

Family First Prevention Services Act:

Brief Summary of Select Provisions and Opportunities

Family First Prevention Services Act: A Real Transformational Opportunity



- **Landmark legislation:** Most significant child welfare law in 20 years
- Dramatically **alters the federal financing structure** for child welfare programming
- Provides the legislative foundation for states to **substantially transform their child welfare systems to:**
 - Reorient their child welfare systems around prevention and **FAMILY**
 - Increase quality family-based placements for children and youth who enter foster care
 - Right size congregate care to create effective continuum to meet needs

Leveraging Family First to Promote Child Welfare System Transformation

Prevention

Evidence Based
Interventions

High Quality
Group Care

Other Major
Provisions

Family First Provisions to Stabilize Families



Prevention

- Beginning Oct 1, 2019, states will have the option to use title IV-E federal funds for evidence-based preventive services/programs (EBPs) for children and youth determined to be *at imminent risk of foster care*, as well as for *pregnant and parenting youth in foster care*.
- Prevention services are for children/parents/kin caregivers regardless of income, and defined as:
 - Skill based parenting programs – individual and family counseling, parenting skills and parent education
 - Substance abuse treatment and prevention
 - Mental health treatment

Family First Provisions to Stabilize Families



Prevention

- To elect the option, states must seek approval from the federal government of a statewide *five-year Prevention Plan* that prompts careful consideration of:
 - selected EBPs
 - target populations
 - intended outcomes
 - eligibility for services
 - workforce development and prevention caseloads
 - mechanism for assessing risk/safety of children served
 - trauma-informed approach to prevention
 - coordination and collaboration with partners to support a full continuum of care
 - evaluation and continuous quality improvement for prevention programs

Family First Provisions to Stabilize Families



Prevention

- **Eliminates Income Test for Prevention Services:** No child or family test for income.
- Preventive services can be federally funded for up to **12 months** at a time; additional 12-month periods are allowable with redeterminations of candidacy/need.
- A child-specific **prevention plan** is required for each child at imminent risk of foster care; the case plan is updated to include prevention services for pregnant/parenting teens
- **Federal Reimbursement** 50% for services, training, and administrative costs
- **Maintenance of Effort** provision to ensure that title IV-E spending does not replace historical spending on prevention EBPs.

Family First Provisions to Focus on Evidence

- HHS will conduct a systematic review of services & publish their level of evidence via an *Evidence-Based Clearinghouse* in four program/service areas.

Evidence
Based
Interventions

Parenting
Skills

Substance-
Use Disorder

Mental
Health

Kinship
Navigation

- HHS will allow transitional funding for programs states demonstrate by Oct 1, 2021, have been through an independent systematic review which confirms the evidence meet federal standards, until the program can be rated by the Clearinghouse.

Family First Provisions to Focus on Evidence

Evidence Based Interventions

- The Clearinghouse rates the evidence of programs as either *promising*, *supported*, *well-supported* or *does not meet criteria* based on their measurable positive outcomes. A program might not be able to be rated depending on the study design, execution or available program documentation.

Does not
meet Criteria

Promising

Supported

Well-
Supported

- The evidence rating of the programs also dictates whether a jurisdiction must conduct an evaluation or may request a waiver of that requirement.

Family First provisions to support right-sizing group care

High
Quality
Group Care

- Restricts federal financial support for children in child care institutions to:
 - ✓ Facilities that meet the *Qualified Residential Treatment Program* (QRTP) criteria (e.g., accredited, trauma informed, engages family and provides after care, accessible clinical staff) for any child's stay beyond 2 weeks.
 - ✓ Children who have an assessment completed within 30 days of placement that indicates their clinical needs are best met in that setting.
- Additional safeguards for children placed in QRTPs include specific case planning requirements, review and hearing requirements, and court approval of placements.

Other Family First provisions to support children in families



Other
Family
Support
Provisions

- Federal investment in kinship navigation services
- Title IV-E funds can support an eligible child in foster care placed with their parent in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility
- Title IV-B funds can be used to provide reunification services while children and youth are in care, and up to 15 months post-reunification.
- Authorizes grants to states to recruit and retain high quality foster parents

Transformative Opportunities that could be leveraged in Family First



- ✓ **Transforming** the child welfare focus from foster care to prevention, increased family stability, and well-being
- ✓ **Engaging** the community in reimagining the role of the child welfare system
- ✓ **Applying** a trauma-responsive lens to the continuum of prevention and out of home services
- ✓ **Partnering** across systems (mental health, substance use, juvenile justice, early childhood, health, etc.) to align prevention efforts
- ✓ **Expanding** the evidence base in child welfare and spreading innovative practices
- ✓ **Reinventing** the business model of residential care providers to best serve families
- ✓ **Aligning** processes for deploying clinical and functional assessments

For more information contact us
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