MONTANA FAMILY FIRST IMPLEMENTATION

Oct. 1, 2019 – Two events

- The first cohort of states goes live with redesigned programs under the Family First Act.
- In Montana, child-serving agencies instituted expanded background checks as required under the Family First Act.

Sept. 2019

Call for recommendations from the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is looking for programs to undergo its systematic review for inclusion on the list of programs approved for Title IV-E prevention services funding. More information and instructions for making recommendations can be found here. The deadline is October 31, 2019.

July to Sept. 2019

The Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse posted the ratings for 12 services and programs that are candidates for state reimbursement through Title IV-E funds. One more program is currently under review. Montana DPHHS is reviewing the Clearinghouse decisions.

June 2019

Montana DPHHS completed its assessment of Montana congregate care facilities and what steps they and the state will need to take in order to meet Family First guidelines. The Center completed a readiness assessment of the state’s congregate care facilities on behalf of DPHHS and made recommendations to facilitate workgroups. The report is available here.

April to June 2019

The Center conducted phone interviews with leadership staff from congregate care providers to understand the challenges and needs they see with implementation of Family First requirements.

Family First Prevention Services Act

Congress passed and the president signed the Family First Prevention Services Act as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act in February 2018.

The new law also creates federal standards for congregate care providers to ensure children are safe, appropriately treated and that families are engaged during placements in group homes.

The Family First Act provides federal funding to states and tribes to help pay for mental health services, substance use treatment, in-home parenting support and other evidence based services that can prevent the need for foster care by allowing children to stay safely at home with their families.

For more information please contact Jeff Folsom, Director of Policy, at 406-431-3214 or email familyfirst@umontana.edu.
April 26, 2019

Montana House Bill 604 was passed mandating the development of a strategic plan for implementing preventive services as required by the Family First Act.

Jan. through April 2019

Working with Montana DPHHS, the University of Montana Center for Children, Families & Workforce Development created a website and policy briefs as a way to inform and communicate with stakeholders and other interested parties.

Jan. 2019

The National Council for State Legislatures presented an educational session for the 66th Montana legislature.

Dec. 2018

DPHHS convened an interagency project management team to oversee implementation of Family First, including other departmental entities such as Medicaid, TANF, Home and Community Services. Partners from the University of Montana Center for Children Families and Workforce Development assist with research and program support.

Nov. 2, 2018

The Center and DPHHS hosted a Family First meeting with stakeholders in Helena to solicit questions and feedback. Governor Steve Bullock, Montana DPHHS Director Sheila Hogan, legislative experts from Casey Family Programs, and former foster youth spoke. The 120 stakeholders in attendance included foster families, child welfare providers, tribal officials, and local and state lawmakers and officials. (Click here for the meeting notes, and here for the meeting summary and evaluation results.) Updates on progress included:

- Child Fatality Review Teams functioning for past two years
- Policies and Standards for Caregivers updated to meet new licensing standards for kinship care, including a new caregiver manual
- State received a grant to develop improved supports for kinship placements
- Policy developed to expand use of child abuse and neglect registries for employees of child-serving agencies. Rules anticipated to be implemented on July 1, 2019.
- DPHHS designed a model for delivery of residential family-based treatment homes for substance abuse, but the grant application was denied.

Oct. 9, 2018

The Center and Montana DPHHS hosted an informational meeting on the Family First Act for budget office staff and DPHHS leadership. U.S. Senate staff for Utah Senator Orrin Hatch and Oregon Senator Ron Wyden, the bill’s co-authors, gave an overview of Congress’s intent. Casey Family Programs Senior Director of Public Policy Barbara Pryor provided an overview of the law.