

Prevention in Kansas



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Kansas Five-Year Prevention Plan approved

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) creates reimbursement pathways for federal funds for specified prevention services provided to families. In accordance with FFPSA, states are required to submit a Title IV-E Prevention Plan to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) outlining required elements. The Kansas Prevention Plan was initially submitted on September 30th, 2019. This produced a round of comments from ACF, requiring resubmitted versions. Though this extended the process, it is not uncommon, and ACF worked with Kansas to interpret questions about the new program

legislature. Kansas celebrated official approval on April 30th, 2020.

Program Specialist for ACF in Region 7, Christine Lucero, shared her thoughts on what it meant for the state to have an approved plan. “As one of just a few states in the country and the first state in Region 7, the approval of Kansas’ Title IV-E Prevention Plan allows for the state to serve a greater number families while children remain in the home of origin. The regional office is proud of all the hard work that has gone into the Plan’s development – collaboration with staff, stakeholders and federal partners indicating a true

dedication by the State to improve the lives of children and families.”

The Title IV-E Prevention Plan illustrates the larger transformation effort of the state. Kansas is developing a “prevention culture” and Family First fit well into the existing structure of the agency and complements the many new programs DCF has begun investing in.

To read the Kansas Title IV-E Prevention Plan, click thru the following [link](#).

Prevention Provider Spotlight: Great Circle, Healthy Families America

Parenting is hard under the best circumstances. But if you are new to an area, or living isolated without nearby family or support network, or lacking sufficient resources to keep your family stable, it can be a recipe for disaster.

That's why programs like Healthy Families America (HFA) coupled with a statewide commitment focusing on families is so important. Although this coupling has been in place in Kansas only since January 2020, Great Circle's 18-person team of case managers and counselors are seeing the benefits for eastern Kansas.

In late 2019, the State of Kansas selected Great Circle to provide home visiting services to hundreds of families with young children in 16 counties in eastern Kansas using FFPSA funds. Great Circle began working with families in early 2020, using the HFA model. The evidence-based program promotes child well-being and prevents child abuse and neglect by working with families to develop effective parenting skills, improve communication, connect to community resources and build on the family's existing strengths. Along with serving Kansas families, Great Circle is Missouri's largest HFA provider.

"When we first started receiving referrals, the families had fear and mistrust," says Mark Leavell, Great Circle's director of community programs in Kansas. "So, our first job was to break down the barriers families had about someone coming into their home on a regular basis. But because of the depth of the HFA program and our caring and supportive staff, parents soon saw we were there to strengthen their family, not break them apart. So, now when we visit, there's trust and a welcoming spirit."

The warm welcome Great Circle received from the state of Kansas has made developing the new program easier, Leavell added. "This is our first foray into delivering services outside of Missouri, so it's fair to say there was trepidation about finding new office space, hiring qualified staff and learning the rules of doing business in Kansas," he says. "We were very appreciative of

how transparent Kansas' Department of Children and Families has been through the process. There have been many moving parts as all of the state's FFPSA programs have been moving forward, but we've all been learning and supporting each other through the process."

As a behavioral health nonprofit, Great Circle has 19 locations throughout Missouri, with the closest office to Kansas in Independence, MO. Great Circle offers a wide array of programs for children and families, including: specialized and fully accredited K-12 education services for students, including those on the autism spectrum and from more than 100 Missouri districts; residential care for children who cannot remain safely in the family home; foster care case management; parent support and education; crisis services for children; online and in-person counseling; and other home- and community-based programs.

Underlying all Great Circle programs is a "commitment to trauma-informed care and the use of evidence-based practices to deliver services that meet children and families where they are in life and then help them become the best version of themselves," says Paula Fleming, Great Circle's President/CEO. "We believe the family unit is the most important element in our communities, and when there are measures in place to strengthen families, the entire community benefits."

Working "upstream" drives Great Circle's approach to developing new programs and expanding service. "If we can get ahead of a problem and help families before a crisis tears them apart, then we have not only reduced the costs to our society but we also have reduced the trauma a child or a family must endure," adds Leavell. "And because we know that childhood trauma can impact a person throughout their lifetime, our positive efforts now can reap benefits for a child for decades to come."

There's a personal motivation for Leavell as well. "I've just become a grandparent for the first time. And my grandson, my son and his wife live in Kansas. So I'm extremely pleased there's a

safety net for them if they need it," he says. "I adopted my son when he was 14. His early childhood was one of abuse and neglect. But because he received the right support, he was able to address his trauma and I know he'll be an amazing father."

