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# Application of Safety Science Principles to Promote a Safety Culture in Child Welfare

Scott Modell, Ph.D.

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# Child Welfare Across the U.S.



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# Florida



May 2011

Florida cuts \$48 million from DCF budget, terminates 500 agency positions.

# Budget Cuts Lead to Loss of Staff at DCF

Gov. Scott is cutting nearly 500 positions in the Department of Children and Families

Tuesday, May 24, 2011 | Updated 10:38 AM EDT

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Getty Images

Rick Scott

The Department of Children and Families is cutting nearly 500 positions to save the state \$48 million as Gov. Rick Scott tries to balance the state budget and slash spending by nearly \$4 billion, the agency said Monday.

Secretary David Wilkins said critical services will not be affected. About half the positions will come from three state hospitals: Florida State Hospital, Northeast Florida State Hospital and



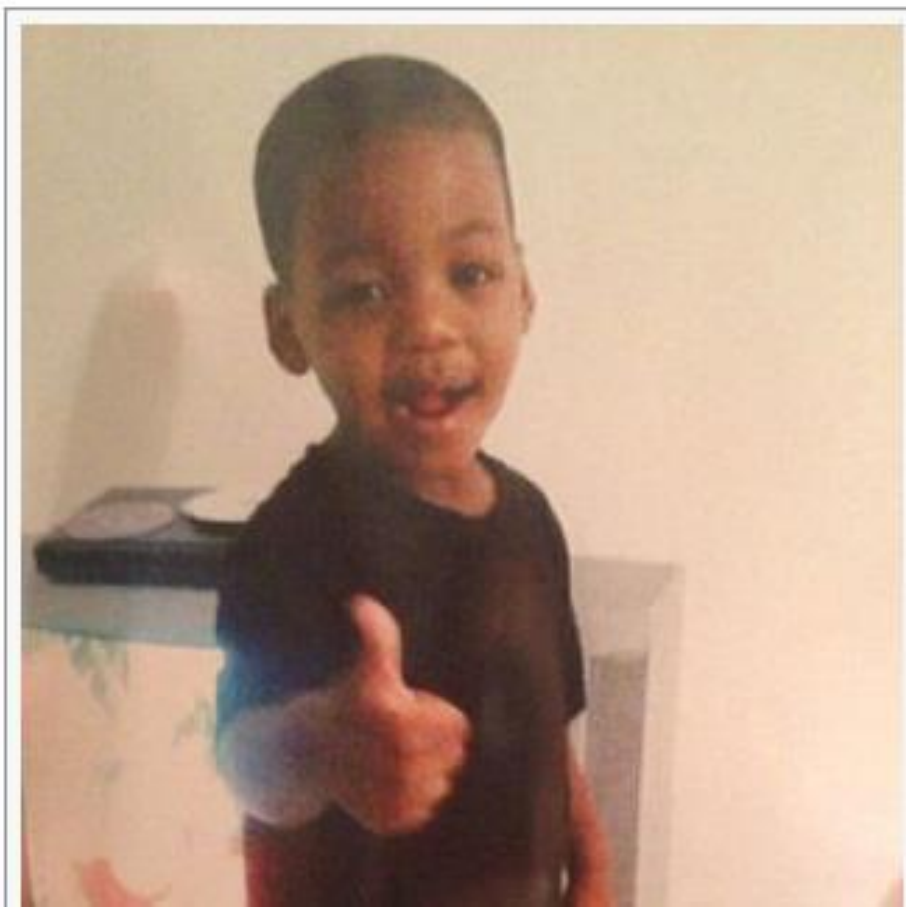
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## June 2013

4 children with DCF history die within 6 week period, causing media maelstrom

CHILD WELFARE

# DCF roiled by another child's death



BY CAROL MARBIN MILLER  
CMARBIN@MIAMIHERALD.COM

For the fourth time in six weeks, the state Department of Children & Families is investigating the death of a Florida child who, only weeks or months earlier, had drawn the attention of agency administrators.

The latest to die is Ezra Raphael, age 2. Police say they were "summoned" to Ezra's home at 15664 NE 10th Ct. in North Miami Beach, at 11:08 p.m. last Thursday to check on a "sick and unresponsive child." When paramedics arrived, police said in a statement, they found Ezra unconscious on the dining room floor. The toddler was pronounced dead shortly after he arrived at Jackson North Medical Center.



