Ohio | Department of Job and Family Services

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OFFICE OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN
Families and Children Letter FCL #014

To: Title IV-E Agencies

From: Jeffery Van Deusen, Deputy Director
Office of Families and Children

Date: October 13, 2021

Subject: Prevention Services Updates

Background

With the passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) in 2018, Ohio quickly began a stakeholder driven planning process for implementation to ensure a shared vision that children should remain safely at home with their families whenever possible, children who must come into care are in the most family-like and least restrictive setting possible, and that we set the expectation of high standards of care and services for our children and families.

The Family First Prevention Services Act Leadership Advisory Council included public and private organizations, advocacy groups, state agencies, and former youth and families with lived experience. The Leadership Advisory Council worked hand in hand with multiple subcommittees to create recommendations for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to guide the planning and implementation efforts to meet the requirements of Family First. These recommendations resulted in the creation of the Prevention Services and QRTP Implementation Workgroups, which have been pivotal in moving the recommendations into actionable implementation steps. Additional information on the Family First planning process can be found here: Historical Information: Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) | Office of Families and Children | Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Family First requires a fundamental shift in how our system is organized and funded and requires all child serving systems to be aligned in their values about what is best for children and families. Every county is starting from a different place. The pathway to prevention in Ohio is a transition that will take time and includes planning, education, resource alignment, and system re-balancing to ensure its intended impact.

This document provides a status update on initial Prevention Services implementation over the pilot period thus far. ODJFS hopes to create a more comprehensive implementation guide for counties which will provide high-level information outlining what counties need to know and

suggested action steps based off of feedback from the pilot community. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Prevention Services Pilot

As Ohio implements Family First, it was imperative to assess what has been built to identify additional considerations, processes, and to receive feedback on experiences in real time. The Office of Families and Children (OFC) began a prevention services pilot on April 1, 2021 and seven counties and one Title IV-E Court agreed to participate and provide feedback on their experiences and input on adjustments needed prior to statewide implementation.

The Prevention Services Pilot was the first step toward implementation of Prevention Services. The goal of the pilot was to examine the new Prevention Services case category, Prevention Services Plan, SACWIS functionality, and process of linking families to EBPs to make adjustments before implementing statewide. The pilot counties have been instrumental in providing feedback, highlighting areas that need additional focus, and providing input on planning, training, and implementation considerations for other counties choosing to begin taking advantage of Prevention Services.

OFC holds biweekly calls with pilot counties to share information, receive county feedback, and facilitate cross-county collaboration. Feedback received during these calls continues to inform planning efforts for statewide implementation of Prevention Services. The most consistent feedback from pilot counties has been around service availability and capacity of evidence-based practice (EBP) service providers. We have outlined some of these points below.

- **Phased Approach for Evidence Based Practices**
  The goal of Prevention Services is to keep more children safely at home with their families through the provision of EBP services. As more children and families receive these services, the expected outcome is that fewer children will enter care and that families will not re-enter the children services system. These two outcomes are expected to lower cost of placement and burden on caseworkers. The state and federally funded EBP services are expected to lower overall county costs.

  During the planning process, the Family First Planning and Implementation Workgroups chose to take a phased approach to Prevention Services. This approach allows the state and counties to build capacity for evidence-based practices, build infrastructure for Prevention Services case work practice, create Ohio SACWIS functionality, and adjust throughout implementation as needed. Family First Prevention Services will continue to be one piece of the overall prevention continuum in Ohio and in local communities.

Phase 1

Evidence-Based Practice	Current Rating
Multi-Systemic Therapy	Well-Supported
Functional Family Therapy	Well-Supported
START	Promising
Healthy Families America	Well-Supported
Parents as Teachers	Well-Supported

Phase 2

Evidence-Based Practice	Current Rating
Seven Challenges	Does Not Meet
High Fidelity Wrap Around	N/A
Incredible Years	Promising/Does Not Meet
Motivational Interviewing	Well-Supported
Triple P	Promising

Phase 3

Evidence-Based Practice	Current Rating
Brief Strategic Family Therapy	Well-Supported
Child-Parent Psychotherapy	Promising
Nurse-Family Partnership	Well-Supported
Parent-Child Interaction Therapy	Well-Supported
Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Promising

Phase 1 is being implemented with pilot counties and other counties will be able to utilize these services as they are ready. Ohio is in the beginning stages of planning for Phase 2 implementation with pilot counties and stakeholder feedback. Prevention Services will continue to evolve as more counties implement the new Prevention Services case category and utilize EBPs with families. Title IV-E reimbursement drawn down by the state for Prevention Services will also assist in ongoing sustainability and capacity building efforts for EBPs.

- **Evidence Based Services Capacity**
  Because some of the services are not widely available in all areas of the state, pilot counties noted that service availability and capacity was the greatest barrier to serving families through Prevention Services. This is an area the state is working to address through a number of initiatives but will take time to fully scale. Adding Phase 2 services is expected to increase service availability throughout the state, as there will be a greater

array of services and several capacity building initiatives are already underway for services in Phase 2.

