

Family First Peer Learning Session



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Housekeeping

- Welcome!
- When using zoom please mute yourself during presentation.
- Please submit questions and comments via the chat at anytime during the presentation.
 - We will be collecting those questions to elevate during our Q&A Session
 - We will answer what we can, and follow-up if needed.
- Today's presentation is being recorded and will be provided via email to all registrants. and available on www.familyvoicesunited.org



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Agenda

- Refresher on Family First Act provisions and updates on status
- How the voices of lived experience educated policymakers
- New funding opportunities in the Consolidated Appropriations Act.
- Examples of successful constituent engagement in implementation
- Tips and resources for constituents looking to get involved in Family First implementation!



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Hosts & Panelists



Dominique Freeman
FosterClub



Kara Georgi
Children's Trust Fund Alliance



Diane Roznowski
Generations United



Timothy Phillips
Parent from Oregon



Gail Engel
Kinship Caregiver from Colorado



Hannah Royal
Former Foster Youth from Oregon



Lauren Beshudi
Casey Family Programs

**Young people + birth parents + relative caregivers
= working together to drive change in foster care.**

We are the constituents of the child welfare system. Our campaign is dedicated to ensuring the voices of those with first-hand experience are heard.



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Constituent:

What do we mean by constituent?

6



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QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What's needed to help relative caregivers navigate supports and services for the children they are raising?

**Submit by March 28th for a chance to win \$50!*

Share Your Perspective

Launched monthly to:

- Engage Constituents
- Raise Public Awareness
- Tool for Advocacy



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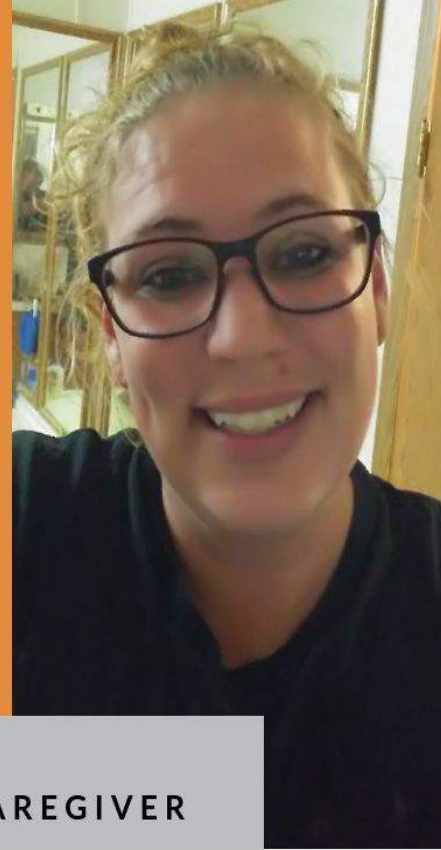
“...Apply wrap-around care that coordinates efforts from one location for all available services and resources with attention given to specific needs and circumstances...”

TECORIA JONES,
BIRTH PARENT



“I would like to see more opportunities for kinship and foster families (parents and kids) to connect. It's most helpful to learn about resources from peers that have been through it.”

JESSICA M.,
KINSHIP/RELATIVE CAREGIVER



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A photograph of a diverse family of three. A woman with dark curly hair is on the left, smiling and holding her hands together. A man with a beard and short dark hair is in the center, smiling. A young girl with curly hair is on the right, laughing joyfully. They are all looking towards the right side of the frame, presumably at a television screen. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

A Fundamental Shift

Family First Prevention and Services Act (P.L. 115-123) is a fundamental shift of federal funds to invest in strengthening families and protecting children.

Family First *Act*

Family First Prevention Services Act Overview

- Prevention Services
 - 3 Areas: mental health, substance use and in-home parenting skills
- Provides support for Kinship Caregivers
- Ensuring appropriate placement (prioritizing family and increased requirements/oversight on congregate placement)
- Improves services for older youth



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Family First Transition Act

- To support the timely implementation of the Family First Act, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Family First Transition Act of 2019 (H.R. 4980/S.2777)
- The Transition Act authorized \$500 million in FY2020 to all states and to tribal nations for transition grants for activities related to implementation of FFPSA with no match requirement.
- The Transition Act provides one-time, flexible funding for states and tribes to help implement Family First, as well as short-term funding guarantees for states with expiring Title IV-E waivers. This will allow states to move forward with Family First without a financial shortfall during their transition.
 - 22 states, the District of Columbia, and the Port Gamble, S'Klallam Tribe are eligible for these additional funds.



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Current Status of Family First Implementation:

Where is your state in the implementation process?

