

Family to Family

Elements of Family First shifting Foster Care

Let's set the stage...

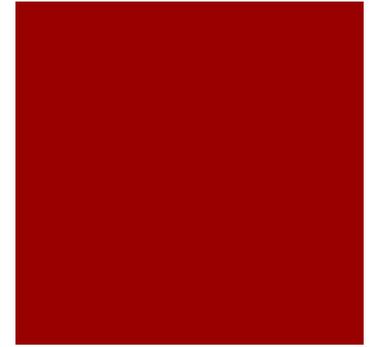
- H.R. 1892 was signed in law when President Trump signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 in February 2018.
- The Act allows states, territories, and tribes with approved IV-e plans to exercise the option to fund prevention services to allow agencies to keep families together rather than place children into foster care.
- The Act seeks to reduce state reliance on group homes and residential care and places a greater emphasis on family foster care.



For purposes of this session, we are only discussing the components of the Family First Act that can expect to impact the roles of foster parents.

Prevention Services

The prevention services that are considered in the Act are secondary prevention services...meaning that they are targeting prevention of foster care placement. (Primary prevention services are those that strive to prevent abuse and neglect from occurring.)



Types of Prevention Services

- Mental Health Services
- Substance abuse prevention & treatment
- In-home parent skill-based programs
- Residential parent-child substance abuse treatment programs

Requirements of Prevention Services

- Each episode of treatment can not exceed 12 months.
- Services must be evidenced-based.
- At least 50% of reimbursed cost must be for at least a “well-supported program.
- Services must be trauma-informed.

Requirements for approved Prevention Services

In order for states to fund prevention services through the federal IV-e program, the services must be:

- Promising Practices: the service must have been tested in at least one study and has been rated moderate to high in at least one target outcome.
- Supported Practice: the service must have been tested as a study in actual practice and been rated moderate to high and demonstrates sustained positive impact for at least six months beyond treatment in one or more target outcomes.
- Well-Supported Practice: the service must have been completed in a practice setting through at least 2 studies and at least one study documents prolonged positive impact for at least 12 months beyond the end of treatment in one or more target outcomes.



The Act eliminates the timeframes for reunification. This can have a significant impact on children awaiting permanency, if we do NOT embrace and progress prevention services to families.

Encouragement from the Children's Bureau



The Children's Bureau has encouraged states to “envision a vastly improved way of serving children and families, one that focuses on strengthening their protective and nurturing capacities instead of separating them.”

What can this mean for traditional foster care?

A model role for foster parents

This encouragement from the Children's Bureau could lead states to expand the role of foster parents. Such roles which could be considered are:

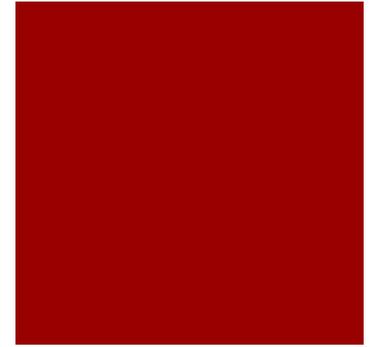
- Mentors to Birth/Kinship Families;
- Parent to Parent support for Birth/Kinship Families;
- Respite Care; and
- Resource and Training Navigators.



Now is the time for state's to become innovative!

Stay updated with the [NCSL](#).

Tips for supporting birth/kinship families



- Acknowledge your own feelings about the birth/kinship family. You may need some assistance in developing empathy for their situation.
- Recognize that developing a positive, nurturing relationship with the birth/kinship family is more likely to allow opportunity for the child to still count on you in their life.
- The child can best benefit when all adults in their lives are working together.

Specific actions that support reunification.

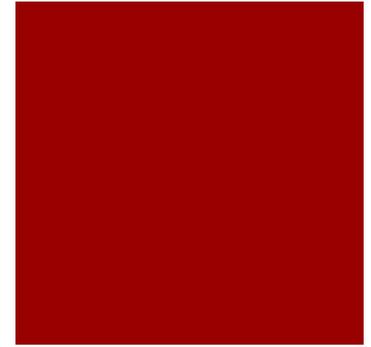
- Encourage the child, if appropriate, to keep a journal of things that are happening in their lives each day, so that their family can know about what they have been doing or how they have been feeling. Let them keep this journal and share with their birth parents or kinship family, when they are comfortable sharing it.
- Keep your comments about their family positive. Don't tear down the parents, children will associate that negativity with themselves and/or jump into a defender posture which is not healthy for their healing.



Foster Focus
magazine
provide
some steps
for
developing
positive
relationships
with
birthparents

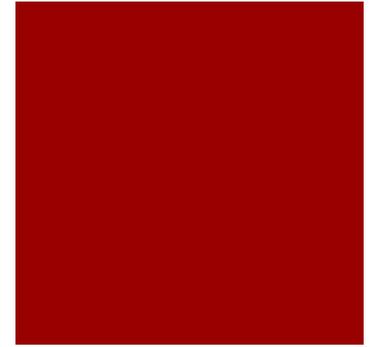
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Supporting Kinship



- Kinship caregivers seldom receive the training and support offered to foster families. Developing a relationship with them will allow them the benefit of all you have learned as well as all you have learned from the child's perspective.
- Be available to help them, this will ease the separation children will experience when leaving your home. Ask your agency, if you can offer to be a respite caregiver for the child.
- If the kinship caregivers is not familiar with the child, try to understand that there can be a number of reasons they became estranged from the birth parents. Offer to help in the transition to their home through play-dates or small meet-ups that ease everyone into the new relationship.

Where do we start in evolving the role of foster care?



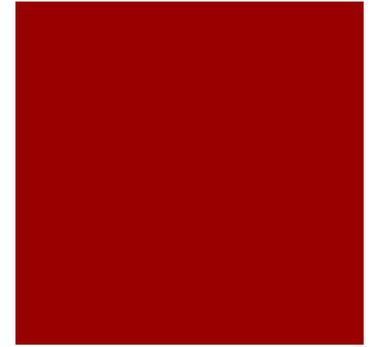
According to NCSL, there have been 73 introduced state bills from 29 states since the signing of the Act.

- Ask your state legislators to keep you informed on their actions in implementing the federal Family First Act.
- Ask your state association to ensure that the foster family voice is included in state level committees planning for the implementation of Family First.
- Request training in ways to best engage with birth and kinship families, so that children have a continuity bond throughout their experience.

Explore CHAMPS

CHAMPS is a partnership of national organizations working together to achieve quality, stable foster parenting. The goals of CHAMPS are closely aligned with Family First requirements. Two foundations of the CHAMPS goals are:

- Support relationships between birth and foster families.
- Prioritize placements with family members.



Resources

- [National Foster Parent Association](#)
- [American Bar Association](#)
- [CHAMPS](#)
- [Chronicle of Social Change](#)