Many counties in the pilot began with a service that they were already utilizing, such as Ohio START or MST, to familiarize themselves with the Prevention Services case category before incorporating new EBPs into the process.

To further support Prevention Services, including a focus on capacity building for EBPs, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services entered into a contract with a vendor for a Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (COE). Case Western Reserve University will coordinate the COE in partnership with JFS and many other state agencies. The role of the COE will be to provide technical assistance, training, fidelity monitoring, and other services to help build and sustain the delivery of EBPs statewide. The COE will also be responsible for building and sustaining a standardized assessment process, evaluating the effectiveness of services, and expanding service and care coordination capacity for children with complex behavioral health needs and their families.

The Center of Excellence is currently working on initiatives specifically designed to increase capacity for MST and FFT across the state. Counties are encouraged to work with the COE and local service providers that may be interested in offering MST or FFT in their community. The Ohio Children's Alliance, in partnership with the COE, is managing the payments for MST and FFT services provided to children and families not receiving Medicaid services.

- **Funding for Evidence Based Practices**
  The pilot counties are utilizing the EBP services identified in Phase 1 of Ohio's Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan: Multisystemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Ohio START, Healthy Families America (HFA), and Parents as Teachers (PAT).

  These services are fully funded by Family First Transition Act (FFTA) funds, in addition to existing GRF and federal funding streams throughout the pilot and statewide implementation. Title IV-E agencies are not expected to fund any Phase 1 service delivery. ODJFS will continue to monitor expenditures and manage IV-E draw down to maximize funding sustainability moving forward.

- **Prevention Services Case Category**
  The Prevention Services case category is a new case category for Title IV-E agencies to use when serving families that may be a good fit for one of the five EBPs. Families being

served at intake (both traditional and alternative pathways) and ongoing can be eligible candidates for Prevention Services.

Pilot counties are piloting the Prevention Services case flow and providing feedback on prevention services implementation, system functionality, and assessment monitoring tools in their work with families through the Prevention Services case category. The case flow can be found here: Prevention Services Case Flow (ohio.gov)

Pathways to Prevention Services

As ODJFS continues to meet the needs of counties, OFC created a technical assistance approach, Pathways to Prevention Services, for Title IV-E agencies beginning their Prevention Services implementation based on pilot county and stakeholder input. Prevention Services are not mandatory for counties and OFC's rollout of Prevention Services will be dependent on county response and interest. Each county is in a unique position to begin the planning and implementation process for Prevention Services. This Pathway is designed to be flexible and self-directed, offering tiered technical assistance, resources, and support to assist counties in their planning efforts.

Rules outlined within the Ohio Administrative Code allowed counties to begin the implementation process at any time after April 1, 2021 and counties interested in Prevention Services are encouraged to begin planning for Prevention Services implementation, training staff, and outreaching to evidence-based practice service providers in their community.

OFC created a "Pathways to Prevention Services Checklist" to walk counties through a series of steps for planning and implementation of Prevention Services. The Checklist outlines the available trainings, additional resources, county-specific technical assistance from OFC, and other resources for implementation. OFC will also begin hosting Prevention Services Virtual Office Hours (Office Hours) for counties that have begun the planning process to ask questions and receive technical assistance. Office Hours will be held once a month and will begin in December 2021.

The goal of providing a menu of supports is to give counties flexible options to meet their needs during the planning phase. Prior to the pilot, the OFC team met individually with each pilot county and found that this forum was helpful to pilot counties in moving forward with implementation planning. A range of readiness activities prior to these individual meetings was also beneficial to counties in thinking through their current state and what prevention services could look like in their county.

The resources provided in the Checklist will continue to be updated and new resources will be added as needed.

Counties interested in implementing Prevention Services should begin with the attached Pathways to Prevention Services Checklist. This checklist includes training, resources, and tiered technical assistance to facilitate your community's planning and implementation process. All trainings and resources are available on the Family First website, https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/Family-First.stm.

Contacts

If you have any questions, please contact Hannah Knies at hannah.knies@jfs.ohio.gov.

Pathways to Prevention Services
Stage-Based Implementation Checklist

The Office of Families and Children (OFC) created a "Pathways to Prevention Services Checklist" to walk counties through a series of steps for planning and implementation of Prevention Services. The Checklist outlines the available trainings, additional resources, county-specific technical assistance from OFC, and other resources for implementation.

The resources provided in the Checklist will continue to be updated and new resources will be added as needed. All trainings and resources are available on the Family First website, https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/Family-First.stm.

