

## HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT[441]

### Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 441—Chapter 172  
“Family-Centered Services”

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 234.6

State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code section 234.6

### *Public Hearing*

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

June 30, 2026  
10 a.m.

Microsoft Teams  
Meeting ID: 229 255 924 058 729  
Passcode: PQ7BW33e

### *Public Comment*

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

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### *Purpose and Summary*

This proposed rulemaking defines and describes procedures for delivery of family-centered services. The rulemaking describes the service definitions, eligibility criteria, and procedures for client appeals. 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. As a part of the Red Tape Review process laid out by Executive Order 10, restrictive terms were removed, duplicative information was streamlined, and language was changed to be in line with modern procedures and practices.

### *Analysis of Impact*

**1. Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:**

• **Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:**

This proposed rulemaking does not have a cost to the public.

• **Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:**

Children and families who are determined to be at risk for entry into the foster care system will benefit from clear and understandable rules regarding eligibility and delivery of family-centered services.

**2. Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:**

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

Since the beginning of State fiscal year 2026, HHS has provided family-centered services to nearly 3,000 families per month.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

Families with children at risk for entry into the foster care system benefit from the services that this proposed rulemaking details.

3. **Costs to the State:**

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

HHS incurs personnel and other administrative costs associated with enforcement of this proposed chapter.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

This proposed rulemaking is not expected to have any impact on State revenues.

4. **Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:**

The delivery of family-centered services is required by Iowa Code section 234.6.

5. **Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

6. **Alternative methods considered by the agency:**

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

Not applicable.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

*Small Business Impact*

**If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:**

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.

- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.

- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

**If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?**

This proposed rulemaking is not expected to have any impact on small business.

*Text of Proposed Rulemaking*

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.