

Family First Prevention Services Act
(Family First)

Analysis and Implications for Iowa

February 24, 2020


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Overview

Children do best in families!

Family First will restructure how the federal government spends money on child welfare to improve outcomes for children and families:

- Prevent the need for removal through evidence-based family preservation services
- If removal is necessary, placement in this order:
 - Relative or fictive kin
 - Licensed Foster Family
 - Congregate care (for treatment only)
- All possible strategies for keeping children with their families, or in family settings, must be explored.



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Prevention Activities Under Title IV-E

What is Different: IV-E dollars are available for Foster Care Prevention Services.

Services Eligible for Federal Financial Support:

- Mental health, substance abuse treatment services provided by a qualified clinician
- In-home, skill-based programs that include parenting skills training, parent education, and individual and family counseling
- Evidence-Based Kinship Navigator Program

Eligible Population and Criteria:

- A child who is at imminent risk of entering foster care, but can remain safely at home or in a kinship placement with receipt of services or programs
- A child in foster care who is pregnant or parenting
- A child with parents in a residential treatment facility for substance abuse

Quality of Service:

- The services described under 'eligible services' cannot be more than 12 months in duration
- Organizations providing eligible services must be Trauma-Informed
- Service must be an Evidence-Based Practice: Promising, Supported or Well-Supported

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Value of Evidence-Based Practices

- **Improvement in quality and variety of services.** Interventions are research-based and matched to the needs of children and families. Developing an array of EBPs is beneficial in effectively serving a range of families with different needs.
- **Shorter lengths of services.** Due to higher intensity and quality interactions with families, EBPs length of service is much shorter than Services as Usual (SAU).
- **Successful case closing.** Achievement of case goals for closed cases served through EBPs is higher than SAU. Goals are clearly defined, fidelity to curriculum is followed, and outcomes are demonstrated.
- **Reduction in repeat maltreatment.** Due to sustained positive impact, families that graduate from EBPs have lower rates of repeat maltreatment episodes.
- **Positive Engagement.** Because the goals of the interventions are targeted and specific, engagement in EBPs tends to be higher than SAU.

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Ensuring the Necessity of a Placement that is not in a Foster Family Home

What is Different: Limitations on federal financial participation for placements that are not in foster family homes. Designed to discourage use of institutional care settings.

Services Eligible for Federal Financial Support:

- The setting is a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP)
- Specialized setting for prenatal, post-partum and parenting program for youth
- Supervised independent living for youth 18+yo
- Residential care for youth found to have been, or at risk of, being sex-trafficked

Eligible Population and Criteria:

- A child who has been clinically assessed using an evidence-based and validated tool approved by HHS and determined:
 - specific short-term and long-term mental and behavioral health goals cannot be met in a family or family-like setting
 - the setting will provide the least restrictive environment and most appropriate level of care

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Definition of a Qualified Residential Treatment Program

Quality of Services:

- Program must be able to meet the treatment needs identified in the assessment due to the serious emotional or behavioral disorders and disturbances
- Must have a registered or licensed nursing staff available according to the treatment model identified and are reachable 24/7
- Facilitates outreach to known family members, including siblings, document outreach and efforts to include family members in treatment.
- Provide family-based aftercare support for 6-months post-discharge
- Accredited by a nationally recognized oversight body

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Pre-Implementation Activities



Completed

Spring 2018 – December 2019

- Since August 2018, there have been 48 presentations on Family First to DHS, legislators, providers, judges, county attorney and other external stakeholders. More than 20 of the presentations have been open to the public.
- Annie E Casey strategic agreement
- Statewide Training: Alia – “The Human Need for Belonging”
- CWPPG focus groups to improve Family-Centered services
- Risk assessment redesign (candidacy for foster care)
- Developed Blueprint
- Screening tool -TOP - for Problematic Sexualized Behavioral beds
- Capacity for Neurodevelopmental and Comorbid Condition (NACC) specialized beds

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Pre-Implementation Activities