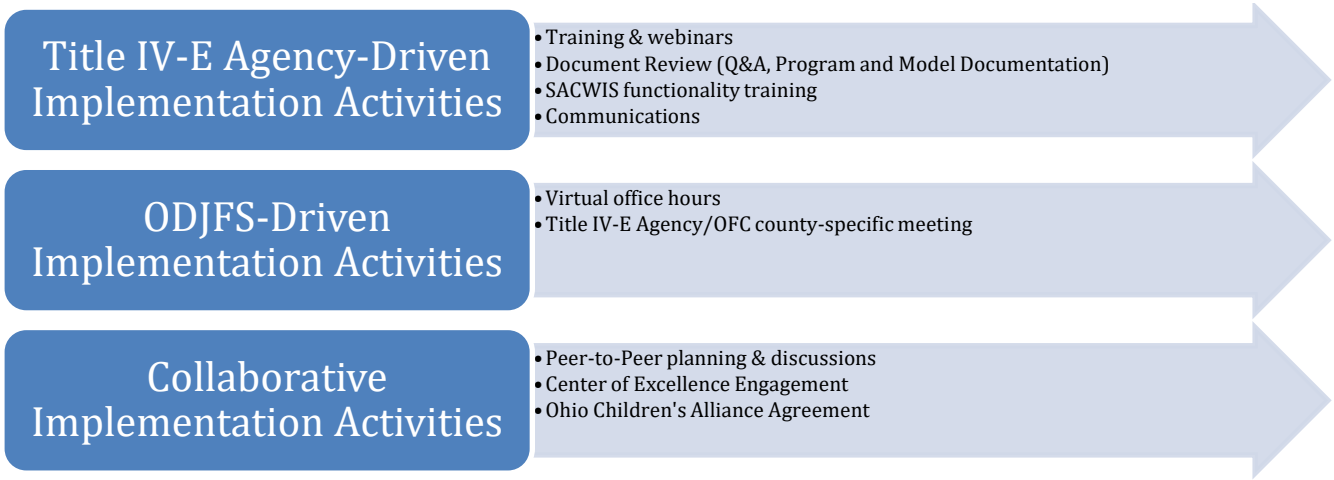
Exploration

- ☐ Ensure internal awareness and alignment around Prevention Services is in place among Title IV-E agency leadership team(s). Communication and language must align internally before beginning to move forward in the process and communicating externally
- ☐ Develop approach to staffing Prevention Services cases
  - Specialized worker, unit, department or assigning Prevention Services cases across all workers
  - Gather feedback and input from internal staff and stakeholders regarding staffing model options
- ☐ Identify current capacity for evidence-based practice services:
  - Current Home Visiting capacity
  - Current Ohio START capacity
  - Current and/or prospective Mental Health providers
- ☐ Identify current referral and utilization of OhioKAN and PASSS
- ☐ Identify local stakeholder group:
  - Family and Children First Council
  - Mental and Behavioral Health Providers
  - County Commissioners
  - Legal Teams (prosecutor, judge, magistrates, CASA/GAL, probation office)
  - Neighboring Title IV-E agencies
- ☐ Engage local stakeholder group:
  - Share Title IV-E agency approach to Prevention Services
  - Establish methods for ongoing communication, collaboration, and problem solving

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- Share Prevention Services approach with neighboring Title IV-E agencies to explore opportunities for partnership and/or shared capacity building efforts

Initial Implementation



- Title IV-E Agency-Driven Implementation Activities
  - Attend Family First trainings (links will be added as they go live)
    - QRTP Casework Policy and SACWIS Training
    - QRTP FCM Rules/Reimbursability and SACWIS Training
    - Master Contract Training
    - Caseworker Preparation for Prevention Services Training
    - FFPS Eligibility/Reimbursability with Ohio SACWIS Training
  - Review Family First Q&A document
  - Complete Phase 1 service webinars, as applicable to your approach and framework (links will be added as they go live)
    - MST and FFT
    - HFA and PAT
    - Ohio START
  - Complete Center of Excellence webinar to gain understanding of role, scope and responsibilities of the COE related to Phase 1 services (links will be added as they go live)
  - Complete Ohio Children's Alliance training on referral and payment process (casework and fiscal staff) (links will be added as they go live)
  - Review Resource Documents
  - Communicate updates and decisions internally
  - Communicate updates and decisions with stakeholders
  - Complete Prevention Services Funding Overview training (links will be added as they go live)

- Review Funding Flow charts (links will be added as they go live)
- Establish MOU agreements with service providers

- ODJFS-Driven Implementation Activities
  - Attend Prevention Services Virtual Office Hours
  - Schedule an individual county call with OFC team – contact FamilyFirst@jfs.ohio.gov to schedule
- Collaborative Implementation Activities
  - Request OFC facilitate Peer to Peer collaboration with a county that has begun implementing Prevention Services – contact FamilyFirst@jfs.ohio.gov to schedule
  - Complete the county agreement with the Ohio Children's Alliance for MST and FFT payment process
  - Engage the Center of Excellence on capacity building activities for MST and FFT

Ongoing Implementation

- Continue attending Prevention Services Virtual Office Hours as needed
- Begin offering Prevention Services through the Ongoing and Prevention Services case categories
- Refer to Resource Documents, trainings, Q&As, webinars, and SACWIS videos as needed
- Reach out to your TAS for ongoing support and any questions

All trainings and resources can be found here: **https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/Family-First.stm**