"He's the proof that with a caring circle of support anyone can overcome their past and build a strong, positive future," Leavell adds. "That's what Great Circle has been doing for many years in Missouri, and now has the opportunity to deliver in Kansas."

Recently, the program has had to adjust to the restrictions created by the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders across Kansas. "Fortunately, because of the rapport our team had already developed with our families, we've been able to continue connecting with them remotely instead of in person," says Leavell. While his team is anxious to get back into the field, he says it has prompted creativity on the team's part to develop new ways to interact with families.

And he stresses, there is not just one "right" way to serve a family. "While we needed to adapt our delivery method because of COVID-19, it didn't alter our overall approach. Each family deserves a unique combination of services and support from us. What are their needs, their strengths and weaknesses? What are the community resources that will best respond to their needs? Would they benefit from joining a parent support group?"

Great Circle's Kansas team also is working to develop "parent cafes" – groups led by parents that provide a place to share information or perhaps serve as a sympathetic ear on tough days. "The idea is to extend the support network beyond the case worker's visits to the home," Leavell says.

"Much like the biblical story of the loaves and fishes, at Great Circle we help families build their own 'toolbox' and start them down the path of positive parenting. And then we can feel confident they have the knowledge they need to add all the other things to their toolbox that will make their family stronger."



Left to right: Mark Leavell, director of community programs. The Great Circle Home Visiting Team. Great Circle's Kansas headquarters in Douglas County/

Prevention Provider Spotlight: Kansas Children's Service League

Kansas Children's Service League's mission is to protect and promote the well-being of children. The agency has been dedicated to meeting the changing needs of children and families in Kansas since 1893.

KCSL provides an array of services across the state and serves as the Kansas Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America. KCSL has provided a continuum of programs and services, advocated for children and collaborated with public and private agencies to impact the lives of more than 40,000 children and families each year. KCSL is dedicated to providing services and advocacy efforts that focus on preventing child abuse, strengthening families and empowering parents and youth.

Family First Selected Program, P-CAP

The Parent-Child Assistance Program (P-CAP), offered in Shawnee county, provides intensive case management services designed to serve pregnant women and parents who have a child under 1 year old and are currently using substances.

The goals of P-CAP are to:

- Assist mothers in obtaining substance abuse assessments and treatment services;
- Provide recovery support and positive social connections;
- Link mother and their families to community resources that will help them build and maintain healthy and independent family lives;
- Increase positive parenting skills and parent-child interactions;
- Help mothers prevent the births of future substance-affected children; and
- Improve child health and well-being.

Services are provided to families through a home visitation model for a minimum of 6 months to 3 years. P-CAP focuses on connecting families to needed substance abuse treatment services and provides support throughout the process. P-CAP also offers education about child development and parenting techniques while identifying potential developmental delays in the first year of the infant's life.

P-CAP specialists are available to their clients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

(continued next page)



PCAP staff (left to right) Hannah Miller, PCAP Specialist; Jennifer Gassmann, PCAP Supervisor; Angela Winn, PCAP Specialist.

(continued) Provider Spotlight: Kansas Children's Service League



(Left to right) Jamie VanCompernelle, KCSL Healthy Families Assistant Director and Healthy Families Director, Kelly Hayes.

Family First Selected Program Healthy Families America

Kansas Children's Service League has been offering the Healthy Families America (HFA) program in Kansas since 1996, providing evidence-based, intensive home visitation services to families at risk for child abuse and neglect. KCSL's existing Healthy Families programs across the state will continue taking referrals from community partners, but are not funded to take Family First referrals.

With the Family First funding, KCSL was able to expand and add two new Healthy Families America programs in Kansas, in Iola and Wichita. The Iola program serves Allen, Neosho, and Wilson counties while the Wichita program serves Sedgwick County. The Wichita program will be the second KCSL Healthy Families program in the city, however the existing program accepts community partner referrals while the newest program will accept only Family First referrals.

Serving up to 30 families per year at each location, referrals to the Family First Healthy Families programs will come from DCF and will enroll families who are expecting a baby or with a child(ren) under age 24 months.