Happening Now

- Kinship Navigator
- Evidence-Based Programs: Safecare and Parent Partners
- Child Safety Conferences – Eastern Service Area
- Group Care Provider Scorecard
- Family First Oversight and Design Team
 - + 5 workgroups
 - + Regional Implementation Teams
 - + Supreme Court Task Force on Family First

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Pre-Implementation Activities



In the works

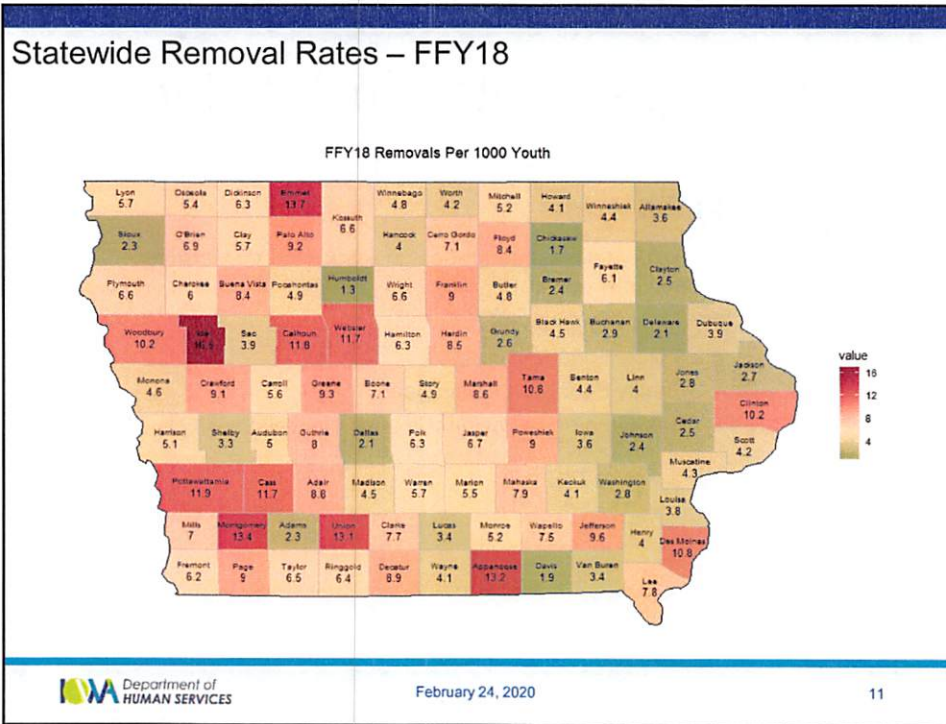
- Safety assessment redesign – Structured Decision-making Tool
- FACs replacement (CCWIS)
- 4 Questions with Judges
- Family First Data Dashboard
- Research on provisional licenses for relatives/fictive kin

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The State of Iowa

- Data Driven Decision Making

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Family or Family-like Setting

December 2019


Total number of children in foster care:	6,104
Children placed with parents, relatives, fictive kin:	3,503 (57%)
Licensed foster home:	1,715 (28%)
Group, Shelter, other non-family setting:	886 (15%)

