



Children's Home Society of Florida 2019 Legislative Agenda

Approved by the Children's Home Society of Florida's Board of Directors on September 14, 2018

At CHS, we have a vision of a world where children realize their full potential. While dreams are distributed equally, opportunity is not – and that's why we deliver solutions that empower children to succeed.

Our innovative solutions such as CaseAIM and the Community Partnership School™ model provide children and families with a hand up – not a handout – so they can gain skills and confidence to succeed. We're also meeting a key need in the mental health arena by eliminating barriers to access for children and adults in need of therapy. We recommend this Agenda and request the Florida Legislature consider prioritizing funding to these important areas so more children can realize their full potential. We have proven strategies to address complex issues children and families face every day – **let's be the solution.**

Increase Access to Mental Health Services

We request increased funding opportunities to expand critical mental health services for children and families in Florida, including those on Medicaid. We also request policy and funding to increase access for children and families to receive comprehensive mental health care through telehealth, at school, in their homes and elsewhere in their communities.

Better Outcomes for Children - CaseAIM

We request a legislative investment in CaseAIM, an innovative technology solution that improves outcomes for children in foster care by increasing efficiency in case management. Developed in partnership with tech giants, CaseAIM has improved outcomes for kids. A 2018 independent study by the Florida Child Welfare Institute demonstrated that, with CaseAIM, children spend less time in foster care, experience fewer placements and experience fewer case manager turnover events. We request funding to continue to expand, evaluate and integrate this program with the new Family First Prevention Services Act requirements.

Evidence-Based Model - Community Partnership Schools

We request continued funding for existing Community Partnership Schools and request the allocation of additional funding to expand and sustain the model to benefit Florida's children, families and communities.

Children's Home Society of Florida asks for your consideration to support the following public policy positions during the 2019 Legislative Session:

- **Role Clarity for Community Based Care Lead Agencies and Providers:** Statutory changes are needed for a Lead Agency providing direct services and to establish a process for providing more than the 35% provision.
- **Foster Parent Information Protection:** Statutory changes are needed to exempt ALL foster parents from public records information requests to protect them and their families.
- **Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)** will impact the State of Florida. Policy and budget changes will be necessary during the 2019 Session to prepare for its implementation and new requirements.
- **Child Welfare Financing Reform:** Seeking consistent methodology of projecting the increase in funds needed for the child welfare system, either through establishing a revenue-estimating conference or statutory provision to have an annual cost-of-living increase for the child welfare workforce.