

Family First Prevention Services Act

Overview

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) underscores the importance of children growing up in families. Enacted in 2018 by the federal government, funding and implementation began July 1, 2021.

FFPSA allows the use of Title IV-E federal funds to enhance and provide robust preventive services for families with an emphasis on keeping children in safe and stable family-like settings in the community rather than being separated from their families and entering foster care.

The focus of The Family First Prevention Services Act is minimizing non-family-based placements (congregate care) while elevating the quality of congregate care or residential settings when they are necessary for youth.

This legislation is in keeping with the way we value families as the experts on themselves and how we approach our work in partnering with them to keep their families together and deliver services that are tailored to their needs.

Available Services

Implementation of FFPSA means that federal funds that had previously only been intended to be used for youth who had already entered foster care can now be used for evidence-based and trauma-informed prevention services.

These evidence-based programs have proven positive outcomes, and they provide practitioners with a standard framework for implementation. To learn more about evidence-based services please visit the [Healthy Minds website](#).

Children who are at risk of entering foster care, as well as their families, are now able to access federal funds to support these prevention services which are categorized in three areas:

1. Mental health prevention and treatment services.
2. Substance use disorder prevention and treatment services.
3. In-home parent skill-based programs.

Eligibility

In Virginia, Local Departments of Social Services such as Fairfax County Department of Family Services are responsible for determining whether a child is a reasonable candidate for these prevention services in accordance with FFPSA. These prevention services can be provided to children and their families for up to 12 months. Children must meet the following criteria:

- A child who can remain safely in their home and had been identified as being at imminent risk of entering foster care.
- Parents or kin caregivers where services are needed to prevent the candidate from entering foster care.
- A child in foster care who is pregnant or parenting their child.
- A child whose adoption or guardianship arrangement is at risk of a disruption/dissolution and includes post-reunification services.

These changes will further enhance the mission of Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Children, Youth and Families Division to partner with families to keep children **safe** and families **connected**.