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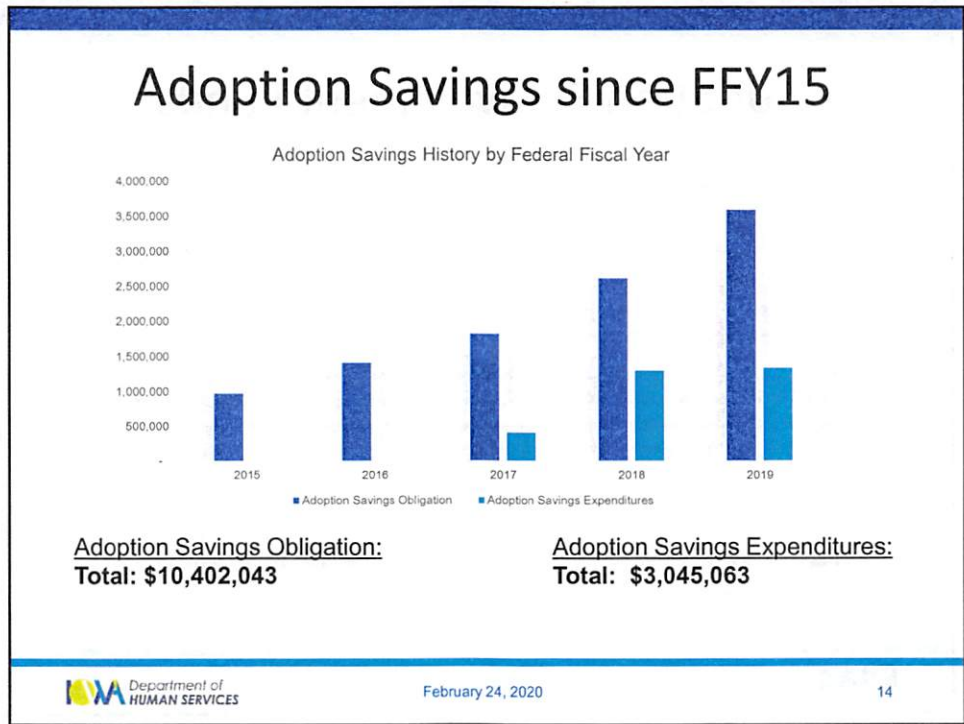
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Location of Placements: Out-of-Home Average Daily Population

Fiscal Year	Family	Group	SAL	Shelter	Total
FY 2016	1,759	635	67	147	2,608
FY 2017	1,750	576	56	148	2,530
FY 2018	1,878	521	63	130	2,592
FY 2019	1,946	479	61	163	2,649


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Iowa's Reinvestment of Adoption Savings

TOP: A scientifically validated tool used for the assessment of well-being for children in foster care. The tool produces scored ratings across 18 behavioral domains. This score impacts treatment plans and populates a Provider Scorecard.

Subsidized Guardianship: The Subsidized Guardianship Program provides financial assistance to caregivers who agree to be the legal guardian for a youth who is in foster care. Guardianship is a safe alternative to adoption, providing permanency for the youth without requiring formal termination of parental rights. The program became effective on 7/1/19.

Neurodevelopmental and Comorbid Condition group care beds: New program in group care for youth who have struggled in prior settings due to the combination of lower cognitive functioning, developmental delays, and serious emotional and behavioral concerns.

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Adoption Reinvestment Funds

- **Adoption Subsidy:** Financial support for the purpose of achieving a stable and permanent family for children who have been abused or neglected and the rights of the child's parent have been terminated.
- **Payment source of adoption subsidies:** Children either qualify for federal Title IV-E adoption assistance or state (non-IV-E) assistance, but not both. To be eligible for federal Title IV-E adoption assistance, the child must qualify as a child with special needs and meet IV-E eligibility rules.
- **Eligibility rules:** If during the month in which the child was placed in foster care, the birth family meets income guidelines for Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC) assistance, a welfare program ended in 1996.
- **What is "Delinking":** A Federal policy change in 2008 resulted in Federal fiscal support towards the adoption subsidy for children who were previously not IV-E eligible. DHS is required to calculate the amount of Federal fiscal support received due to this policy, report the savings, and reinvest the savings on services eligible under Title IV-B or other Title IV-E programs. At least 20% must be spent to strengthen and support post-adoption services. Savings cannot supplant existing funds.
- **What does this mean for Iowa:** Delinking means that more kids receiving adoption subsidy will be IV-E eligible, meaning the federal financial support pays a greater share of the costs of adoption subsidy. States are required to calculate the "state savings" that results from delinking and the state is obligated to reinvest this amount for specified purposes.
- **Ensuring States Reinvest Savings:** The federal Government Accountability Office is tasked with conducting a study to ensure states are using the money obligated due to Adoptions Reinvestment Funds.

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Questions and Comments