A regular home visitor goes to the home of the family, building rapport and trust with them. Currently, virtual home visits are being done by video chat during the COVID-19 pandemic. The home visitor becomes a person the caretaker can reach out to for advice, not just about parenting, but daily life situations that may adversely affect their family. The Healthy Families America program is focused on supporting the family in building positive parenting practices, identifying and achieving goals that are meaningful for the family, and creating healthy relationships among family members. The program offers families help with transportation, concrete goods to help with child development, and resources to help the caretaker cope with stress and build confidence in parenting.

KCSL's Healthy Families programs are accredited by Healthy Families America and most recently received accreditation as a multi-site system in March 2020. The overall goals of the HFA program are to:

- Build and sustain community partnerships to systematically engage overburdened families in home visiting services prenatally or at birth
- Cultivate and strengthen nurturing parent-child relationships
- Promote healthy childhood growth and development
- Enhance family functioning by reducing risk and building protective factors

KCSL also provides other statewide resources that might be of interest to our Family First partners during this virtual work time. Including:

[Free training webinars on Child Abuse & Neglect, ACES, Period of PURPLE Crying, and more!](#)

Contact training@kcsl.org for a full list of opportunities.

Parent Helpline: 1-800-CHILDREN, available 24/7 for parents with questions

Or check out the [new podcast](#) for parents "KCSL Parenting Shorts"

Prevention Providers Partnership Spotlight: Douglas County

Success By 6 Coalition and Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health

Partnering on a Family First grant, the Douglas County Success By 6 Coalition and Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health, saw an opportunity to collaborate and coordinate to improve the access of protective factors and provide more support to vulnerable families to become stronger.

The mission of SB6 is to ensure that all Douglas County families of children under 6 have what they need to successfully parent their young children, thereby fostering positive parent-child relationships and preparing children for success in school and in life, SB6 maintains a small staff of 1 FTE Collaborative Projects Coordinator and .75 FTE Data Administrator to administer about a million dollars annually in funds to strengthen the work of implementing partners. These partners work to strengthen families with program areas of parenting education, case management, parent/child therapy, early care & educa-

tion. SB6 relies on a Strengthening Families – protective factors – approach when selecting and designing projects, programs, and policies. SB6 uses the Strengthening Families framework both as a platform for collaboration and as a lens through which to evaluate the progress in accomplishing the mission.

SB6 strives to prevent child abuse and neglect by recognizing and building on families' strengths and improving access to resources that strengthen families. No single partner can provide all that families need for success. SB6 has found that this diversity of existing agencies, funding streams, policy priorities, resources, and changing environments give rise to a need for coordination and collaboration. Therefore SB6 commits to ongoing coalition of an early childhood community.

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health has served the Lawrence and Douglas County community for more than 130

years. Its mission is to advance policies, practices and programs that promote health for all, prevent disease and protect the environment. For nearly forty of those years, since the 1980's, Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health has provided some form of child abuse prevention services within its maternal and child health program. Since 2010 that program has been Healthy Families Douglas County (HFDC). The Family First funding will allow 20 additional families to be served per year.

"This is a great opportunity to support and partner with more families in Douglas County that are overwhelmed with a multitude of stressors," said Jenn Preston, Supervisor of Support Services. "We are thankful for the partnership with Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County that lead the effort to secure this grant for Healthy Families Douglas County."

Family First Selected Program, Healthy Families America

Healthy Families Douglas County (HFDC) which is accredited through Healthy Families America, is a family support and evidence-based home-visitation program that works to support early, nurturing relationships as the foundation for healthy development.

HFDC staff are public health workers, such as registered nurses, social workers and family support specialists, hired for their inter-personal skills that will ensure a trusting and supportive relationship is created with the families they serve. Staff obtain over one hundred hours of training within their first year and at least twenty hours of annual, ongoing training related to trauma-informed care, evidenced-based curriculum, infant-toddler mental health, prevention of child abuse/neglect and topics that support the specific cultural or social needs of the families served.

With a Spanish speaking home visitor on staff, these families are just as easily served. HFDC programming is unique in that 75% of the families referred are pregnant which provides more opportunities to prevent negative outcomes rather than intervening after a negative event has occurred. HFDC is fortunate to have long standing, positive community partnerships with referral agencies such as WIC, OB-GYN offices and the local hospital that serve pregnant families and get them connected to HFDC services. Staff work hard to maintain positive, supportive relationships with community partners in order to best serve their families.

