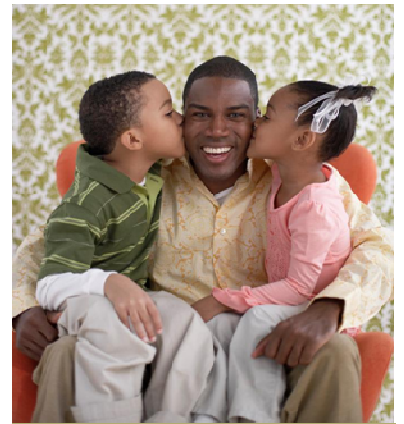


**PARTNERSHIP FOR STRONG FAMILIES**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2010-2011-2012**



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**Gainesville, FL 32601**  
**352-393-2740**



**Share Love. Give Hope. Foster a Teen.**

**The Library Partnership**  
A Neighborhood Resource Center



valuing children | strengthening families | engaging the community



*PARTNERING WITH PARENTS,  
SUPPORTING STRONG FAMILIES*

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## I. Strategic Foundation for PSF

### Introduction

**The PSF Vision:** to be a recognized leader in protecting children and strengthening families through innovative, evidence-based practices and highly effective, engaged employees and community partners.

The PSF Strategic Plan was developed with a great deal of employee input, in order to create a useful roadmap for the future and to provide the foundation for an operational plan. Here, we would like to share with you the passion that underlies this plan.

Above all, each of us at PSF cares about the children and the families we serve-- every day, we strive for the best possible quality of their lives. Everything in this plan has been put there to help us find more ways to protect children and to strengthen families. We want to be a **recognized leader** because that will give us the ability to shape the way people in the community and legislators in state government support children and families. As a recognized leader, we can develop extraordinary funding sources for research into the best ways to serve children and families-- and we can become a strong voice for children and families when attempts are made to divert attention away from their needs.

We want to constantly improve and innovate so we can do even more to **protect children and strengthen families**, helping families find the resources and the solutions they need to keep every child safe and thriving. We really want to listen to each child and family member, so that we can help them discover their individual strengths, to support them in finding their own particular ways to grow and create nurturing homes. The families we serve have the answers for making their lives good and productive--we want to help them find their own unique paths to meaningful lives.

In order to constantly improve the delivery of services to children and families, we must focus on **innovative, evidence-based practices**. This means that we must add to the research base for determining the best ways to protect children and strengthen families. Our innovations must be evidence-based or evidence-informed, so that we can develop an exceptional system of care and then share our knowledge with others in the child welfare community.

We also want to **support our employees and providers** as they do this important work. In part, we do that through training and coaching to constantly improve the ways in which they serve children and families. We also do that by making their working environment one that is encouraging, that offers excellent counsel when difficult

decisions must be made. Basically, we want to be open, collaborative and effective, with each other as employees and with each child and family we touch.

Every month we serve approximately 2000 children and families. Our work is complex and demanding; to do the best possible job we need a clear vision, along with a roadmap that will make that vision a reality. We believe we have that vision and roadmap clearly stated here. We openly share this plan, because we want to keep making it better, adjusting to the needs and changes that will occur over the next three years. And what drives it all is our dedication and caring for the children and families we serve.

### **The Purpose of This Plan and How It Was Developed**

The purpose of the strategic planning process at PSF is twofold: first, to provide an overview of the actions that are necessary to fully carryout the new PSF Vision and second, to partner with PSF employees as well as Board members and stakeholders in creating a document that is meaningful and useful. Based on an assessment of both internal and external opportunities and threats, the Senior Management Team expanded the Vision statement and identified the core competencies necessary to successfully implement that Vision. Then, the entire Leadership Team was asked to participate in the process of recommending key activities that are essential to develop each core competency. In addition, stakeholders were interviewed and the PSF Board of Directors was consulted for input into the plan.

This plan represents only the top layer of detail behind PSF's strategic direction. A second document, PSF's Operating Plan, is the vehicle for setting specific action steps and achievement indicators for each key strategic activity. This document will also serve as a tool for PSF staff to track, update, and revise the strategic plan.

