

Treasure Coast Child Summit: Working together to protect local kids

More than 200 professionals, community leaders, advocates and representatives from child-serving organizations gathered Sept. 23-24 in Fort Pierce for the 2026 Treasure Coast Child Summit, a free two-day educational event focused on strengthening the community's ability to recognize risks, respond to concerns, and better protect children.

Hosted by Guardians for New Futures the annual Summit was held at Indian River State College Public Safety Training Complex in Fort Pierce.

The event brought together experts from law enforcement, mental health, the legal field, child advocacy and other professionals to address critical issues impacting children and families – topics included, among others, autism, grooming, artificial intelligence, online exploitation, child abuse prevention and emerging threats to child safety.

Throughout the Summit, presenters provided practical knowledge and real-world insight to help attendees better recognize risks and respond to concerns. The overarching message was clear: Protecting children is a shared community responsibility, and meaningful change happens when we work together. ■



Clockwise from above left: Sarah Marie Henry, Debbie Butler and Kevin Kwan; Debbie Butler, Okeechobee Sgt. Cristina Torres, St. Lucie County Sgt. Marcus Stigmon and Det. Corporal Eric Wax; Martin County Lt. Christopher Morales with Suzanne Mogavero; Marion County Sheriff Billy Woods; Sarah Marie Henry with BACA (Bikers Against Child Abuse) members; Gold Law attorney Michael Kugler; Kenesha Hennings and Julia Medina.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARVANN KETCHAM