Focusing on parent skill-building through a trust-based, ongoing relationship with their public health worker, these services are provided in the parent's home. Due to COVID-19, virtual home visits are now being conducted. Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health supports this virtual work by providing staff with laptops, secure internet connection, cloud-based files and database as well as work cell phones. While staff are adjusting to a new

way of service delivery their priority continues to be the needs of families and offering personalized support to help them connect to resources to reduce stressors.



Top: The HFDC team practicing social distancing (closest to furthest) Jenn Preston (Support Services Supervisor), Traci Dotson (Public Health Social Worker), Frendida Zamora (Family Support Specialist), Kelli Raney (Public Health Nurse), MariaAna Garza (Public Health Nurse)
Right: Frendida Zamora loading "Covid-19 toolkits" to deliver to families.



From the Field: Examples of prevention during the Covid-19 crisis



Working together to keep children safe and strengthening families, even in times of COVID-19, DCF and prevention providers continue to be creative on how to offer services without interruption. Here are just a few real stories from DCF staff making the connection to prevention partners, offering families hope during these unprecedented times.

DCF Supervisor of PPS & Team Decision Making,

East Region: *One of our families is engaging in Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) and they are doing really good! Parent states they enjoy the play therapy with the child. Our CPS was at the home a few weeks ago and witnessed them in a PCIT session and afterwards the child said it is their favorite time. The parent is learning new ways to communicate with the child and to better handle situations. Some of the children are temporarily with their grandparent and the parent is excited to learn ways to better parent they return home. Although the parent easily becomes overwhelmed, we've seen the skills learned while participating in PCIT being used and it has been positive. Without these services in the home, safety concerns would be still be present.*

DCF CPS, Wichita Region: *Our service provider has gone above and beyond and I'd like to recognize them. A DCCCA Family Preservation, Family Support Worker (FSW) is working with one of my families in which the*

teen was engaging in risky behaviors, and having mental health concerns. Parent has been willing to do everything asked/suggested to help the child, however, the parent suffers from mental health concerns of their own and needs a lot of guidance, reassurance, and reminders of what is needed for the child. I referred to DCCCA to assist parent in obtaining mental health, learning alternative ways to communicate, parenting skills etc. This FSW has gone above and beyond her role/duty as a family support worker to help this family. The child's behaviors became unpredictable and extremely harmful for the family. This FSW has continued to go to the home, maintaining all regulations for self-care during Covid-19 and/or maintained constant contact with parent and myself via telephone. When the results came back positive for multiple substances on a random drug test on the child, this FSW quickly got into contact with an agency to complete a drug and alcohol assessment for child, located a bed available for treatment and after the child was recommended for inpatient treatment, secured the bed. This FSW has taken a step-further in helping this family, by transporting the child and parent to the treatment facility hours away, as parent does not have the ability to drive. In the meantime, I too have been in contact with parent and child on an almost daily basis, showing my support to the family and encouraging the continued progress that the family has been making with services.

DCF Child Protection Specialist, Wichita Region: *I was working with a family struggling with a complex situation which involved a young teen who was repeating of dangerous patterns Worried the teen would negatively influence the younger children in the family the parent was uncertain of allowing the teen to continue living in the home. I explained the Family First Family Centered Therapy program and the parent agreed that an in-home therapist could help the family change behavior patterns and reinforce their bond to ensure the children's continued safety. I spoke with the teen and asked if they would feel safe at home with the services in place. I explained to the both the child and the parent that there would have to be behavioral changes and it would be difficult, but if they were willing to try great results could come from the services. The teen stated they would try to engage with the therapist and would feel safe returning home. The child returned home the following day and services were initiated. (continued next page)*

DCF Child Protection Supervisor, East Region:

I received a very emotional call from a kinship caregiver that had adopted a child with high needs. The child had significant behaviors and the school was not able to manage them in a classroom and often isolated the child from other students.

The parent was not trusting of the agency and has long personal history of childhood trauma of their own. Wanting nothing but the best for the child, the parent struggled to get the needed resources to help. Aftercare services had just ended but the parent still needed help from the agency.

I pulled together a team of professionals that could assist in coming up with resources and options. Many professionals came together that had no history with the family but were willing to do anything to help and maintain the adoptive placement. We came up with respite options, residential treatment options, supports, and made a Family Preservation referral. At the initial meeting, this parent who initially was so untrusting of any state agency, cried and asked me to tell everyone that helped "thank you and god bless you all".

While we never know if the final outcome will be a full success, everyone pulled together to give this family some hope and much needed support and the gratefulness of the family is heartwarming.



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