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**On Tap at the Capitol**

March 31, 2009

### **LOBBYING FOR CHILDREN**

Advocates for children's issues will be at the Capitol in force today to try to stave off budget cuts that could hurt kids. Advocates say programs that care for abandoned and neglected children have seen \$24 million in current year cuts, and would have a hard time sustaining more in the coming budget year.

Experts in child welfare and others in town for "children's week," will attend a kick-off breakfast Tuesday morning. Speakers include Department of Children and Families Secretary George Sheldon, Rep. Erik Fresen, R-Miami, and Karen Burns, who recently adopted four siblings with state help. Also at the Capitol on Tuesday will be hundreds of foster and adoptive parents, lobbying the Legislature to keep programs that help people adopt. (Kickoff breakfast for advocates: 7:30 a.m., Doubletree Hotel, 101 S. Adams, Tallahassee; Adoptive and foster parents pancake breakfast: 8 a.m., Senate portico.)

### **KIDS TOWN HALL MEETING**

Middle and high school students and college freshmen will get to ask questions of the Children and Youth Cabinet at its "Kids Only" Town Hall meeting Tuesday. The 12-member student panel was selected from applicants statewide and will get a chance to grill the cabinet members on issues important to them. Lt. Gov. Jeff Kottkamp will chair the meeting. (10 a.m., Tallahassee City Commission Chambers, City Hall, 300 S. Adams St., Tallahassee.)