



DEVELOPING AND EXPANDING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION SERVICES IN MONTANA

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Child and Family Services Division



STRATEGIC PLAN
August 2020

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OVERVIEW OF THE FFPSA

On February 9, 2018, the landmark bipartisan Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) was signed into law. The FFPSA includes reforms that support keeping children and youth, where possible, safely with their families, and helps ensure they are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to their special needs when foster care is needed.

The FFPSA creates an expanded 50% reimbursement stream of federal funds to provide specific evidence-based models for in-home parenting, mental health and substance use disorder services to keep children and youth safely with their families without regards to income.

In addition, FFPSA increased the requirements for specific congregate care settings when youth with emotional and behavioral disturbance requiring special treatment and are unable to be cared for safely in a family-like setting.

With the Family First Prevention Services Act, the state has an opportunity to continue modernizing the child welfare system and enhance prevention services to strengthen families and prevent abuse and neglect. All children deserve the opportunity to grow up in safe, stable and nurturing families. The Family First Prevention Services Act represents meaningful steps towards better aligning federal child welfare policy with this critical vision for Montana's children and families.



MONTANA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FFPSA

Montana initiated a state, county, and stakeholder collaborative effort to create an Implementation Project that represents understanding, planning, and initial execution of the FFPSA. This includes the development and execution of sub-projects currently underway that specifically align to provisions of FFPSA to ensure effective implementation on or before October of next year.

The structure for this work included:

- Creation of the following sub-projects, with assigned stakeholder sub-groups, as part of the Montana Family First Project Implementation Plan:
 - Prevention Services Plan Implementation
 - New Standards for Practice Models - Trauma-Informed Care Requirements
 - Transition to Using Clearinghouse of Prevention Services
 - Data Collection and Evaluation - Outcome Assessment and Reporting
 - Technical Assistance and Best Practices

- Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTF) – Designation and Management
 - Training Improvements for Courts and Legal System
 - Mental Health Diagnosis Protocol Improvements
 - Assessment Process Improvements for Placement in Qualified Residential Treatment Programs
 - Review and Improve Placement Licensing Standards
 - Defining Continuing Support for Child and Family Services (Foster Family Support)
 - Kinship Navigator Program Support and Enhancement
 - Tribal Child Welfare Coordination
 - Statewide Plan to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities
 - Children Aging out of Foster Care
 - Streamlining ICPC Placement and Reducing Delays
- Development of an internal FFPSA Leadership Team
 - A designated group of Child and Family Services representatives responsible for providing day-to-day direction, work, review, and decision-making functions for the FFPSA work in Montana
 - Utilization of the State Advisory Council for on-going oversight and implementation feedback





MONTANA CONTEXT

CFSD Core Values

- Children have the right to grow and develop in safe and permanent family environments.
- The safety of children is dependent on the actions/omissions of adults.
- When families and communities collaborate, the possibility for success is increased.
- The safety of children in our care is dependent upon multi-level stewardship of human and financial resources.

Vision Statement

Keeping Children Safe and Families Strong is the vision that drives CFSD's work in Montana and complements the Division's Statement of Purpose, which is to protect children who have been or are at substantial risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment.

We strive to assure that all children have a family who will protect them from harm.

We recognize the protective capacities of families and incorporate them in assessments, decision-making, and actions with the goal of improving safety, permanency and well-being for children.

We encourage our communities to strengthen their prevention efforts and to share responsibility for the safety of its children and families.