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Miami Herald publishes series alleging DCF underreported child death numbers.

**INNOCENTS LOST**

# FLORIDA'S UNDERCOUNT OF CHILD ABUSE DEATHS

The state says abuse and neglect deaths are receding after a spike. But are they? And, if so, by how much? A closer look at the numbers.

**BY CAROL MARBIN MILLER AND AUDRA D.S. BURCH**

CMARBIN@MIAMIHERALD.COM

PUBLISHED MARCH 22, 2014



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## July 2013

Head of DCF resigns following scandal surrounding the deaths of the 4 children.

POLITICS

### Florida DCF head David Wilkins resigns



David Wilkins, Florida's top child welfare and social service administrator, shown in this Dec. 19, 2012 file photo, resigned Thursday, July 18, 2013, amid [Buy Photo](#)

BY CAROL MARBIN MILLER AND MARY ELLEN KLAS  
CMARBIN@MIAMIHERALD.COM

David Wilkins, Florida's top child welfare and social services administrator, resigned Thursday amid an escalating scandal over the recent deaths of four small children who had a history of involvement with child-abuse investigators.

Wilkins is leaving the agency to "pursue opportunities in the private sector and to provide more attention" to a foundation he leads, Gov. Rick Scott said in a statement.

Wilkins, who became the governor's longest-serving agency head, served as secretary of the Department of Children & Families since Scott's inauguration in 2011. But in recent months, Wilkins became mired in a simmering controversy over the deaths of four youngsters in a six-week period, all but one from Miami-Dade and Broward counties. A fifth child, also from Miami, nearly died from a lacerated liver after the agency failed to act when the infant suffered a broken thigh bone months earlier.



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## April 2014

Legislators pledge \$47 million in new funding for child welfare.

LEGISLATURE 2014

# House, Senate settle on \$47 million in new money for child welfare

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The Miami Herald and WLRN hosted a town hall meeting to discuss Innocents Lost, the investigative series that looked at 477 Florida child deaths by abuse or neglect that occurred over a six-year span.

BY MARY ELLEN KLAS

HERALD/TIMES TALLAHASSEE BUREAU

TALLAHASSEE -- With breakneck speed, House and Senate budget negotiators met Tuesday and agreed to \$47.8 million in new money for child welfare, far below what child advocates had hoped for but with more money for treatment services than either chamber had originally sought.

The proposal also gives the governor only about \$21 million of the \$39 million he had asked for to expand child protection services.

The agreement may be only preliminary, said Senate President Don Gaetz, R-Niceville, who said budget negotiators may find additional funds for child welfare programs as they work to finish their \$75 billion budget this week.





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# Georgia



2007 – 2012

## Georgia DFCS budget reduced by 28% over five year period.

Updated: 9:57 a.m. Thursday, April 12, 2012 | Posted: 5:38 a.m. Thursday, April 12, 2012

### Hit hard by budget cuts, DFCS strains as workload jumps

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Photos: Agency faces funding cuts

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Phil Skinner

By [Shannon McCaffrey](#) and [Craig Schneider](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

More abused and neglected children are getting state protection under an aggressive new policy mandate, but deep budget cuts are threatening efforts to help those children and their families heal, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution has found.

The Division of Family and Children Services lost 28 percent of its state funding for child welfare services over five years and is bracing for the loss of millions in federal dollars. Now, under a new regime, DFCS is emphasizing children's safety by opening thousands of additional investigations and taking hundreds more children into foster care.



