



**FLORIDA  
INSTITUTE  
FOR CHILD  
WELFARE**  
AT FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

# INSTITUTE INSIGHTS

Issue 9 | July 2019

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



I hope the summer is going well for each of you! Our summer at the Institute has been busy but very productive.

We held a Symposium on Racial Equity in May and we are very excited to have engaged in such meaningful dialogue with our colleagues and partners around Florida. I want to again thank our **sponsors**, and all who participated in our Symposium. We are committed to continuing the racial equity work in the coming year. Please stay tuned for updates on racial equity activities.

Last month, we hosted our Annual Meeting with our statewide **affiliates** in Orlando. One of our main goals in the coming year will be providing research and technical assistance to our child welfare community as we prepare our state for the **Family First Prevention Act**. Our affiliate network has continued to expand and grow and we are looking forward to utilizing their expert acumen even more in the coming year.

Currently, our Institute is writing up our **annual report** which includes a detailed description of our research and collaborative activities during this past fiscal year. We also provide research-informed recommendations to our policy-makers. In addition to what we have done, we include a description of what is ahead for us in the coming year. Be sure to keep an eye out for our 2018-2019 annual report!

Lastly, I'm excited to announce our brand new podcast series: *Child Protection Caseworker Support*. Each episode focuses on empowering and supporting our frontline child welfare professionals. Set to launch on **August 26, 2019!**



## A CONVERSATION ON RACIAL EQUITY WITH CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

Jessica Pryce, Director of the Florida Institute for Child Welfare, sits down in conversation with Rene Ledford, Director of Quality Improvement and Training at Children's Home Society to discuss **Racial Equity in Child Welfare**.

## RECENT CONFERENCE



The Institute worked with the President of the Florida Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and Casey Family Programs to create a new Child Welfare Track for the Florida conference. This track's purpose is to engage child welfare workers with clinicians in workshops that address issues that both sets of professionals deal with when working with child welfare involved families. One such workshop was *Integration of Clinical Social Work in Child Welfare: Transforming the System*.

We also had several affiliates make presentations. Dean Clark led a panel of leaders (and Institute faculty affiliates) to discuss *Social Work Solutions from the Florida Schools of Social Work*. The panel included: **Dr. Mary Helen Hayden, FIU; Dr. Heather Thompson, FAU; Dr. Michiel Van Zyl, USF; Dr. Bonnie Yegidis, UCF; and Dr. Tom Felke, FGCU.**

Drs. Morgan Cooley and Heather Thompson conducted a workshop on *Engaging Mandated Clients*.



## NEW PROJECT FOR 2019/2020

This fiscal year, Dr. Lisa Magruder will be working to enhance the development of the Institute's **affiliate network**. Specifically, Dr. Magruder will work with individual affiliates to connect them to resources, encourage collaboration, and produce content that is meaningful to the Institute's stakeholders. With the help of our esteemed affiliates, the Institute's goal is to offer a steady stream of child welfare-related content throughout the year, including webinars, in-person training, research briefs, and updates on relevant legislation.

## AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT

### MARTIE GILLEN, Ph.D., MBA



The Institute was delighted when Dr. Martie Gillen became a research affiliate. As a newer member, we are pleased to introduce you to Dr. Gillen and to her current research projects. Read Dr. Gillen's full bio [here](#).

Dr. Gillen has recently collaborated with the Institute on the following initiatives: She serves as the Principal Investigator for the Florida Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) implementation evaluation. The project is a legislative mandate per Florida Statute 39.6225. GAP took effect July 1, 2019. The evaluation will determine the impact of the implementation of the GAP, identify barriers that may prevent eligible caregivers from participating in the program, and identify recommendations regarding enhancements to the state's system of supporting kinship caregivers. Dr. Morgan Cooley at Florida Atlantic University and faculty affiliate of the Institute serves as a project consultant. The Institute is funding the GAP implementation evaluation.

Dr. Gillen collaborated with Heartland for Children (Dr. Teri Saunders, CEO of Heartland for Children and Institute research affiliate) and the Florida Institute for Child Welfare on a grant submission to the Administration on Children, Youth and Families—Children's Bureau—to strengthen and preserve families through community collaboration. If funded, Dr. Gillen will serve as a project consultant. She will develop curriculum and provide training on topics such as adverse childhood experiences, child development, the effects of trauma on brain development, and trust-based relational intervention. The Institute will complete the project evaluation.

