



What Early Childhood Advocates Should Know

What is the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)?

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) was signed into law as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018. This ground-breaking legislation reshapes child welfare funding to promote prevention services for children at imminent risk of out-of-home placement. It also sets criteria to promote placement in high-quality family foster care – including kinship care – and limit the use of congregate care setting unless needed for time-limited treatment. The intention of funding these prevention services is to safely keep families together. States are implementing the provisions of the law now. Parents, advocates, child welfare agencies, providers, and state leaders all can be a voice to ensure that implementation is strong and robust and aims to strengthen families.

What are the Prevention Services Supported by Title IV-E of the Social Services Act?

States and tribes will have the ability to use Title IV-E funding to support prevention services for children at imminent risk of out-of-home care and their parents – biological, adoptive and caregivers.

These evidence-based services will address:

- Mental health
- Substance abuse; and
- In-home parent skill-based programs
- Kinship Navigator Programs

States have the option of receiving 50 percent reimbursement for these services as early as October 1, 2019, however, states have the option of determining when they opt in.

What are the Other Requirements of the law?

- **Candidates for Care:** States individually can define the qualification of a child who is at “imminent risk of foster care,” which allows the ability to be creative but also family focused.
- **Duration of Prevention Services:** The 12-month period in which the service is offered can be utilized for additional 12-month periods, if needed; it can also be provided after a child has returned home from out-of-home care under Title IV-B funding.
- **Parents and Other Caregivers are Eligible for Services:** Biological parents are not the only individual as defined to receive the service. Also included are caregivers, kinship caretakers, adoptive parents, and pregnant and parenting youth in foster care.

- **Evidentiary Standards for Prevention Programs:** Services must meet the qualifications of “evidence-based,” which are further defined as “Well-Supported,” “Supported,” and “Promising.” The prevention programs currently eligible for reimbursement can be found on the Title IV-E Clearinghouse website. In addition, [the Administration for Children is seeking public input on other evidence-based prevention programs that the Clearinghouse should consider for inclusion as an evidence-based program.](#)

Who are the key Stakeholders and Organizations in the Child Welfare field?

- Children & Families, including foster parents, kin caregivers, and fictive caregivers
- Public child welfare agencies, including caseworkers, supervisors, administrators who have primary responsibility for responding to reports of abuse and neglect
- Tribes
- Other public agencies serving children including Medicaid, substance abuse and mental health agencies, public health departments, public housing agencies, educational agencies and agencies administering TANF and other needed services
- Service Providers, including public and private providers who contract with child protective agencies to provide services to families within child welfare systems
- Community institutions, including schools, law enforcement, physicians, hospitals, churches, parent organizations, and faith-based organizations
- Family Courts, judges and attorneys
- Policymakers, including city, county, federal and state legislators
- Public health, juvenile justice, early childhood, mental health, housing, education advocates

What are the key opportunities for Early Childhood Advocates to Support Prevention Efforts under FFPSA?

Although a handful of states intend to implement the prevention program under FFPSA this year, many states are working to develop their prevention programs, including identifying the populations and geographical service areas; identifying the prevention services and programs children and families need; and working to integrate services and systems to seamlessly provide services that strengthen and safely keep families together. Early childhood advocates can join existing implementation efforts by:

- **Participating in Statewide and Regional Meetings Regarding FFPSA Implementation:** Many states have set up regional convenings by elected officials, child welfare agencies, foster parent associations and others working on FFPSA implementation.
- **Connecting with Child Welfare Agencies:** Advocates should contact child welfare agencies, state and local elected officials and other key stakeholders in your state to inquire about how you can join FFPSA implementation efforts;
- **Leveraging Early Childhood Contacts and Programs to Influence Prevention Efforts:** Use existing early childhood contacts and opportunities in early childhood programs to connect with child welfare advocates and practitioners working on FFPSA implementation. The following two examples may provide pathways for early childhood advocates to work on FFPSA implementation:
 - Needs Assessment in the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program: Connecting with the MIECHV agency in your state to highlight the ways in which the needs assessment should include the needs of children and families in danger

of entering foster care and/or the needs of pregnant and parenting youth in foster care is a way to influence FFPSA implementation;

- Strategic Planning for the Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five: Similarly, highlighting the needs of children in danger of entering care in the strategic planning for the Preschool Development Grant can lead to partnerships with others on the implementation of FFPSA.
- **Partnering with Prevention Programs:** Partnering with prevention programs and services in your community to highlight effective programs to state and county child welfare agencies. In addition, early childhood advocates who are aware of the community programs in their states should consider highlighting those programs to federal agency officials who are determining the programs that the Title IV-E Clearinghouse is evaluating for eligibility for reimbursement. For additional information regarding submitting evidence-based programs to the Clearinghouse, click [here](#).

What States are implementing Prevention Programs under FFPSA this year?

To date, four states and the District of Columbia have filed Title IV-E Plans with the federal agency and indicated the intention to offer IV-E prevention services this year (See information regarding their plans below):

- Arkansas
- [Kansas](#)
- [Kentucky](#)
- [Nebraska](#)
- Utah
- [Washington, DC](#)

Where can we access more information regarding FFPSA?

- [National Conference of State Legislatures Resources regarding the state implementation of FFPSA](#)
- [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#) provides information regarding the evidence-based prevention programs eligible for reimbursement under Title IV-E.
- [Family First Act information, summaries, webinars and articles](#) compiled by national advocates and philanthropic organizations.
- [Child welfare financing information researched and compiled by Child Trends](#)
- [Communications Toolkit](#) prepared by Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Resources regarding FFPSA and broader child welfare policy by the [Casey Family Programs](#), which works in 50 states and with numerous territories and tribes to support long-lasting improvements in the safety and success of children and families.