



October 19, 2018

Senator Kate Bolz
District # 29, State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

RE: LR 430

Dear Senator Bolz:

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the LR 430 hearing as I am on a statewide tour meeting with our CFS team and stakeholders to provide information and receive feedback on Safety Organized Practice (SOP), a strategy included in the division's program improvement plan in response to the CFSR Round 3 findings. I would like to provide you an update to the progress the Division of Children and Family Services has made toward implementation of the provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act.

An external stakeholder meeting occurred in June of 2018. The meeting included representatives from advocacy groups, legislators, tribal representatives, service providers, education personnel, the other Divisions of the Department and other interested parties. At this meeting, a summary of each provision within The Act was provided along with the date the provision needs to be implemented and the person leading the implementation. All persons who attended were encouraged to participate in an implementation workgroup. At this time there are eight workgroups regularly meeting.

1. **Program and Services Prevention Plan** – This team has met twice and is focused on the development of the five-year Prevention Plan. This plan must be submitted, and approved, by the Administration for Children and Families in order for the state to claim IV-E funds on prevention services. This group will continue meeting to draft the state programs and services prevention plan. The Administration for Children and Families has not yet issued the Program Instruction that prescribes all the requirements nor the due date for submission of the Prevention Plan.
2. **Criminal Record and Registry Checks for Adults Working in Child-Care Institutions** – In August 2018 the Department submitted a request for a legislative delay from our federal partners. The work group met in August and is scheduled to meet again in October 2018. This team will collaborate and provide feedback for possible legislation and implementation procedures.

3. **Title IV-E Foster Care Maintenance Payments for Children with Parents in a Licensed Residential Family Based Treatment Facility for Substance Use** – A workgroup consisting of the Division of Behavioral Health, licensed residential family based treatment facility providers, and other stakeholders met twice to discuss questions, as well as review two draft documents. The first document was a draft Standard Work Instruction that was created for staff on the steps that must be in place for the IV-E prevention claiming of federal funding to take place. The second document was the draft scope of work that would need to be included in a sub award for the provider of this service. Both of these documents were sent to Nebraska’s federal partners at the end of September, as required by the Administration for Children Youth and Families.
4. **Kinship Navigator Program** – The Division of Children and Family Services met with stakeholders in June 2018 regarding the application to submit for the Kinship Navigator Program. The Division of Children and Family Services submitted an application requesting funding for the Kinship Navigator Program in July 2018. The Division of Children and Family Services was notified, and received a \$233,000 federal grant in September 2018 to develop the framework for the Kinship Navigator Program in Nebraska. This workgroup will collaborate on the program development and implementation.
5. **Protocols to Prevent Inappropriate Diagnoses** – The Division of Children and Family Services is collaborating with the Healthcare Oversight Committee and interested stakeholders to develop a plan for the ongoing oversight, and coordination, of health care services for children in foster care, to include implementation of protocols to prevent inappropriate diagnosis of children.
6. **Plan for Child Maltreatment Death** – This requirement is due on June 30, 2019. The Division of Children and Family Services has reviewed, and discussed, the requirement to develop and implement a statewide plan to prevent fatalities with Nebraska’s Child and Maternal Death Review (CMDR) Team and the Fetal Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) Team in Douglas County. Our next step is to meet with the CMDR subcommittee on Child Abuse and Neglect. Once the information gathering stage is complete, a workgroup will be convened to discuss the next steps.
7. **Foster Family Recruitment and Retention** – Our Federal partners have not released grant information pertaining to foster family recruitment and retention. The Division of Children and Family Services, and interested stakeholders, continue to check the federal grant website regularly. In July, interested stakeholders agreed to meet once the grant information became available.
8. **Model Licensing Standards** – Program Instruction for the National Model Licensing Standards for Foster Family Homes was issued in August 2018. CFS held a meeting with various stakeholders in September 2018. CFS drafted comments and recommendations which were submitted to the Children’s Bureau. Pending further guidance from Federal Partners on implementation expectations, a workgroup will reconvene.

The Division of Children and Family Services has already implemented the following provisions of the Families First Act:

- Electronic case processing system;
- Limit on the number of children in a foster family home;
- John H. Chafee foster care program for successful transition to adulthood; and
- Grants for electronic interstate case processing system.

The following provisions are awaiting approval from the Children's Bureau; once approval is received, the state will be considered in compliance:

- Title IV-E adoption assistance, delay of adoption assistance phase-in of applicable child requirements; and
- Proof of foster care.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the implementation of the Family First Prevention Service Act. I would encourage anyone interested in participating in a work group to contact my team at DHHS.FamilyFirst@Nebraska.Gov.

Sincerely,



Matthew T. Wallen, Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services