



**Center *for the*
Study of
Social Policy**

Ideas into Action

Advancing Equity through Policy Implementation: Seizing the Opportunity within the Family First Prevention Services Act

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Objectives

- Understand how intentional implementation can address existing disparities and prevent hardwiring in of policies that perpetuate existing disparities
- Learn about opportunities and challenges to advancing equity specifically within Family First

Implementation: "A specified set of activities designed to put into practice an activity or program of known dimensions"

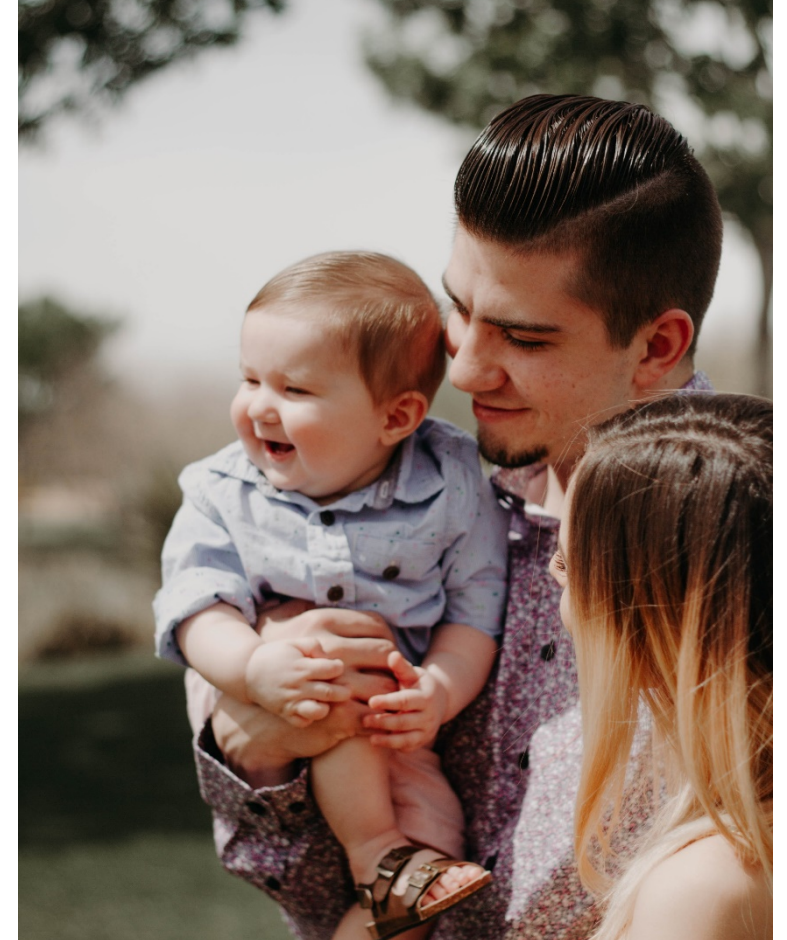


The Family First Act: A Tool for Advancing Equity



The Family First Prevention Services Act

- Family First does not advance equity on its own
- States must be intentional about reducing existing disproportionalities and disparities
- States can prevent the hardwiring of new policy and processes that reinforce existing inequities
- Creates an opportunity to undo existing systemic and institutional racism
- This must be an iterative process with continuous quality improvement strategies built in





Overview

- Supports keeping children at home with their families when safe
- New Title IV-E prevention funding must support and not supplant existing investments in prevention (available FY2020)
- Promotes appropriate placements for youth who must enter foster care
- Prioritizes family-based placements and provides new model foster home licensing standards
- Creates safeguards against placing children unnecessarily in congregate care
- Extends Chafee services for youth in care





Prevention Services



- **Eligibility:**
 - Children who are candidates for foster care
 - Parents and caregivers of children who are candidates
 - Pregnant and parenting youth in foster care
- **Services:**
 - Mental health, substance abuse, in-home parent skill-based programs, and kinship navigator programs
- **Evidence Criteria:**
 - Well-supported, supported, promising
 - Clearinghouse guidance recently released; waiting for initial program ratings
 - Guidance for tribes operating IV-E systems
- **Requires states to submit a Title IV-E Prevention Plan**



