



## The C.C.Kids Connector



*CCKids* attended Rally in Tally this week, visiting several key legislators. From left are CCKids Chief Operating Officer Cheri Sheffer, Indian River County Director for CCKids Caryn Toole, Chief Executive Officer Carol Deloach, Sen. Gayle Harrell, Clinical Director Josie Kirchner, and Chief Financial Officer Lauren Hahn.

Child-welfare professionals rally for change

**Tallahassee** - The halls of Florida's Capital were brimming with the excited chatter of young adults, caregivers and child-welfare professionals who gathered in Tallahassee this week for the sixth annual [Rally in Tally](#).

Among them were members of Communities Connected for Kids' executive and senior management team who traveled to the state's capital in support of key 2019 child-welfare priorities.

Rally in Tally is an advocacy event coordinated by the [Florida Children's Coalition](#), the membership body and advocacy arm for the state's 20 Community Based Care Lead Agencies, like [CCKids](#). Priorities this year are outlined below:

- Aligning the [Guardianship Assistance Program](#) passed into law last year with federal changes taking place this summer. The measure would allow Florida to draw down federal dollars for children in foster care who are placed into a long-term placement called "permanent guardianship."
- Researching capacity demands to ensure children served by CCKids and other Community Based Care agencies receive the resources needed to achieve safety and permanency.
- Expanding the menu of services available to children in care.
- Sharing information with law enforcement. The measure would inform law enforcement of any active child-protection investigation prior to entering a home.
- Giving equal justice to caregivers. Today, when a person from the child-welfare system is assaulted, the crime is a misdemeanor. This proposed law would apply the same charges for an assault in these cases as it does for the general public.
- Enabling equal access to medicine for foster children. Florida statute allows psychiatric nurses to prescribe medicine to children in the general public - but not to children in the dependency system. This measure would align statutes to end the exclusion of children in foster care, creating equal access for all children.
- Adding foster parents and child-welfare personnel to the list of people whose contact information is protected. This proposed law was suggested by local CCKids staff and adopted by the Coalition as one of its priorities after a Florida foster parent in South Florida was shot by the mother of a child living in her home.
- Defining the percent of direct services a community based care agency is allowed to provide. Many child-welfare professionals argue that the point of community based care is to engage the community through a service network of different agencies.

Communities Connected for Kids staff will head back to Tallahassee next month, when the state celebrates Children's Week, beginning March 24.



## February is the month of love - and foster care recruitment

**Stuart** - February is more than the month of love.

It's the second stop on a year-long truth journey to dispel common myths and ideas surrounding foster care.



The multi-agency awareness campaign began last month as a way to draw more people into foster care. A different theme will be featured each month and discussed in newsletters and social media platforms across several agencies.

Participating agencies include CCKids, the [Guardian ad Litem Program](#), [4Kids of the Treasure Coast](#), [Camelot Community Care](#), [Mount Bethel Human Services](#), and the [Roundtable of St. Lucie County](#).

This month's theme explores the common statement, "I could never be a foster parent."

Catch more stories, interviews and posts on [Facebook](#) as we demonstrate that the hard work is worth the effort and that, as adults, we can be as resilient as the children who need our help.