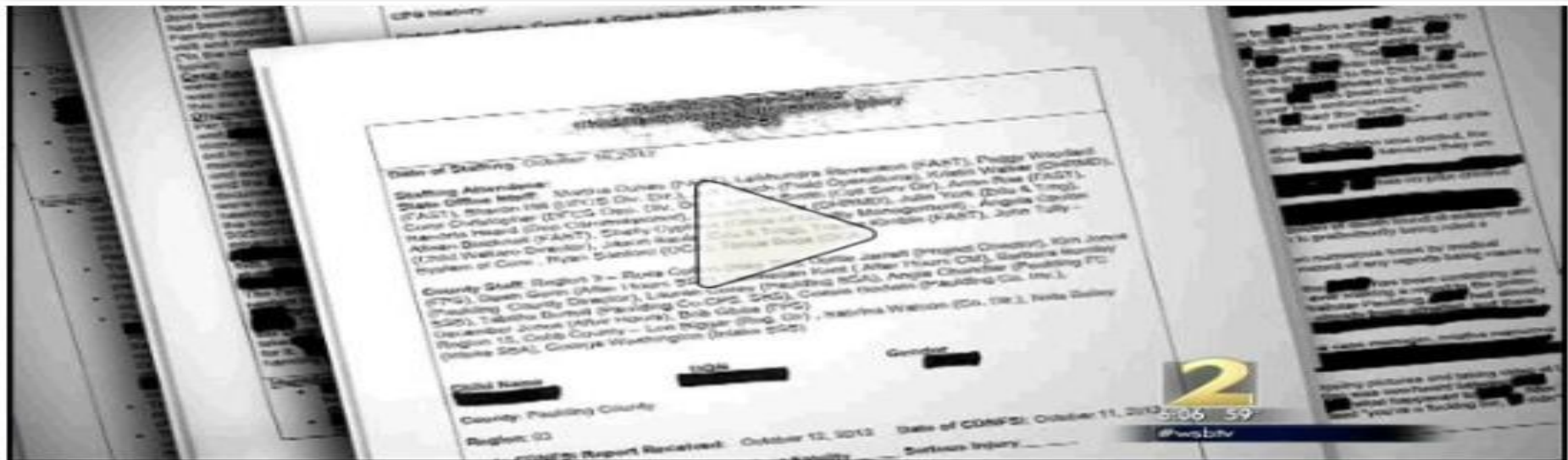
November 5<sup>th</sup> 2013

Alleged mishandling of child death cases by DFCS prompts media firestorm and public outcry.

Posted: 9:14 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013

## DFCS investigating alleged child abuse deaths

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### Related

Father charged with murder claimed boy drowned

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By Alexis Stevens

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Eric Forbes and Emani Moss lived 60 miles apart. But together, their tragic deaths allegedly at the hands of their parents could spark changes for the state agency responsible for protecting children.



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November 13<sup>th</sup> 2013

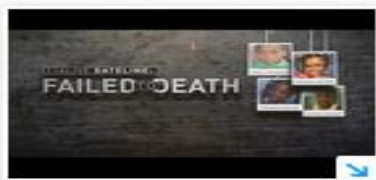
DFCS fires two employees connected to reportedly mishandled death cases.

## Two DFCS employees fired after two child deaths



Two Georgia Division of Family and Children Services employees involved have been fired, after deaths of two children.

11Alive Staff, WXIA 3:27 p.m. EST November 13, 2013



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ATLANTA -- Two Georgia Division of Family and Children Services employees have been fired, after internal investigations into the deaths of Eric Forbes and Markea Berry.

Everything you love,  
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**November 14<sup>th</sup> 2013**

**Georgia Governor Nathan Deal proposes plan to increase DFCS budget by \$27 million and hire 500 additional caseworkers.**

**Local**

**6:00 AM THU NOVEMBER 14, 2013**

# Deal Proposes \$27M DFCS Funding Boost

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By [MICHELL ELOY](#)

Gov. Nathan Deal says he wants to expand the Division of Family and Children Services.

His plan, which will be introduced in his upcoming FY2015 budget proposal, calls for hiring about 500 DFCS case workers and supervisors and increasing the division's budget by nearly \$27 million over the next three years.





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# South Carolina







## 2008 - 2009

### South Carolina DSS loses more than \$100 million due to budget cuts.

# DSS not meeting requirements



Adam Parker  Email  Facebook  @adamlparker

May 24 2010 12:01 am  Mar 23 3:12 pm

#### By the numbers

Key findings in a federal assessment of South Carolina's child abuse protection system: Permanency and stability in living situations — A success rate of 25 percent. Continuity of family relationships and connections — A success rate of 38.5 percent. Enhanced ability to provide for children's needs — A success rate of 33.8 percent. Adoption

The state agency responsible for addressing child abuse and neglect has lost so much money to budget cuts that it can't meet many federal requirements for child welfare, according to a recently released report.