Dr. Gillen is also collaborating with Dr. Morgan Cooley, Institute faculty affiliate, and MaKenna Woods and Donna Brown, Institute Research Assistants and doctoral students. The purpose of this collaboration is to analyze foster care data and develop manuscripts on alternative perceptions regarding foster parent recruitment and retention, foster care placements, and foster parent quality.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

### 2019 National Child Welfare Evaluation Summit

August 20-21 Washington, DC

### National Sexual Assault Conference

August 21-23 Philadelphia, PA

### 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual National Independent Living Conference

August 27-30 Orlando, FL

### Building Hope for Children Conference

September 5-6 Greenville, SC

### 24th International Summit on Violence, Abuse & Trauma Across the Lifespan

September 5-8 San Diego, CA

### Prevent Child Abuse America National Conference

September 16-18 Milwaukee, WI

### Zero to Three Annual Conference

October 2-4 Ft. Lauderdale, FL

### JuST 2019: Conference on Juvenile Sex Trafficking

October 15-17 Cincinnati, OH

### CSWE 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Program Meeting

October 24-27 Denver, CO

### American Association of Health and Human Services Attorneys Conference

October 27-30 Arlington, VA

## CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

### National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence

Deadline: **July 29, 2019**

### CWLA Conference 2020

Deadline: **August 2, 2019**

### 2020 Anxiety and Depression Conference

Deadline: **September 5, 2019**

### 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Research and Policy Conference on Child, Adolescent, and Young Adult Behavioral Health

Opens: August 2, 2019

Deadline: **October 11, 2019**

## JULY IS MINORITY MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that children of color will represent the majority of all U.S. kids by 2020. This prediction applies to Florida as well. Yet, KidsCount 2019 notes that as a nation we have failed to reduce racial and ethnic disparities among children and dismantle the obstacles that so many children of color encounter on the road to adulthood. Despite gains for children of all races, the nation's racial inequities remain deep, systemic and stubbornly persistent. This is true for youth of color in the foster care system, who face racial disparities in mental health referrals, services and quality of treatment.

One of Florida's nine statutory CBC outcomes is "Children Receive Services to Meet their Physical and Mental Health Needs." The Department of Children and Families provides outcomes for children's physical needs, including dental, but little information is available on children's mental health needs. **Turney and Wilderman** (2016) note that such data limitations make it difficult to compare the mental health status of children placed in foster care to the general population of US children. However, combining data from multiple sources, they estimated that foster children were 5 times as likely to have anxiety, 6 times as likely to have behavioral problems, and 7 times as likely to have depression than children in the general population.

The **American Academy of Pediatrics** identifies mental and behavioral health as the largest unmet health need for children and teens in foster care. Its Healthy Foster Care America initiative recommends that mental health services for children and teens in foster care be provided by well-trained, experienced pediatric mental health professionals who provide care that is continuous over time and in the context of the micro-culture of foster care and the child's multiple families. The American Psychological Association also identifies the need for culturally appropriate treatment for youth of color. In **Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Racial and Ethnic Minority Youth: A Guide for Practitioners**, the authors noted that even youth who have experienced ACEs can achieve favorable

mental health outcomes when protective factors exist to provide a buffer against experiences of racial discrimination. Positive racial and ethnic identity is a protective factor associated with global self-esteem, which has direct implications for mental health. They encourage practitioners to use protective factors to inform their approach to treatment in order to promote resilience in racial and ethnic minority youth.

## RESOURCES

**National Alliance on Mental Illness**, includes a link to the Docuseries *Strength Over Silence: Stories of Courage, Culture and Community*.

**Mental Health America**, provides the 2019 Minority Mental Health Month Toolkit and information on the 2019 #DepthOfMyIdentity Campaign.

**The Steve Fund**, dedicated to the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color, includes a link to the Equity in Mental Health Toolkit.

**HHS Office of Minority Mental Health**, offers many resources for Minority Mental Health Awareness Month including the new e-learning program *Improving Cultural Competency for Behavioral Health Professionals*.

**The National Child Traumatic Stress Network** in recognition of Minority Mental Health Awareness Month has compiled a list of helpful resources for parents and caregivers, children and teens, mental health providers, child welfare and juvenile justice professionals, healthcare providers, educators and school staff, and policy makers.



## CHILD PROTECTION CASEWORKER SUPPORT

**SAVE THE DATE: AUGUST 26, 2019**

Launch of the new podcast series *Child Protection Caseworker Support*. Additional information will be posted on our **website** and **Facebook page**.