

**2011 Family Connection Discretionary Grants:
Using Family Group Decision-making to
Build Protective Factors for Children and Families**

Project Abstract/ Summary

Grantee Name: Kids Central, Inc.
Grantee City and State: Ocala, Florida
Grant Project Title: *Family Group Decision Making: Engaging, Encouraging and Empowering Families to Succeed*

Our initiative proposes to implement Family Group Decision Making as a component of a strong system of care that supports family connections. This project is a variation on an evidence based theme, effectively engaging families in order to affect positive change in their circumstances through education, empowerment and encouragement so that children can remain safely in their homes. Our target population is families who are subjects of a recent abuse investigation. These families will be referred to participate voluntarily in Family Group Decision Making thus avoiding an adversarial court process. Through the systematic implementation of a strength based, family inclusive framework that educates on protective factors in a non-threatening environment, children and families will experience positive outcomes. Families will be empowered to make purposeful, educated choices as they use their strengths to create a plan for addressing their identified needs. Families will be continuously supported during the intervention episode as a means of assuring their successful participation.

The expected outcomes are a reduction in the number of children who enter the formal child protection system, measurable improvements in child safety, permanency, and well-being, an increase in the rate of successful participation in FGDM, and increased awareness of the protective factors.

Kids Central has partnered with Devereux Kids, the American Humane Association, and J.K. Elder & Associates, the project evaluator to complete this initiative. American Humane Association will provide training on Family Group Decision Making to staff from both Kids Central and Devereux Kids. Family Team Meeting Facilitators and Case Coordinators will receive on-going mentoring, coaching and training in response to identified needs. This highly structured approach ensures a capable professional staff well equipped to engage and support families in a non-threatening family-centered environment. Evaluation activities are designed to reliably assess fidelity of project implementation and identified project outcomes. Cost analysis activities will be completed in order to determine the total cost of implementing the Family Group Decision Making program.

For more information, contact:

Joanne Billingsley, Project Coordinator
352 873 6332

joanne.billingsley@kidscentralinc.org