MONTANA CONTEXT

Guiding Principles to Support our Vision Statement in Practice

- **Clear Objectives** - We are committed to setting clear and measurable goals that are based on data, resources, and thoughtful deliberation to improve outcomes for children and families. Team decisions and actions are recorded and clearly communicated to our staff and stakeholders.
- **Leadership** - We are progressive leaders who impact positive change for Montana children and families. We have a clear understanding of who we are and why we do what we do. We are trustworthy and transparent with community partners and employees.
- **Teamwork & Shared Decision Making** - We approach our work in an engaged and empowered manner. Team members understand their role and their responsibility to participate. We follow a process of shared decision making by seeking and appreciating input in a nonjudgmental environment that promotes thoughtful decision-making for which we all take ownership.
- **Respect** - We are committed to creating a respectful work environment through collaboration with all staff. We provide opportunities for professional development to maximize potential and we recognize the expertise within our agency. This collaboration inspires creative and innovative solutions to better serve children and families.
- **Continuous Improvement** - We take personal responsibility for continuous learning and improvement. We deliberately gather information and feedback to evaluate and course correct our work to reach the best outcome for those we serve.
- **Celebrate Success** - We take pride in our work. We recognize and acknowledge our success and the successes of others.



VISION FOR MONTANA'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Montana's Strategic Plan for Developing and Expanding Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Services reflects DPHHS's strategic approach to implementing Family First Prevention Services Act, Title VII of Public Law 115-123. Through the implementation of the FFPSA, it is critical to DPHHS that factors are reviewed, and strategies proposed are specific to Montana's urban and rural areas, as well as the state's Indian communities and reservations.

This strategic plan focuses on targeted services that are within the scope of DPHHS in Montana addressing prevention services for children and families known to the Montana child welfare system. This plan is braided with the Department prevention reports to ensure complementary prevention planning.

The state will continue to align and coordinate this plan with broader child welfare stakeholders throughout the state as a crucial aspect of the vision of continuing to improve Montana's Child Welfare System. Effective child welfare champions are in place in state government, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations, and local and tribal agencies.

Goal 1:

Adopt definitions for integral Family First Prevention Services Act terms.

1. Adverse Childhood Experiences: (ACEs) are traumatic events occurring before age 18. ACEs include all types of abuse and neglect as well as parental mental illness, substance use, divorce, incarceration, and domestic violence.

A landmark study in the 1990s found a significant relationship between the number of ACEs a person experienced and a variety of negative outcomes in adulthood, including poor physical and mental health, substance abuse, and risky behaviors. The more ACEs experienced, the greater the risk for these outcomes. It is critical to note that ACEs can be prevented. (*Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - National Child Abuse Prevention Month - Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2020*).

2. Prevention Services: Prevention Services permissible under FFPSA are:

- Mental health and substance abuse and treatment services provided by a qualified clinician. (*Note: if services are allowable under Medicaid, IV-E is the payor of last resort*).
- In-home parent skill-based programs that include parenting skill training, parent education and individual and family counseling.
- The allowable services can be provided for a 12-month period and for any preventions services to be eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement, it must be rated and listed on the federal Administration for Children Youth and Families National Clearinghouse. (*Public Law 115-123, Division E- Health and Human Services Extenders, Title VII - Family First Prevention Services Act*)

3. Trauma: Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. (*Samhsa.gov. 2020. Trauma. Available at: <<https://www.samhsa.gov/issues-conditions disorders/trauma>>*)

4. Trauma-Informed Care:

A trauma-informed child and family service system is one in which all parties involved recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system including children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the child, using the best available science, to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive.

(Creating Trauma-Informed Systems, 2020. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. <http://www.nctsn.org>).

Objective 1:

Ensure that services delivered to children and families meet the standards of trauma-informed care, utilize a trauma-informed approach and focus on the identification of trauma events as required in the FFPSA.

Strategies:

- 1.1) Support additional research to implement evidence-based services that are trauma-informed.
- 1.2) Continue collaboration with other agencies within DPHHS to identify existing definitions that have been adopted; to ensure there are congruent definitions across all sectors regarding prevention services.
- 1.3) Engage in continuous improvement processes to continue to grow the Montana Child Welfare system capacity.
- 1.4) Increase and improve coordination between the Montana Child Welfare System and the state's Indian and reservation communities as well as the state's urban and rural areas by adopting consistent definitions.

