




**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Rick Scott
Governor

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

DATE: July 22, 2013
TO: Florida Foster Parents
FROM: Esther Jacobo, Interim Secretary 
SUBJECT: Partnership

The significance of the role you play in the lives of children who have been abused, neglected or abandoned by their parents cannot be overstated. By opening your heart and home to a vulnerable child, you have influenced that child's life forever.

As the newly appointed Interim Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families, I personally thank you for your willingness to parent a child who has been traumatized by abuse. I invite you to share with me your concerns and ideas for continually improving the system of care we collaboratively provide to help strengthen children and families

Because I have worked in the field for the last six years, I know that you have faced enormous challenges. I also recognize that Secretary Wilkins and Tanya Wilkins made you a top priority. I have heard from many of you how much you appreciated their advocacy on your behalf.

I want to assure you that I equally value you. Without you, the mission of protecting children and ensuring their well-being would be impossible. I have had the opportunity to work closely with Carole Shauffer to help implement the Quality Parenting Initiative and to provide foster parents with a true voice in our system of care.

I am committed to the standards and goals of the Quality Parenting Initiative, and I invite you to visit qipflorida.org and take advantage of the many online resources.

I also encourage you to invite your neighbors, friends, co-workers and extended community to consider becoming a foster parent and/or mentor to a child who has been abused or neglected. Many of you participated in the successful recruitment from July 2012-June 2013 of more than 1,300 newly licensed foster parents! On behalf of the Department and, especially, the children who will benefit, thank you!

I pledge to you that I will continue to look for ways to empower you and encourage you. It is the only right thing to do for you and for the children and families we serve.

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