Prevention Services



Opportunities	Challenges
<i>Implement an Array of Available Services</i>	<i>Over Surveillance of Families of Candidates and Pregnant and Parenting Youth</i>
<i>Invest in Growing the Evidence</i>	<i>Broad Definition of Candidacy</i>
<i>Contribute to a Continuum of Prevention Services</i>	<i>Restrictive Services</i>



How Family First Advances Equity



Engage the broader **community**



Responsibly defining **candidacy**



Develop an **array** of prevention services



Invest in growing the **evidence**



Engage the Broader Community



- **Engage families** – those who have and have not participated in prevention services
- Meaningfully include **youth voice**
- Include **partner agencies** and **community stakeholders** to gain multiple perspectives about the needs of children and families
- Go beyond the usual suspects – engage child welfare staff at the **county and local level**





Engage the Broader Community



- **Promote a shared investment** in developing the plan will also lead to shared accountability — ensuring that quality services are effectively implemented
- Create mechanisms for and **commit to continuous** engagement and feedback





Responsibly Defining Candidacy



- Evaluate **state and local data** to understand the needs of children and families
- Extreme care and attention must be taken so that the definition of candidacy **does not further structural and institutional racism.**
- States should not define candidacy so broadly that the potential of federal funds results in children and families becoming **involved with child welfare unnecessarily.**





Developing an Array of Prevention Services



Develop a broad range of prevention services that can meet the unique needs of families



Analyze data and disaggregate by race, sexual orientation, gender identity, other needs.

Consider promising approaches that have a **strong fit** for your children and families.

Include targeted services for pregnant and parenting youth, post-reunification, guardianship and adoption.



Developing an Array of Prevention Services



- Utilize the **Hexagon tool** as part of request for proposals
- Increase mechanisms for **transparency and continuous quality learning**
- **Contracting** for equity

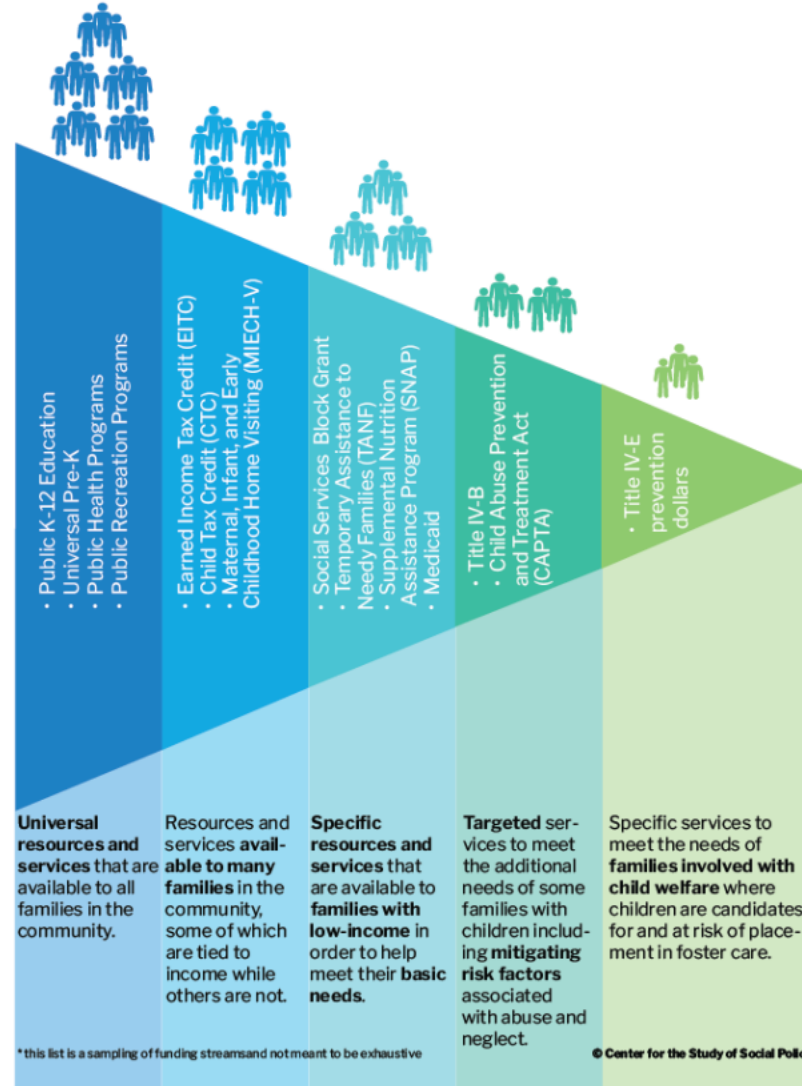




Ensuring a Shared Prevention Vision



Financing Streams to Support Prevention Programs for Families





Invest in Growing the Evidence



Only a small number of evidence-based programs have been normed on children and families disproportionately involved with child welfare – and for whom the greatest disparities exist