Goal 2:

Inventory of existing programs to determine whether existing programs or components of existing programs would qualify for Family First Prevention Services Act funding or could be adapted to qualify for funding.

See Appendix 1. Prevention Services – List of Approved Models (pg. 18)

Objective 2:

Engage in collaboration with the other DPHHS sectors responsible for providing prevention services to families. As services and programs must be approved by a single, federally-governed Clearinghouse; Montana Child and Family Services Division has an opportunity to inventory all existing programs that would qualify for FFPSA funding and collectively respond to the current state of the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse.

Strategies:

- 2.1) Identify existing prevention services currently being used within the State of Montana.
- 2.2) Match existing services to Clearinghouse items.
- 2.3) Submit desired services to Clearinghouse for review and approval.
- 2.4) Navigate approval/update process – include or remove existing programs.
- 2.5) Update Montana list of approved programs.
- 2.6) Communicate approved program list to all stakeholders.
- 2.7) Notify ACF of compliance.
- 2.8) Repeat submission, approval, and update processes every six (6) months.

Goal 3:

Review and research programs from other states related to prevention services and trauma-informed care.

Objective 3:

Increase inter-state collaboration efforts to ensure that Montana remains informed, current and innovative in terms of the prevention services that are offered to children and families; and that programs meet the highest levels of being trauma-informed, as defined by the federal Clearinghouse, in order to serve families effectively and with intentionality to the unique needs of Montana families.

Strategies:

3.1) The Montana FFPSA Leadership Team will continue to engage in ongoing partnership with Casey Family Programs on a monthly basis to learn from other states and gain additional knowledge to increase Montana's prevention service capacity, with an emphasis on the FFPSA, and offerings provided to children and families.

3.2) Explore other state's Title IV-E Prevention Services Plans that have been submitted and approved; as a guideline for Montana to confirm compliance as well as ensure a robust, comprehensive plan.

3.3) Engage in continuous improvement to meet the ever-changing needs of Montana's prevention services programming.

Goal 4:

Evaluate need and capacity for new prevention-focused services in Montana.

Objective 4:

Continue to improve Montana's prevention service/program infrastructure and increase prevention service provider participation.

Strategies:

4.1) Engage in continuous quality improvement with child welfare stakeholders, including the evaluation of, the five-year Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan.

4.2) Respond to the current state of the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, and address its practices, response time, willingness to accept new programs, approval criteria, and administration.

4.3) Frequently monitor the Clearinghouse to identify specific models that align with Montana prevention service provider interests for acceptance as a well-supported practice.

Goal 5:

Draft an evidence-based, trauma-informed plan for providing prevention services in Montana to be used in applying for Family First Prevention Services Act funding in 2021.

Objective 5:

Continue to develop and improve the Montana Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan for submission to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

This plan will serve as a comprehensive guide for effectively implementing well-supported prevention services within Montana's Child Welfare System at the State and local levels within Montana's urban, rural and Reservation communities.

Strategies:

5.1) Provide understanding of the Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA) for child welfare stakeholders and constituents, and use that understanding to plan and execute multiple sub-projects that will align Montana's child and family care practices with the requirements of the act.

5.2) Engage with child welfare staff and stakeholders in Montana to achieve compliance with the FFPSA and effectively communicate that compliance to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The project will achieve compliance with the FFPSA by October of 2021 and will include a roadmap for future achievements and compliance with future federal legislation.

5.3) Develop and execute a series of sub-projects, including revisions to program guidelines. The stakeholder group will include DPHHS and CFSD representatives, members of the provider service community, academic subject matter experts,



front-line social workers, legal counsel, tribal child welfare leaders, kinship care representatives, foster families, system-involved youth and children affected by the child welfare landscape in Montana, where appropriate.

5.4) Project success will be achieved when all the sub-projects have been completed and the ACF agrees that Montana's actions have placed it in compliance with the Family First Prevention Services Act.





DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Montana is committed to meaningfully engaging stakeholders throughout the planning process. The state has engaged a wide range of child welfare stakeholders, including Montana DPHHS representatives, Child and Family Services representatives, members of the provider service community, academic subject matter experts, front-line social workers, legal counsel, tribal child welfare leaders, kinship care representatives, foster families, system-involved youth and children affected by the child welfare landscape in Montana.

As the FFPSA work continues, local, state and tribal representatives in Montana's urban and rural areas will continue to be engaged. The state plans to conduct targeted and general strategic planning and continuous improvement sessions. The strategic planning process, including participation opportunities, is detailed in the table below.

Figure 2. Strategic Planning Process

PROCESS STEP	DESCRIPTION
1. Engage State Advisory Council, Providers, and other stakeholders in focused dialogue on the FFPSA	Facilitated a conversation to elicit strategies to enhance the state's child welfare system from participants based off FFPSA recommendations. Included stakeholders, representing the breadth of the state's child welfare system. The meeting was focused on developing a common understanding of and vision for Developing and Expanding Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Services in Montana; and defining critical success factors, barriers, and strategies as well as general education on the FFPSA.
2. Conduct formal Tribal Consultation and tribal strategic planning sessions	A Tribal Consultation was held in Fall 2018 as an opportunity for tribal partners and DPHHS to share and learn about the strengths, gaps, and opportunities in tribal child welfare systems and tribal-state collaboration. Additional strategic planning sessions are scheduled for July 2020, August 2020, September 2020, and October 2020.
3. Conduct discussions around the totality of child abuse and neglect prevention services within Montana	There has been much work conducted around prevention across the state that acts in concert with and compliments the FFPSA. Discussions took place with providers, in-home service providers, and others across Montana. While the FFPSA provides a view of a portion of the prevention work in Montana; it does not encompass the totality of prevention work in the state. Discussions included topics regarding requirements and recommendations of the FFPSA, strategy development, and prioritization of developed strategies outside of the FFPSA scope.

PROCESS STEP	DESCRIPTION
4. Refine strategies	Across a series of meetings, the State Advisory Council will review sub-group findings/recommendations, aggregate planning strategies, regional prioritization, and the Department of Public Health and Human Services' strategic plan to develop/refine strategies and define the goals and objectives for the Developing and Expanding Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Services strategic plan.
5. Finalize Title IV-E Prevention Services plan	The Department will finalize the Title IV-E Prevention Services plan with leadership, for federal review and approval.
6. Future - continue to work with stakeholders	The Department will continue to communicate through local and regional stakeholder meetings.



APPENDIX 1

Prevention Services - List of Approved Models

Approved by Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse

MENTAL HEALTH PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS OR SERVICES	TITLE IV-E PREVENTION CLEARINGHOUSE RATING
Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)	Well-Supported
Multisystemic Therapy (MST)	Well-Supported
Functional Family Therapy (FFT)	Well-Supported
Brief Strategic Family Therapy	Well-Supported
Child Parent Psychotherapy	Promising
Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)	Promising
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND PREVENTION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS OR SERVICES	TITLE IV-E PREVENTION CLEARINGHOUSE RATING
Multisystemic Therapy (MST)	Well-Supported
Motivational Interviewing (MI)	Well-Supported
Brief Strategic Family Therapy	Well-Supported
Families Facing the Future	Supported
Methadone Maintenance Therapy	Promising
IN-HOME PARENT SKILL BASED PROGRAMS OR SERVICES	TITLE IV-E PREVENTION CLEARINGHOUSE RATING
Healthy Families America (HFA)	Well-Supported
Parents as Teachers	Well-Supported
Nurse Family Partnership	Well-Supported
Brief Strategic Family Therapy	Well-Supported
Homebuilders-Intensive Family Preservation and Reunification Services	Well-Supported
SafeCare Augmented	Supported