



# FAMILY FIRST LOUISIANA

An Initiative of Louisiana Department  
of Children & Family Services

*The federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) gives the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) an exciting opportunity to build upon current efforts that connect families with the preventive services and support needed to strengthen the family unit and help more children remain safely at home. It also aims to improve the well-being of children in foster care by prioritizing family placements rather than group care settings and enhancing the quality of care for residential treatment programs.*

## What does Family First mean?

- 1 Preventive services and support to strengthen the family and help children remain safely at home
- 2 Improving the well-being of children in foster care by prioritizing family placements rather than group care settings
- 3 Enhancing the quality of care for residential treatment programs

## » Prevention and Family Preservation

FFPSA recognizes that families can often provide safe and loving care if they have the support and services they need. The legislation allows states to use federal funds to provide prevention services and programs for up to 12 months to:

- Children at risk for entering or re-entering foster care
- A child whose family has substance abuse issues
- Siblings of children in foster care who live at home
- A child with psychological or behavioral health needs whose parent/caretaker needs additional support

- Parenting or pregnant youth who are in foster care or have recently exited care
- A child living with a relative or kin caregivers

### **These services include trauma-informed and evidence-based:**

- Mental health services
- Substance abuse treatment and prevention services
- In-home, skill-based parenting programs
- Kinship navigator programs

continued on back



## »» Family-Like Placements

FFPSA also emphasizes the preference for family-like settings in foster care by changing the federal reimbursement criteria for out-of-home placements. Federal funds may be used for:

- Family and kinship foster homes
- Placements for pregnant or parenting youth
- Supervised independent living for youth
- Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRT) for youth with treatment needs
- High-quality residential placements and support services for victims of sex trafficking

## »» Work Already Underway

FFPSA reinforces DCFS's mission of keeping children safe and strengthening families, and dovetails with work already underway through primary prevention programs such as My Community Cares, Kinship Navigator, Workforce Development Prevention Team model, and the continued exploration of prevention and family support services. DCFS is working to create a robust continuum of prevention services, with FFPSA focusing on families at risk of removal and entry into foster care.

## »» Next Steps to Implementation

DCFS is currently facilitating workgroups to support early intervention and supports to at-risk families through identified services to prevent entry into foster care. Implementation of the FFPSA requirements and service array will be incremental. Some services are planned to be available as early as this summer, while other services will become available over the next year.

» **How you can help:** Statewide collaboration with community partners and individuals with lived experience is essential to keeping families together. As we create an FFPSA plan, we welcome your input on how to attain the goal of strengthening families in Louisiana.

» **For more information:** Visit our website at [www.dcf.la.gov/familyfirst](http://www.dcf.la.gov/familyfirst) for updates and email us at [FamilyFirst.DCFS@LA.gov](mailto:FamilyFirst.DCFS@LA.gov) with specific inquiries. We will provide you with the next steps to be a part of these exciting changes to come in working with Louisiana families!

