



TO: Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Chief Juvenile Probation Officers
County Children and Youth Social Service Agencies
Private Children and Youth Social Service Agencies
County Children and Youth Agency Solicitors
Juvenile Court Judges' Commission
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency
Pennsylvania Court Appointed Special Advocates Association
Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators
Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services

FROM: Jonathan Rubin 
Deputy Secretary, Office of Children, Youth and Families

RE: Pennsylvania's Implementation of the Title IV-E Prevention Program under the Family First Prevention Services Act

DATE: December 2, 2021

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide continued guidance related to Pennsylvania's implementation of the Title IV-E Prevention Program as outlined in the [Office of Children, Youth and Families \(OCYF\) Bulletin 3130-21-03, titled "Policies and Procedures for Implementation of the Title IV-E Prevention Program under the Family First Prevention Services Act."](#) The guidance provided in this memorandum is intended to complement the bulletin in order to help clarify and reinforce some select concepts and requirements related to candidates for foster care and prevention planning. Please continue to refer to OCYF Bulletin 3130-21-03 for information on all requirements for implementation of the Title IV-E Prevention Program, including prevention planning for pregnant, expecting and parenting youth.

Pennsylvania officially began implementation of the Title IV-E Prevention Program under the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) on October 1, 2021, at which time key requirements outlined in OCYF Bulletin 3130-21-03 took effect. Since that time, OCYF has continued to work with county children and youth agencies (CCYAs), private providers, and other system partners to monitor implementation. Based on feedback received through various monitoring efforts, OCYF would like to call further attention to the following components of Pennsylvania's implementation of the Title IV-E Prevention Program under Family First.

Assessment of Needs and Determination of Candidacy

- OCYF Bulletin 3130-21-03 does not require CCYAs to implement any new assessment practices or tools to make a determination of candidacy.
 - Existing CCYA formal and informal practices for assessing needs of children and families may continue to be utilized to gather the information needed to determine whether a child meets the definition of a candidate for foster care.
- While OCYF Bulletin 3130-21-03 discusses timeframes related to candidacy, prevention planning and monitoring, it should be noted that **a candidacy determination may be made at any time during the family’s involvement with the CCYA.**
 - A determination may occur during any phase of casework practice based on ongoing case activity and analysis of information continuously gathered that can be used to identify needs for services and interventions.
 - A determination that a child is a candidate is not restricted to only a specific event (ex. Family Service Plan (FSP) review).
- Pennsylvania has defined a candidate for foster care as a “child that is determined to be at significant risk of entering foster care but can remain safely in the child’s home or in an agreed upon informal kinship placement with prevention services.”
 - Staff from the OCYF regional offices are available to assist CCYAs as they determine how this definition will be operationalized for incorporation into assessments and daily case practice at the local agency level.
 - If a child or family is participating in a Title IV-E reimbursable evidence-based program, that does not automatically mean the child meets the criteria to be a candidate for foster care. Candidacy must involve a determination that the child is at significant risk of entering foster care.

Prevention Planning for Candidates for Foster Care

- **Prevention plan requirements may be satisfied by integrating the required elements outlined in OCYF Bulletin 3130-21-03 into your agency’s current FSP or by developing a separate stand-alone document.**
- The determination that a child is at significant risk of entering foster care and that the child can safely remain in the home or in an agreed upon informal kinship placement with prevention services is the event that triggers a requirement for a prevention plan.
- A prevention plan is comprised of the elements outlined on page 7 of OCYF Bulletin 3130-21-03, which includes the strategies for foster care prevention and any specific services or programs that will allow the child to remain safely in the home and prevent placement into foster care.

- As outlined in OCYF Bulletin 3130-21-03, all children determined to be candidates for foster care must have a prevention plan.
- The child's candidacy must be documented in the prevention plan.
- **The requirement that a child must have a prevention plan is based solely on the determination that a child is a candidate for foster care and is not determined by the funding stream for the services that will be put in place for the child and/or family.**
- CCYAs are encouraged to consider all services, supports and resources that are needed to prevent placement of a child who is at significant risk of entering foster care as part of prevention planning with the family, regardless of the funding source involved, and should not limit prevention strategies to only the use Title IV-E eligible evidence-based programs.

CCYAs should continue to reach out to their OCYF Regional Office staff regarding any technical assistance needs and for support surrounding Family First implementation.

Questions may also be submitted to OCYF by emailing the Family First resource account at PAPutsFamiliesFirst@pa.gov.