one
additional case per investigative unit to serve as a replacement case if an investigation has to be eliminated. All eliminations will be staffed and approved by the Regional Quality Assurance Manager.

The lead reviewer, with the assistance of other Quality Assurance staff, will also have the following pre-review responsibilities:

- Arrange for a review site that will accommodate the full team;
- Assure that each reviewer has a laptop with access to the appropriate program or software to complete the review; and
- Complete an analysis of current data related to Circuit 15 protective investigations and be prepared to share with reviewers.

The review itself will occur in a single location to facilitate discussion among reviewers. If questions arise that are not clearly answered in the review guidelines, the lead reviewer will be responsible for research through the Florida Center for Advancement of Child Welfare Practice or obtaining an answer from Headquarters’ Quality Assurance. Any issues identified as being a safety risk to a child will be immediately brought to the attention of the appropriate Program Operations Administrator and the Circuit Operations Manager for resolution. The Circuit will be required to communicate follow-up actions to resolve the issue to the Quality Assurance Lead Reviewer and Manager within 48 hours of notification. Once all investigations have been read, a full team debriefing will occur to identify practice trends.

Circuit 15 has implemented two additional processes to the CPI review process, the opportunity for CPI supervisors to shadow reviewers and a process to allow staff the opportunity for review of the completed tool prior to finalization of the ratings.

CPI supervisors now have the opportunity to shadow a reviewer for a day to observe the review process. They do not shadow a case review from their unit. This allows the supervisor to become knowledgeable of the review standards and the process employed by Quality Assurance to complete a review. Inclusion of the supervisors helps to build a team process and enhance the quality of the investigations.

CPI supervisors and staff also have an opportunity to review completed tools. The completed tools are provided to CPI unit supervisors, through the program operations administrators, for review, comment and input prior to Quality Assurance finalizing the tool. The intent of this step is to provide operations the opportunity to raise questions regarding the reviewer’s ratings. A specified time frame will be
provided for staff to raise questions regarding the review tools. Upon request, Quality Assurance staff and the individual reviewer will meet face-to-face with the supervisor to discuss the findings, explain how ratings were determined and resolve outstanding issues. The reviewer’s rating of a standard may or may not be adjusted as a result of the process.

Child Protection stakeholder surveys will be included as part of the review process. Surveys will be conducted and data reported in a manner consistent with the requirements established by Headquarters. Additionally, the CPI Operations Manager has developed a six (6)-question survey that will be used monthly to assess contact between the protective investigators and families. This information will be used by local administration for quality improvement purposes.

Once all cases have been reviewed, the lead, with assistance from other Quality Assurance staff, will have the following post-review responsibilities:

- Review all completed review instruments for completeness and consistency;
- Analyze review data;
- Schedule an Exit Conference if one is desired by Circuit Administration; and,
- Prepare a report of review findings based on Family Safety Program Office requirements and using the format provided. This report will be presented to Circuit Administration for approval within the period set forth in the statewide Quality Assurance Plan and forwarded to Headquarters Quality Assurance upon approval.

Circuit 15 CPI Administration will be responsible for drill down of data and development of a quality improvement plan strategies. Quality Assurance staff will participate in plan development meeting upon request. The strategies will be included in an action plan format or incorporated into the Circuit 15 CFSR QIP.

IV. Circuit Discretionary Child Protective Investigation Reviews

“Windows into Practice”, the statewide Quality Assurance Plan, requires the Region/Circuit conduct at least one additional review a year on a topic or focus area selected by the Circuit. The topic(s) for review will be determined with input from the CPI Operations Manager and Regional Administration and may be based on areas of concern identified through the semi-annual reviews or other Circuit activities.

The process for discretionary reviews will mirror, as closely as possible, that used for the Quarterly Reviews. Some modifications may be needed depending on the
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review focus. Headquarters Quality Assurance may be asked to assist with the development of specialized review instruments.

V. Special Reviews
Special Reviews may be requested by leadership at Headquarters, the Region or Circuit. Quality Assurance staff had the lead or participated in several special reviews during the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year. There is no way to project the number of special review requests for 2010-2011. These reviews frequently involve high profile situations and are workload intensive. Depending on the nature and complexity of the review, some adjustment to the schedule or review participants may be necessary.

VI. No Jurisdiction/Duplicate Reviews
The Regional Child Protective Investigations specialist completes the monthly “No Jurisdiction/Duplicate Review” following the protocol established by Headquarters. Quality Assurance staff assists upon request.

VII. Child Death Reviews
The Regional Quality Assurance unit has one staff member dedicated to the review of all child deaths in Broward and Palm Beach Counties that may be the result of abuse and neglect. Because the Southeast Region has a relatively high number of child deaths, the Death Review Coordinator may only be able to participate occasionally in regularly scheduled reviews.

VIII. Reporting
The reports will be completed at the frequency and in the format requested by Headquarters and will include progress on improvement initiatives.