



CDHS values meaningful engagement with our partners and the people we serve because we must work together to achieve the best outcomes.

The Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) is meant to transform the child welfare system.

Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is also in the process of finalizing a performance improvement plan with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families Children's Bureau. This Child and Family Services Plan is a five-year strategic plan for child welfare.

CDHS is in the process of gathering input from professionals, as well as volunteers, youth and families, who have interacted with the child welfare system to inform future decisions.

Survey Respondents

 Youth (n=50)  Parent or family member (n=52)  Foster parent or kinship caregiver (n=621)

Constituents' Concerns

The need for ongoing constituent engagement was confirmed with **74% wanting to continue giving input**, including 12% who want to give additional input to this survey.

 "Nothing about us without us" in every meeting, every activity, every removal of a child!"

There were no significant differences between metro and non-metro counties responses, except access to support group services which had the largest utilization difference (8.7%).

 "Support groups even in more rural areas. Seems like a lot of things are in metro Denver and while that is understandable, it is not possible for families to travel that far, especially without child care."

Raising up youth voice – To complement learning from youth survey participants, project Foster Power provided the top three issues from their Fall Listening Tour.

-  Young people said their **top three issues** are:
- 1. Sibling connection;**
 - 2. Supportive & nurturing foster homes that encourage listening** and long-term supportive relationships and
 - 3. Childhood opportunities** like driver's licenses, sleepover and after-school activities.

Themes & Testimonials

COMMUNICATION AND RESPECT

Responses **around better communication and more respect** were most prevalent in survey with youth and foster parents or kinship providers listing it as the top priority. This included notions of feeling heard and being respected as a valuable member of the team and to be upfront and honest in all communications. Additionally, 70% of youth reported being in foster care did not feel supported by their caseworker.

 "Keep the communication paths open. Being more forthcoming on WHY things are occurring and not just barking out orders."
 "Give foster families more voice and treat them like they are a part of the process."
 "More honest conversations with our social worker"

LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE SYSTEM

Over 50% of parents or family identified **lack of information about the system** as a major barrier and it was the third most prominent response from foster parent or kinship caregivers. Overall system issues included ease of navigation, timeliness and over burdensome requirements.

 "If process was made clear in the beginning I would have been more prepared for the journey of it. Give more specific details of process."
 "Have a roadmap for people to try to follow."

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

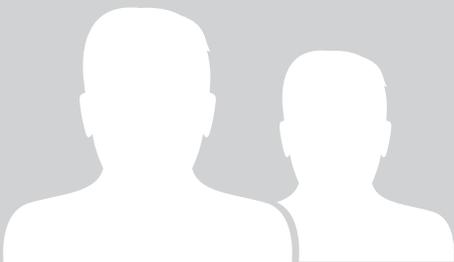
Increasing **financial support** with childcare assistance (including at trainings and meetings), transportation help for visits, food, energy, clothing, activities and housing was named second most often for both family and parents and for foster parents/kinship providers.

 "Providing more financial support for basic necessities as well as activities"
 "Any time you can connect with a family with additional financial resources, it is really helpful!"

THERAPY FOR YOUTH AND FAMILY

Strengthening behavior supports and therapy for the youth and overall family and ensuring more timely access to therapy was identified 22% of the time by from foster parent or kinship caregivers and parent or family members.

 "More directed assistance to help with behavioral issues we see"
 "Therapy for the family for self-care! More support groups"
 "In home therapy."



Constituent Considerations for Advisory and Implementation

How is implementation going to reflect constituent feedback by:

1. Supporting better communication, building more respect between the system and clients, and valuing the youth, family, and foster parent/kinship provider as decision-makers;

2. Improving overall system issues including ease of navigation, timeliness of services, and over burdensome and unclear requirements;

3. Lowering financial burdens around childcare, transportation, housing, food and energy; and

4. Increasing timely access to behavior supports and therapy for the youth and overall family.

Are there policies, rules, service priorities, or practice changes that need to be amended or added to move the needle on constituent concerns?

How can FFPSA directly or indirectly address these concerns?