Southeast Region Child Protective Investigations
Quality Assurance Plan
2009-2010

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. During 2008-2009 substantial program redesign occurred. The units originally assigned to the north, south areas of the county were centralized at the Circuit headquarters office in West Palm Beach, and “hoteling” was implemented. One of the 15 original case carrying units was designated as the Receiving Unit. All but one protective investigator 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. 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 specialists to support the investigative units. The Region also has one Child Protective Investigations Specialist who interfaces with staff and specialists in both Circuit 15 and 17. The Regional Child Protective Investigations Specialist also serves as the 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
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 each investigation.

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
Southeast Region Child Protective Investigations
Quality Assurance Plan
2009-2010

month. This will assist with workload issues while discussing investigations that occur at different points in time during the month.

2. Review Process:
The Regional Child Protective Investigations Specialist and the Regional Training Coordinator completed the “Train the Trainer” session sponsored by Headquarters and provide training and on-going technical assistance to supervisors on the mentoring and modeling process.

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.

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 will be placed on the share drive that is accessible to all supervisors and Circuit Administration. As supervisors complete their discussions they will enter
Southeast Region Child Protective Investigations
Quality Assurance Plan
2009-2010

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 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: Upon completion of each month’s validation reviews, specialists will meet (in person or by phone) to discuss identified trends and decide on the need for additional training and guidance for the supervisory group as a whole, i.e. time management through task consolidation, clarification on overall use of the guide, etc. Subsequent to this meeting, 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
During fiscal year 2009-2010, C-15 will return to semi-annual Child Protective Investigation Reviews. Please refer to Attachment I for the complete schedule of reviews for 2009-2010.

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 that 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 and the number/percentage of shelter cases required by Headquarters is represented in the sample. 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;
- Complete a thorough background check of prior investigations and services to the family, print the results and place in folders for use by the reviewers;
Southeast Region Child Protective Investigations
Quality Assurance Plan
2009-2010

• 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 Circuit Operations Manager for resolution. The Circuit will be required to communicate follow-up actions to resolve the issue to the Regional Quality Assurance Manager within 48 hours of notification. Once all investigations have been read, a full team debriefing will occur to identify practice trends.

Beginning with the 2009-2010 fiscal year 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 Circuit approval.

Circuit 15 CPI Administration will be responsible for drill down of data and development of a quality improvement plan strategies. 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
The statewide Quality Assurance Plan requires that the Region/Circuit conduct at least one additional review a year on a topic or focus area selected by the Circuit. The topic for the review has not yet been identified but many ideas have been discussed.

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 review focus. Headquarters Quality Assurance may be asked to assist with the development of specialized review instruments.

The months that Quality Assurance staff will be available to complete these reviews are marked on the attached schedule.

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 numerous special reviews during the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year. There is no way to project the number of special review requests for 2009-2010. 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 completing the review of all child deaths in Broward and Palm Beach Counties that may be the result of abuse and neglect. A formal process map for child death reviews has been completed (See Attachments II and III) and accepted by the Broward Sheriff’s Office and Circuit 15. Training on the process map will continue to be provided to Child Protective Investigators in both counties as need dictates. 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
In addition to the reports that statewide QA guidelines suggest for quarterly, semi-annual, discretionary and special reviews, a mid and end of year report will be completed that incorporates all available case management and protective investigations review data. The reports will be completed at the frequency and in the format requested by Headquarters and will include progress on improvement initiatives.