The S.C. Department of Social Services lost more than \$100 million from July 2008 to December 2009 -- nearly \$50 million in state money along with federal matching aid that would have flowed to the state if legislators had made targeted rather than across-the-board budget cuts.

As a result, thousands of children risk prolonged exposure to dangerous conditions at home or remain in foster care. Social workers at the cash-starved agency are so overloaded that they often can't provide even basic help.



**February 2014**

**DSS faces controversy after admitting mistakes in case of 4-year-old Robert Guinyard, Jr.**

## DSS Death: "The System Failed Robert"

Clark Fouraker, WLTX

11:54 p.m. EST February 24, 2014



(Photo: Family photo)

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- **8 Employees Fired After Death**
- **Agency Evaluates Previous Abuse Reports More**

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Columbia, SC (WLTX) - The agency charged with protecting vulnerable children in South Carolina says they dropped the ball.

Despite multiple reports to the South Carolina Department of Social Services, steps were never taken to remove Robert Guinyard Jr. from his home before he died.

"They were notified on multiple occasions of abuse with this child," said Richland County Coroner Gary Watts.

Along with the Richland County Sheriff's Department, Watt's office responded to Guinyard's home on July 1, 2013, the night he died. Incident reports say deputies found Robert face down unresponsive. Watt's office would later perform the autopsy on the four year old boy.

"Through full body x-rays basically, we were able to determine not only an immediate traumatic injury to the child, but also a history of abuse," Watts said. "There was certainly an extensive history of this."

Family members say they witnessed incidents of abuse and reported them to DSS.





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**April 2014**

**DSS Director Lillian Koller testifies before senate panel and receives criticism from state legislators over handling of child death cases.**

# DSS director testifies before Senate panel



**Cynthia Roldan** Email Facebook @cynthiaroldan

Apr 16 2014 10:55 am Apr 16 6:41 pm

COLUMBIA - The embattled director of the South Carolina Department of Social Services spent her Wednesday morning fending off criticism and allegations made against her administration during past several months.

Director Lillian Koller testified about reports of shortfalls at the agency by current and former staffers, and about coroners and families who have said the system has failed the children of South Carolina. The problems have come to light during a series of hearings held by the Senate's DSS Oversight Subcommittee since last fall.



South Carolina DSS Director Lillian Koller talks with reporters after her testimony Wednesday before a Senate DSS Oversight Committee. Cynthia Roldan/Staff



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## June 2014

Director Koller resigns from DSS amid scrutiny over child death cases.

# DSS chief Lillian Koller resigns, says her leadership has become a "distraction"

Posted by JAMIE SELF on June 2, 2014



Department of Social Services director Lillian Koller testifies for the second time at a Senate panel charged with investigating the agency's role in cases where children died.

GERRY MELENDEZ — [gmelendez@thestate.com](mailto:gmelendez@thestate.com) [Buy Photo](#)



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**January 2015**

**Governor Nikki Haley proposes \$7.1 million budget increase for DSS to hire 200 additional caseworkers and to raise employee pay.**

# Education, DSS top Haley's budget proposal

BY BENJAMIN JEFFERS – [UPDATED JANUARY 15, 2015](#)

**Source:** Greenville Journal

Discussion: **0** **Comm**

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“Haley also devoted \$7.1 million to hiring 200 additional DSS caseworkers and more than 60 caseworker assistants. The additional funds include \$1.8 million to give DSS workers a 10 percent pay raise.”



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# Massachusetts



## 2008 - 2013

# Massachusetts cuts \$137 million from child welfare funding, a reduction of 15.1%.



Highcharts.com

[download as spreadsheet](#)

	Adjusted for inflation (CPI)	NOT adjusted
<b>FY15 SWM</b>	\$818,987,413	\$818,987,413
<b>FY14</b>	\$803,012,026	\$787,436,016
<b>FY13</b>	\$777,293,337	\$749,803,189
<b>FY12</b>	\$786,464,924	\$746,160,781
<b>FY11</b>	\$801,439,855	\$738,639,317
<b>FY10</b>	\$855,012,968	\$772,676,358
<b>FY09</b>	\$912,144,909	\$816,309,511
<b>FY08</b>	\$915,106,890	\$807,621,073

### See Changes in Funding

Between  and



comparisons adjusted for inflation (CPI)





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January 2014

Disappearance and presumed death of 5-year-old receiving DCF services causes media uproar.

