

# Los Angeles County Family First Prevention Services Act



Los Angeles County  
Department of Children  
and Family Services

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Esteemed Community Partners,

In recent months, the Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Probation, and Mental Health (DMH), in partnership with other county agencies and community partners, have been working together to lay the foundation for the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).

As valued partners with critical roles in the provision of services to the County's children and families, it is our hope that you find the information contained in this document useful. While the State of California submitted its [Five-Year State Prevention Plan](#) for the Family First Prevention Services Act (Part I) to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in August 2021, we anticipate that it will be several months before the plan is finalized and approved.

We will provide additional information as it becomes available. For more details, please see California's Department of Social Services Family First website at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ffpsa>

## **Family First Frequently Asked Questions**

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

Signed into law in February 2018, Family First is landmark legislation that has two key components. Part I allows federal dollars (Title IV-E funds) to be invested in children and families to prevent entry into the child welfare system, specifically focused on evidence-based mental health prevention and treatment, substance use prevention and treatment, and in-home parenting programs. Part IV limits federal reimbursement for congregate care and establishes new requirements for youth being placed in residential treatment programs. In addition to these provisions, Family First provides support for kinship (relative) caregivers and improves services to older and transition-age youth.

Los Angeles County embraces Family First as an important opportunity to continue to strengthen its prevention-focused system and to provide additional supports to keep children safely at home with their families and in their communities.

More information about Family First can be found at <https://familyfirstact.org/about-law>

## **How will Family First benefit children and families in LA County?**

Family First creates new opportunities to expand access to evidence-based prevention services for children, youth and their families in Los Angeles County, including Tribal children and their families.

## **Who will be eligible for Family First prevention services?**

Children and youth determined to be at imminent risk of entering foster care, including Tribal children, as well as their parents, guardians and caregivers. All expectant or parenting youth in foster care will also be eligible for Family First prevention services to help break the cycle of system involvement. There are no income eligibility requirements for these services.

## **What types of Family First prevention services will be available to eligible children and families in LA County?**

California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan includes all evidence-based programs (EBPs) that have been rated "well supported" by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse. Importantly, California's Plan includes Motivational Interviewing as a cross-cutting intervention beyond solely substance use disorder treatment, with the intention that it be used in a variety of settings, such as community agencies and clinical settings, to improve engagement with families.

For more information, please see California's [Five-Year State Prevention Plan](#) and the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse at <https://preventionservices.abtsites.com/>.

It is important to note that, in order for these prevention services to be eligible for Title IV-E funding, they must first receive approval from ACF as part of the approval process of California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan.

Children and families in Los Angeles County will continue to receive prevention services that meet their needs, regardless of the funding stream.

## **What is the federal financial participation rate for Family First?**

For states and Tribes with approved title IV-E Prevention Plans, Family First allows for 50 percent federal reimbursement for certain approved evidence-based prevention services, as well as approved administrative and training costs.

## **How will Family First impact community-based organizations (CBOs) in LA County?**

We look forward to working closely with the Los Angeles County provider community to offer Family First prevention services to eligible children and their families. CBOs can expect that compliance with Family First requirements will include use of at least one of the approved EBPs in California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan. Additionally, DCFS and Probation will be expected to monitor for fidelity of use with the approved EBPs. This will mean that community agency staff will need training for any new EBPs and that County Departments will require regular monitoring and review of the EBPs.

It is anticipated that amendments will be required to bring community agency contracts into compliance with Family First requirements. While the specific amendments are still under evaluation, they may include:

- Changes in the invoicing, intake and case plan documentation process, as well as utilization of the state-approved prevention plan format and referral tracking system to ensure they meet child-specific Family First guidelines
- Training of staff in the approved EBPs, and
- Tracking and monitoring of outcomes for evaluations that meet Family First reporting requirements.

## **What opportunities will there be for CBOs that aren't currently contracted with DCFS or Probation to provide Family First prevention services?**

There will be opportunities for new CBOs to subcontract with agencies that currently hold contracts with DCFS to provide Family First prevention services. There will also be opportunities for CBOs to provide Family First prevention services through the community pathway that is envisioned in California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan, if approved. This pathway would allow families with children who are determined to be at imminent risk of entering foster care to receive approved prevention services in their communities, without child welfare system involvement.

For more details, please see California's Five-Year State Prevention Plan available at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ffpsa>

## **What is the timeline for implementation of Family First prevention services in LA County?**

While we wait for California's Five-Year Prevention Plan to be approved by ACF, LA County is already starting to build the infrastructure and processes needed for successful Family First implementation. We look forward to sharing updates on our progress.

## **How will Family First impact Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs)?**

Family First prioritizes placing children in the least restrictive, most family-like environment and limits federal reimbursement for congregate care. Starting **Oct. 1, 2021**, it restricts the use of Title IV-E funds for children and youth placed in congregate care settings if the placement exceeds 14 days, with four exceptions:

1. Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs), that are determined to be appropriate, effective and least restrictive placements for youth
2. Specialized settings for pregnant and parenting youth
3. Transitional housing for youth 18 and older, and
4. Programs providing support to CSEC youth (commercial sexual exploitation of children)

Given the implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform (Assembly Bill 403) and the transition of California's facilities to STRTPs, many of the provisions required in the federal law are already in place for California's STRTP providers. However, additional changes will be needed to ensure that children placed in STRTPs will continue to be eligible for federal funding.

## **How will I receive updates on the status of Family First in LA County?**

You may go onto the CDSS website at <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ffpsa>. In addition, Los Angeles County will provide updates as they become available to keep our community partners informed accordingly.