### **History of PSF**

#### History

Partnership for Strong Families was established in 2004 to provide community-based child protection services for the north central Florida counties making up the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Circuits 3 & 8. After two years of operation, the PSF management team and board of directors endeavored to create their first Strategic Plan. This guided their work from 2006 – 2009. In that time PSF's many significant achievements included, but were not limited to, the following:

- A significant reduction in case manager turnover
- Improved communication and partnering with contracted Case Management Agencies (CMAs)
- Creation of a Utilization Management program, including a prevention/diversion component as well as a shift to a fee-for-service method of purchased services
- Creation of a secure, web-based client data system, called "P-Kids"

- Integration of quality management positions within day-to-day child welfare operations
- Re-branding of the agency, including the use of broad multimedia strategies

## **Current State of PSF**

Currently, many unique opportunities exist for PSF that represent the promise that was hoped for at the advent of community-based care. At the same time, challenges and threats exist that could impede progress if not properly recognized and mitigated. A scan of PSF's current situation, reflecting developments over the last year, reveals the following realities:

### Community Perception

Community perception has a significant impact on PSF's ability to fulfill its mission. As a community-based organization, PSF strives for strong awareness and communication among stakeholders and the general public alike.

As part of PSF's strategic assessment, a recent interview survey conducted with a small sample of local executives familiar with PSF revealed the following themes:

- Stakeholders perceive the top leadership team at PSF to be quite capable and solutions-oriented.
- PSF employees are described as consistently open to collaborating as partners with both providers and families.
- PSF is seen as demonstrating a family-centered approach that is creative and flexible.
- PSF is not perceived as being well recognized in the community. The fact that PSF is young as an organization was noted by several stakeholders as a reason for the external "face" of the company to be relatively unknown. However, stakeholders did emphasize the importance of being understood and known in the community from three perspectives: legislative action, donations and goodwill.

Overall, the stakeholders indicated a high regard both for PSF as an organization and for individual employees at every level. This regard is particularly focused on the strong commitment to children and families that is demonstrated, as well as the collaborative nature of the partnership that is consistently offered both families and providers.

### Assets/Opportunities

The following represent some of the current achievements and/or opportunities that PSF must continue or capitalize upon:

- *Foster Care Redesign.* PSF has been actively engaged in the Foster Care Redesign initiative, with a focus on safely reducing the number of children in the local foster care system. This has required close partnering with DCF, Casey Family

Programs, and community providers. With the help of this initiative, PSF has reduced its foster care population by 38% in 2 years. It has also given PSF access to national experts in child welfare practice.

- *The Library Partnership.* In June of 2009, PSF opened The Library Partnership, a joint library/neighborhood resource center in northeast Gainesville. This unique new program gained local, state, and national attention.
- *Contract Performance.* In 2008-2009, PSF was one of the top performing Community-Based Care (CBC) agencies in the state on DCF contract performance measures.
- *Innovation Zone Status.* PSF was selected to receive a 2-year grant, designating itself as an "Innovation Zone" for family-centered practice.
- *Federal "Family Connections" Grant.* This three-year grant (2009-2011) will fund expansion of PSF's family-centered practice model, focusing on important research into the effectiveness of Family Team Conferencing.
- *Mobile Workforce.* PSF has developed a workplan to mobilize its workforce through the use of technology. This was accelerated in June of 2009, when DCF provided equipment to supply every caseworker with a laptop and mobile device.

### Challenges/Threats

The following are challenges that PSF faces that must be addressed and overcome for continued progress:

- *Funding limitations.* In July of 2008, PSF executed a new 3-year contract with DCF. However as a result of re-alignment of DCF's districts, PSF funding was reduced. This, coupled with a 4% state budget hold-back, prompted PSF to re-structure the agency, reducing administrative positions. For example, the Resource Development (i.e., public relations) department was reduced from 3 staff to 1, and marketing activities were scaled back significantly. There were no reductions in direct service to children and families.
- *Title IV-E Waiver.* Florida's federal Title IV-E Waiver, which allows Florida to spend federal dollars to serve at-risk families with funds that traditionally have been allocated only for children in foster care, expires on September 30, 2011. If the state does not maintain the current level of foster care funding, this waiver will be put in jeopardy.
- *Risk management.* It is widely acknowledged that privatized child protection services carry an immense business risk. PSF must manage this risk on three levels: our clients, our employees/ providers, and our financial stability as a company. On a regular basis, we review and improve our risk management practices, with the goal of reducing and mitigating risk to our clients and employees/providers as well as increasing the financial depth of the company.