Mass. DCF under siege regarding handling of child welfare cases

SOURCE: JACKIE MERCHANT



00:00:02

00:00:03

TS MASSACHU

DCF UNDER SIEGE

01-08-00-01

NECN

Mass. DCF under siege regarding handling of child welfare cases

Recent cases of children like Kaydn Hancock and Jeremiah Oliver have agency, Mass. gov. accused of negligence



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February 2014

Boston Globe publishes piece claiming that children under the watch of DCF "die with alarming regularity."

# Savage toll of abuse for children in DCF care

More than 95 have died since '01, state reports say

By **Jenifer McKim** | NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING FEBRUARY 02, 2014

ARTICLE

COMMENTS ( 31 )





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April 2014

**DCF Chief resigns after discovery of missing 5-year-old's body and deaths of two infants with DCF contact occur within 15 day period.**

## DCF Chief Olga Roche Resigns After Deaths

By The Associated Press April 29, 2014 Updated Apr 29, 12:05 pm



Gov. Deval Patrick, who had earlier defended DCF chief Olga Roche, said it was clear now that Roche had the expertise to do her job but no longer had the support of the public or her staff. (Josh Reynolds/AP)





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May 2014

Lawmakers propose \$38 million increase to DCF budget.

# As Mass. DCF Moves Under New Leader, Lawmakers OK Funding Boost

*by: Sarah Birnbaum*

MAY 1, 2014

BOSTON

As the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families undergoes a change in leadership, lawmakers are trying to increase the agency's budget.

The House is recommending a \$38 million boost over last fiscal year for the department. That's roughly what Gov. Deval Patrick proposed.





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# Time for Something New

# Tennessee child welfare officials draw on lessons from aviation, call for "safety culture"



IMAGE DISTRIBUTED FOR COMMISSION TO ELIMINATE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES à Staffers from the Tennessee Department of Children's Services Offices of Child Health and Safety Noel Hengelbrok (from left), Scott Modell, and Michael Cull speak during a public meeting of the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and

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Smith deserves some c  
#Tigers



# Contrasting Reviews



Turkish Air flight TK1951 received erroneous information from the plane's radio altimeter system. The crew's response resulted in a fatal crash that claimed the lives of 4 crew members and 5 passengers.

# Contrasting Reviews

A large, modern swimming pool with a stone fireplace and lounge chairs, set against a backdrop of a large house and trees. The pool is surrounded by a concrete deck and has a stone wall on one side. The house in the background has a stone and stucco exterior, large windows, and a covered patio area. The scene is bright and sunny, with clear blue skies and lush green trees.

A 2 y/o girl in foster care left unattended drowns in the family's swimming pool.



# Expert Findings

- The Captain had close to 11,000 hours on the Boeing 737 alone. This combination of training standards and experience is apparently not enough **to protect crews from the subtle effects of automation failures** during automated, human-monitored flight.
- The documentation and training available for flight crews of the Boeing 737NG leaves important **gaps in the mental model that a crew may build up about** which systems and sensor inputs are responsible for what during an automatically flown approach.



# Expert Findings

- It is indisputable that DCS was **well aware of the hazard associated with the pool.**
- The home **should never** have been approved without a specific and shared understanding between DCS and the foster parents about the pool.
- The pool **should have been** removed or a suitably protective fence **should have been** placed around it.
- **No children should ever** have been placed in the home before one of these things happened.
- By **failing to ensure** that this hazard was either removed or mitigated, DCS **violated** CWLA and COA **standards** and its own **policy.**



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# Developing a Safety Culture

3 Transitions to a New View of Safety





**Transition 1. Blame to Accountability**

*To understand how to learn and improve as an organization.*



**Transition 2. First Stories to Second Stories**

*To dive beneath surface level descriptions of events and understand the true sources of failure and success.*

**Transition 3. Accountability up to Responsibility Down**

*Shifting from a focus on compliance to support.*