- Submitted

- **States: 9** (Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia)
- **Tribes: 2** (Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, AK; Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, NC)

- Approved

- **States: 10** (Arkansas, DC, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, North Dakota, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Nebraska)

The majority of states do not have approved Family First plans three years after passage of the Family First Act.

Overview of Family First Act

Prevention Services

Kinship

Congregate Care

Older Youth

The BIG ideas:

- Provides states and tribes the new option to use uncapped federal funding (Title IV-E) for prevention services for children at imminent risk of foster care entry and their families also applies to parenting and pregnant youth in care.
- Evidence-based prevention services such as:
 - substance abuse
 - mental health
 - skill-based parenting supports (such as parenting skills training, parent education, individual and family counseling)



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The BIG ideas:

- Children and youth do better when they can live with relatives (rather than strangers or in institutions).
- States can receive federal reimbursement for up to 50% of their expenditures to provide kinship navigator programs that meet certain evidence-based requirements.
- Seeks to improve licensing standards for foster family homes including kinship placements.



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Overview of Family First Act

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The BIG ideas:

- For youth placed in a setting other than family-like, federal Title IV-E funds will be limited to settings that meet the following requirements as Qualified Residential Treatment Settings
 - Trauma-informed treatment model
 - Nursing / licensed clinical staff onsite
 - Engage child's family in treatment plan
 - Discharge planning and family-based aftercare (at least 6 months)
 - Licensed and accredited



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Overview of Family First Act

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The BIG ideas:

- Shifts language to emphasize **transition to adulthood** rather than **independence**.
- Allows services and education support for youth who have experienced foster care age 14+ (Currently 16+)
- Eligible for Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) until age 26 (Currently age 23). Use ETVs for up to 5 years non-consecutively.
- Adds achieving connections to caring adults and positive youth development to the service array.



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Consolidated Appropriations Act

Signed into law December 27, 2020 to address the impacts and challenges on the child welfare system amplified by the pandemic.

- **Supports the direction of Family First and implementation during a challenging state budget time.**
- **Funding for prevention services**
- **Support for kin and relative caregivers**
- **Supports for older youth in foster care, and those aging out of foster care during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



New Opportunities for Family First



Temporarily increases the federal reimbursement rate up from 50% to 100% for the Title IV-E Prevention Program, created under the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018, for the duration of the COVID19 public health emergency period (April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021).

18



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Consolidated Appropriations Act

Prevention Services

Kinship

Older Youth

- Temporarily increases the federal reimbursement rate up from 50% to 100% for the Title IV-E Prevention Program, created under the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018
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Consolidated Appropriations Act

Prevention Services

Kinship

Older Youth

- Provides 100% reimbursement for kinship navigator program services provided from April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.
- Waives the requirement that for kinship navigator services to be reimbursed they meet the evidence-based standard required in Family First.



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Consolidated Appropriations Act

Prevention Services

Kinship

Older Youth

- Provides an additional \$400 million for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program for FY2021, with no state match. Also Increases the age of eligibility of services to age 27 Removes the 30 percent cap on room and board.
- Provides an additional \$50 million for Education and Training Vouchers (ETV, with no state match. And Increases the maximum ETV from \$5,000 to \$12,000 per year through FY2022



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QUESTIONS?

22



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Constituent Panel



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Poll:

**How are you involved
now?**



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How you can be involved!

Tools & Resources

Family Voices United Perspective Papers

- FVU paper on Mental Health
- FVU paper on Supporting Kinship Caregivers

Constituent Voice Memes

- FVU voice meme on supporting older youth

● Family Voices United Podcasts

- FVU Podcast on strengthening families and opportunities with prevention support
- Opportunities for Advocacy

26



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I am now twenty-eight years old, a married mother of two children myself. If facilities are not the kind of healing environment we would want for our own children or ourselves, we have to ask why they are good enough for young people who have experienced significant trauma and neglect? Family First raises the oversight of facilities to ensure youth receive the mental health support they deserve to heal.

— Creta Munns, foster care alumni



The Family First Act: An unprecedented opportunity to transform child welfare

Kids should grow up in safe, stable and secure families who support their long-term well-being. Research makes clear — growing up in a family is essential for all kids, especially those who have experienced abuse or neglect. Family First is an opportunity moment that offers exciting possibilities for us to be responsive to the specific needs of children, teens and families.

[Learn the Basics](#)

Sign Up!

Receive updates about what's new @
FamilyFirstAct.org

Email Address *

[Join](#)



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Join the movement!

If you believe the voices of youth, birth parents, and relative caregivers must inform child welfare policies, join us! You'll receive updates about Family Voices United, including regular opportunities to share your perspective.

Thank YOU!

Visit us: <http://familyvoicesunited.org>

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Generations United: Diane@gu.org

29



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Poll:

**How informative was this
learning session today?**
