



FAMILY FIRST ACT

How does it align with what we've
already been doing around

PREVENTION

The Family First Act moves toward a public health approach to child welfare and focuses investment on prevention, allowing child welfare professionals to use interventions that help families in crisis stay together whenever it is safe to do so.

Family First provides long overdue federal investment in prevention for children at risk of foster care. The act supports evidence-based prevention efforts that help us make better, more informed decisions for greater positive impact for children and their families – and shift us away from the status quo.

Prevention services can include mental health supports, treatment and services, substance use disorder treatment and services and in-home parenting supports.

This should sound familiar...
because Family First Is Us!



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KINSHIP CARE

When children and teens cannot remain safely at home with their parents, they should live with relatives or close friends whenever possible. Research indicates living with relatives is less traumatic than non-relative care for young people who have experienced abuse or neglect. (Children's Bureau, 2018)

Family First offers additional support for relative caregivers by providing federal funds for evidence-based kinship support programs that links extended family members to a broad range of services to help them create a safe home for the child.

Family First also requires states and tribes to document how their foster licensing standards accommodate relative caregivers.

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FAMILY FOSTER CARE

For children and youth who must be placed in foster care, the Family First Act emphasizes the importance of the least restrictive family-like setting appropriate to a child's needs.

The Family First Act provides opportunities to ensure children are placed with loving families that are highly qualified, well-trained, and supported.

When foster care is needed, Family First allows federal reimbursement for care in family-based settings.

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CONGREGATE CARE

While there are instances when a child requires intensive therapeutic services to heal, a young person should never spend their childhood in institutional care.

Facility and staff – no matter how excellent – are never an adequate replacement for family. Institutions serving our nation's most vulnerable children, including group homes and residential treatment programs, must deliver the highest quality care, be held to standards of excellence, and be time-limited so that children can return to families and their communities.

Family First provides treatment programs called Qualified Residential Treatment Programs – or **QRTP** for short – that are short-term and customized, providing support while kids are living with families – birth parents, relatives, close friends or foster caregivers.

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OLDER YOUTH

The Family First Act also addresses the over-reliance of placing children in group care or congregate care homes. Studies have shown that children living in such facilities have poorer outcomes than their peers in family-based foster homes. (Dozier, 2014)

We must do more to support young people who have spent much of their childhood in foster care and will age-out and transition to adulthood without having achieved permanency.

The Family First Act includes important improvements for older youth services in the child welfare system, including supporting youth transitioning from care.

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