- Identify local interventions that work to achieve positive outcomes for children and families
- Utilize maintenance of effort dollars (MOE) to support innovation
- Identify public-private partnerships
- Invest in communities of color implementing promising and effective approaches
- Look to tribes operating Title IV-E systems
- Look to National Quality Improvement Centers
- Document adaptations and share this information



Ensuring Appropriate Placements in Care



Ensuring Appropriate Placements



- **Promoting appropriate placements:**
 - Array of placements
 - Recruitment and retention of foster parents
 - Support for kin
 - Assessments of need
 - Judicial oversight
- **Qualified Residential Treatment Program requirements:**
 - Case planning, family engagement, accreditation, needs-based
- **Exclusions:**
 - Pregnant and parenting youth, Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and independent living programs

Ensuring Appropriate Placements



Opportunities	Challenges
<i>Reducing Disproportionality and Disparities</i>	<i>Increase in Disproportionality and Disparities</i>
<i>Professional Standards Inclusive of SOGIE Principles</i>	<i>Pathologizing Older Youth Behaviors</i>
<i>Require Non-Discrimination and SOGIE Principles in Contracts</i>	<i>Youth Placed in Overly Restrictive Settings (at-risk of CSEC, PPY)</i>
<i>Expanded and Targeted Recruitment and Retention</i>	<i>Faith-Based Providers who Discriminate</i>



How Family First Advances Equity



Reduce disparities in congregate care through:



- Focus on **targeted** foster parent recruitment and retention
- Implement policies to **prevent unintended** placements



Foster parent recruitment and retention



- Implement foster parent **recruitment and retention strategies** for youth who are over-represented in congregate care, including LGBTQ youth, teenagers, youth with behavioral health needs and those who are expectant or parenting.
- Invest in **targeted training** for foster parents.
- Provide **in-home support** for foster parents.





Policies to promote positive placements



- Develop guidance to **reduce unintended consequences** of placement of youth in more restrictive settings
- Ensure appropriate assessments of all youth in care to ensure safety while **preventing bias** from influencing placement decisions
- Review your current foster family **licensing standards** and compare to the national standards.





Key Takeaways and Resources



Key Takeaways

1. **Implementation is key** to actively ensuring equity and preventing unintended consequences.
2. **Equity isn't just an "add on."** It must be core to implementation.
3. **Intentionally focusing on equity** should help states better meet the mandates of Family First.



Q&A





Resources from CSSP

- *10 Ways to Advance Equity and Well-Being through FFPSA:*
<https://cssp.org/resource/seizing-the-opportunity/>
- *Responsibly Defining Candidacy within the Context of FFPSA: Five Principles to Consider:*
<https://cssp.org/resource/responsibly-defining-candidacy/>
- *Supporting All Families: Financing Streams to Support Prevention Programs:*
<https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Policy-Financing-a-Comprehensive-Prevention-Continuum.pdf>
- *FFPSA: Pregnant and Parenting Youth FAQs:* <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Family-First-FAQs.pdf>
- *Opportunities for Progress: Better Serving Families with Domestic Violence through FFPSA:*
<https://cssp.org/resource/opportunities-for-progress-domestic-violence-ffpsa/>



Resources from CSSSP

- *Out of the Shadows: Supporting LGBTQ Youth in Child Welfare through Cross-System Collaborations:* <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Out-of-the-Shadows-Supporting-LGBTQ-youth-in-child-welfare-through-cross-system-collaboration-web.pdf>
- *Achieving Racial Equity: Child Welfare Policy Strategies to Improve Outcomes for Children of Color:* <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/achieving-racial-equity-child-welfare-policy-strategies-improve-outcomes-children-color.pdf>
- *Expanding the Evidence Universe: Doing Better by Knowing More:* <https://cssp.org/resource/expanding-the-evidence-universe/>
- *Placing Equity Concerns at the center of Knowledge Development:* <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Putting-Equity-at-the-Center-of-Knowledge-Development.pdf>