

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT[441]

Notice of Intended Action

Proposing rulemaking related to family-centered services and providing an opportunity for public comment

The Department of Health and Human Services hereby proposes to rescind Chapter 172, “Family-Centered Services,” Iowa Administrative Code, and to adopt a new Chapter 172 with the same title.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code section 234.6.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code section 234.6.

Purpose and Summary

This proposed chapter underwent a Red Tape Review pursuant to Executive Order 10. As part of that review, restrictive terms were removed, duplicative information was streamlined, and language was changed to be in line with modern procedures and practices.

This proposed rulemaking defines and describes procedures for delivery of family-centered services. Family-centered services are services designed to prevent a child from entering foster care and to assist families when the needs of a child, parent, or kinship foster caregiver are directly related to the safety, permanency, or well-being of the child. The proposed rulemaking describes the service definitions, eligibility criteria, and procedures for client appeals.

Regulatory Analysis

A Regulatory Analysis for this rulemaking was published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on June 10, 2026. A public hearing was held on the following date(s):

- June 30, 2026

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Department for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 441—Chapter 2504.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking, which must be received by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m. on August 11, 2026. Comments should be directed to:

Victoria L. Daniels
Department of Health and Human Services
Lucas State Office Building
321 East 12th Street

Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.829.6021
Email: compliancerules@hhs.iowa.gov

Public Hearing

Public hearings at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

August 11, 2026 10 to 10:30 a.m.	Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 236 367 247 016 22 Passcode: Zz9hm7xR
August 11, 2026 2 to 2:30 p.m.	Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 255 612 002 852 701 Passcode: 7pL7pY24

Persons who wish to make oral comments at a public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Department and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Rescind 441—Chapter 172 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 172 FAMILY-CENTERED SERVICES

441—172.1(234) Definitions.

“*Case*” means at least one child in a household is involved in department services with a department social work case manager.

“*Child*” or “*children*” means a person or persons who meet the definition of a child in Iowa Code section 234.1(1).

“*Child abuse*” means one or more of the categories of child abuse defined in Iowa Code section 232.68(2).

“*Child abuse assessment*” means an assessment process by which the department responds to all accepted reports that allege child abuse as defined in Iowa Code section 232.68(2), or that allege child abuse as defined in Iowa Code section 232.68(2) that also allege imminent danger, death, or injury to a child. A child abuse assessment results in a disposition and a determination of whether a case meets the definition of child abuse and a determination of whether criteria for placement on the registry are met.

“*Child in need of assistance*” means the same as set forth in Iowa Code section 232.2(8).

“*Contractor*” means a private organization authorized to do business in Iowa that has entered into a contract with the department to provide one or more of the services defined in this chapter.

“*Family-centered services*” means the services provided by contract pursuant to Iowa Code section 232.102A(1) “b.”

“*Household*” means the place where a child resides.

“*Kinship foster caregiver*” means the same as set forth in 441—Chapter 125.

“*Permanency*” means a child has a safe, stable, custodial environment in which to grow up and a lifelong relationship with a nurturing caregiver.

“Protective capacities” means the family strengths or resources that reduce, control, or prevent risks from arising or from having an unsafe impact on a child.

“Risk” means the probability or likelihood that a child will experience maltreatment.

“Safe” or *“safety”* means that no signs of present or impending danger to a child are identified or that one or more signs of present or impending danger are identified but the child’s degree of vulnerability or the caregiver’s protective capacities offset the current threat. The child is not likely to be in imminent danger of maltreatment.

441—172.2(234) Family-centered services. Family-centered services are services designed to prevent the child from entering foster care and to assist the family when the needs of the child, parent, or kinship foster caregiver are directly related to the safety, permanency, or well-being of the child. The outcome of the services may be to maintain the child with a parent or in the home of the kinship foster caregiver, to reunify the child safely with a parent or kinship foster caregiver, or to achieve permanent family connections for the child.

172.2(1) Family-centered services provide interventions and supports based on identified needs of children and families that have come to the department’s attention because of:

- a. Evaluation of a child abuse assessment or child in need of assistance assessment and the family’s risk assessment score; or
- b. The child’s adjudication as a child in need of assistance pursuant to Iowa Code section 232.2; or
- c. The child’s placement out of home under the department’s care and supervision.

172.2(2) Family-centered services are designed to:

- a. Identify and build on the family’s strengths and enhance the family’s protective capacities;
- b. Address the risk factors that affect the child’s safety, permanency, and well-being;
- c. Strengthen family connections to community resources and informal support systems in order to promote greater self-reliance; and
- d. Remain respectful of the family’s unique background and needs.

172.2(3) Family-centered services will utilize evidence-based interventions to the greatest possible extent.

172.2(4) Family-centered services may be offered to the following persons:

- a. A child eligible for services under the provisions laid out in this rule;
- b. Any sibling of that child who resides in the same household at the time of service referral or moves into the household during the service delivery period; and
- c. A parent, stepparent, or kinship foster caregiver of the child.

172.2(5) During the time that a child and the child’s family are approved to receive family-centered services on an open case, the department will be responsible for maintaining case management, including contact with the child and family to ensure that:

- a. The factors that present risks of harm to the safety and well-being of all children in the family are being adequately addressed; and
- b. Services and supports are in place to achieve the child’s permanency goal.

441—172.3(234) Authorization. When the department has approved provision of family-centered services for a child and family, the department will notify the contractor by issuing the referral and authorization for child welfare services form. This authorization form will indicate:

172.3(1) The specific service category authorized; and

172.3(2) The duration of the authorization.

441—172.4(234) Client appeals. Clients may appeal the department’s decision pursuant to 441—Chapter 2506 when:

1. The client’s application for services as described in this chapter is denied, or
2. The services are terminated.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 234.6.