## PSF Mission and Vision Statements for 2010-2012

**Mission:** to enhance the community's ability to protect and nurture children by building, maintaining and constantly improving a network of family support services.

**Vision:** to be a recognized leader in protecting children and strengthening families through innovative, evidence-based practices and highly effective, engaged employees and community partners.

## Fundamental Assumptions

The following key assumptions permeate all elements of PSF's strategic plan. These realities form the foundation of PSF's business and mission:

1. Child safety is paramount, which means that our first priority is protection from abuse and neglect. Once that priority is satisfied, our goals are to strengthen families and to work for the overall health and well-being of children. Ultimately, we strive for the highest possible quality of life for each child and family we serve.
2. Financial health and fiscal stewardship are critical to mission effectiveness. PSF will work to ensure funding adequacy and be responsible in allocation of the available budget.
3. Satisfactory contract performance must be maintained. In as much as the DCF contract is PSF's primary funding source, performance on contract measures must remain a priority focus.

## Core Competencies & Key Activities

PSF's management staff and board of directors have conducted an internal review of our current **core competencies**. This, coupled with external perspectives derived from a brief external scan, has resulted in the identification of specific competencies for our strategic focus in the coming years. These competencies are intended to enhance the opportunities that exist and to reduce the challenges that PSF faces.

In addition to core competencies, **key activities** that are essential to the development of the competencies have been identified. PSF's core competencies and key activities provide the framework for our Strategic Plan and the foundation for making our vision a reality.



## II. The PSF Strategic Plan for 2010-2012

### Core Competency1: Services to Protect Children and Strengthen Families

**Description:** PSF will provide services that protect children and strengthen families. We will model a family-centered, strength-based approach in working collaboratively with those we serve. We will make available individualized, flexible services to meet the unique needs of children and families.

#### 2010 Key Activities:

1. Implement a family-centered practice approach through specialized training for PSF and provider staff.
2. Provide expert coaching services for unit supervisors on the family-centered, strength-based practice approach.
3. Engage families and care-givers in needs assessment, process improvement, and training, with the goal of better understanding our clients and finding individualized ways of meeting their needs.
4. Enhance the Family Team Conferencing (FTC) practice model, to ensure fidelity to the model and effectiveness in family-centered practice.
5. Continue to develop the Library Partnership program, including refinement of operating procedures and tracking of data/outcome measures.
6. Continue to develop the Family Service/utilization management model to ensure rapid authorization of appropriate services to meet child and family needs.
7. Expand the support services available to relative and non-relative caregivers.
8. Enhance and improve the network of foster homes, to promote placement stability and quality care for children in out of home care.
9. Continue to develop innovations in practice in order to reduce the time it takes to achieve permanency for children.
10. Continue to refine and improve PSF's provider service array through network management procedures and improved communication.

#### 2011, 2012 Activities:

1. Diversify service delivery and customer base beyond current contract with DCF Circuit 3 & 8. The purpose of this diversification is to increase the financial strength of PSF, allowing it to serve children and families in the event of reductions in state funding.
2. Expand the Library Partnership neighborhood resource center model as a means of protecting children by strengthening families in the community.
3. Continue to implement the "concurrent planning" adoption model from a pilot program to system-wide implementation.



## **Core Competency 2: Recognized Leadership**

**Description:** PSF will engage the larger community in the organizational vision, and become known on local, state, and national levels for excellence in child welfare service provision.

### 2010 Key Activities:

1. Create a protocol for dissemination of pertinent PSF information, including key performance indicators and success stories. Strategies should include both internal and external communications.
2. Enhance PSF's communication plan, to include mass media marketing strategies, community events, and fund-raising approaches that conform to legislative requirements.
3. Contribute to the community in new ways by getting involved in community volunteer projects.
4. Better understand and support stakeholder priorities, through monitoring the effectiveness of current programs and identifying needs for improvement.
5. Increase involvement in local, state and national advocacy groups related to our work (ex, Alachua County Children's Alliance, Florida Coalition for Children, Child Welfare League of America.)
6. Inform and educate state and local legislators about PSF's work and the needs of local children and families.
7. Provide coaching, workshops and a program of experiential contact for board members to deepen their understanding of the PSF system of care.
8. Engage the PSF board of directors in communicating the PSF vision as well as participating in legislative advocacy and fund-raising.

### 2011, 2012 Activities:

1. Increase marketing and fund-raising activities.
2. Continue to monitor effectiveness and communicate the PSF Vision.

## **Core Competency 3: Innovative, Evidence-Based Practices**

**Description:** PSF will focus on providing innovative, evidenced-based and evidence-informed child welfare practice approaches within the system of care. This will include both making evidence-based practice a priority, and developing effective methods to assess and document practice outcomes internally. Innovations will support the improvement of PSF's overall system of care, and strive for improved outcomes. This

will include the progressive use of technology within our practice, in secure yet responsive ways.

**2010 Key Activities:**

1. Detail our work through policies, procedures, and protocols that are frequently reviewed and updated.
2. Conduct ongoing assessment of internal processes and activities, in order to find innovative ways to gain efficiencies and maximize resources.
3. Develop the capacity to analyze system outcomes, so that the information can be learned from and shared with others.
4. Utilize advanced technology to create a more efficient workforce, better communication with partners, and advanced data collection and reporting systems.
5. Continue to monitor and assess our system of care, using feedback from clients and partners to improve PSF's quality management practices.
6. Continue to refine and improve PSF's risk management practices.

**2011, 2012 Activities:**

1. Research evidence-based/evidence-informed models, and seek funding to implement those practices that would benefit the PSF system of care.
2. Document PSF's Foster Care Redesign "story", and market within the child welfare industry.
3. Explore the creation of a Child Welfare Practice Institute.

**Core Competency 4: Highly Effective, Engaged Employees and Community Partners**

**Description:** PSF will develop an effective, engaged workforce through collaborative efforts with its staff and community partners. We will create an organizational culture that promotes a supportive yet stimulating work environment, and encourages open, meaningful communication with employees, community partners, and families.

**2010 Key Activities:**

1. Continually improve relations with subcontractors, service providers, DCF staff, Guardian ad Litem staff, and other key stakeholders.
2. Continue to develop mobile technology for a more flexible, efficient workforce.
3. Explore the creation of state-of-the-art web-based interfaces for families, staff, and community partners, which will enhance communication and reduce fragmentation among key parties within the system.
4. Improve the documentation of job and workplace expectations for PSF employees, as well as the performance appraisal process.
5. Develop a new, more comprehensive staff development and training program.

6. Create opportunities for cross functional team-building and the ability for PSF departments to learn each other's work.
7. Obtain comparative data to determine appropriate and competitive compensation levels.
8. Conduct events to build employee morale and engagement. Create additional methods for staff to openly communicate ideas and ask questions of company leadership.
9. Continue to improve processes for internal collaboration and conflict resolution among employees at all levels and locations.
10. Explore ways to improve and upgrade web-based resources.

2011, 2012 Activities:

1. Create a career path development and planning program for PSF employees.
2. Professionalize the Family Care Counselor and Family Care Counselor Supervisor roles.
3. Explore providing more (or all) services by PSF employees directly to clients rather than through sub-contractors.

## **Implementation of the Strategic Plan**

The Key Activities listed in this plan will be incorporated into a detailed Operating Plan by PSF staff. This will be a key tool in PSF's implementation of the plan. Regular updates on the status of the plan will be provided to the Board of Directors. The Strategic Plan will be modified as necessary with the approval of the board.

***This Strategic Plan was approved by the PSF Board of Directors on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010.***