

# Prevention in Kansas

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## Family Preservation's holiday preparations

Each December the Family Preservation providers go above and beyond to dose families with holiday cheer. The elves at the three Kansas Family Preservation agencies have been working hard to get this year's festivities moving forward and wish lists filled. Here's what the Family Preservation providers in each region have been doing to prepare:

**TFI Family Services** has worked with local community partners in Northwest and Southwest Kansas to ensure every child being served through their Family Preservation program has a gift to open under the tree on Christmas morning.

**Cornerstones of Care** Family Preservation asked all families they work with in Northeast and Southeast Kansas for a Christmas wish list and are gathering donations to ensure those families have a happy holiday.

**DCCCA** Family Preservation in the Wichita region and the Kansas City

region are planning separate but similar holiday parties for their current and past families that have participated in the program. The party includes dinner, games, and photos with Santa. In addition to the party, DCCCA has the goal to provide a gift to every child receiving services. Gifts are made possible by community partnerships and Toys for Tots.

Jeanette Owens, Chief Child Welfare Officer at DCCCA shared, "We do love Christmas and getting to share some fun and happy moments with our families. Witnessing the joy and gratefulness that so many of our families experience during this time often stays with our staff throughout the entire year. Many times parents have tears of joy knowing they will be able to have a gifts for their children on Christmas morning. Staff work exceptionally hard during the season to ensure no family has to decide between having food or paying rent and can celebrate the holidays with a gift or two."

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**Top:** Donations for DCCCA Family Preservation families. **Left:** TFI Family Preservation with gifts for children under the Christmas tree.



**fosteradopt  
connect**

## Provider Spotlight: FosterAdopt Connect Kansas Caregivers Support Network

When all prevention services to maintain children safely within their family of origin have been exhausted, those children need the care and support of loving, permanent caregivers like relatives, foster parents or a trusted friend of the family also known as Non-Related Kinship. When this occurs, those caregivers may need additional support to be successful. FosterAdopt Connect's program, Kansas Caregivers Support Network, provides that support.

FosterAdopt Connect began supporting the Kansas Caregivers Support Network in July 2021 after being awarded a contract from Kansas DCF. FosterAdopt Connect's mission is to bridge the gap between Kansas Caregivers and the Child Welfare System by creating access to resources to sustain a healthy environment for children and youth and the families caring for them. "Our goal and vision is to become an innovative, and trusted resource for caregivers and other child welfare partners across Kansas through meaningful representation and giving a voice to those caring for children who have experienced trauma" said Kristalle Hedrick, Vice President of Kansas Programs at FosterAdopt Connect. The Kansas Caregivers Support Network provides for caregivers' needs in a variety of ways, including peer to peer support and mentoring, advocacy, education and training opportunities, and providing information and resources to assist all caregivers in feeling equipped to handle the needs of children in care. The Kansas Caregivers Support Network is a resource for all Kansas Foster, Non-Related Kinship and Kinship/Relative caregivers. Additionally, the program provides support to Child Welfare Case Management Providers, Child Placing Agencies, Kansas Department for Children and Families as well as other child welfare providers.

FosterAdopt Connect began in 1998 when a group of dedicated foster parents recognized a need for stronger

support, training, and companionship as they pursued the difficult and rewarding work of parenting a child from the foster care system. Many felt isolated and ill-equipped to provide the most loving care for kids who experienced abuse and neglect. As more and more families were drawn to the care and advocacy offered, this support system quickly matured into FosterAdopt Connect (formerly Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association), which was incorporated in 2000 as a 501c3 nonprofit social service organization. Rapid growth fueled by the needs of youth who age out of foster care and foster and adopted children and families has expanded the geographic reach and depth of the innovative programs and services offered. Yet, at its core, FosterAdopt Connect maintains an "in the trenches with you" approach to serving kids and families.

Every kid deserves a childhood free of abuse and neglect within a family that offers love, stability, safety. FosterAdopt Connect actively monitors the changing needs of foster and adopted children and families within the community to identify gaps in available services. To fill these gaps, they search nationally and internationally for best practices to implement, and if none are available, they create innovative solutions to improve outcomes for the children and families served.

"We are excited to be one piece of the support network that surrounds caregivers and children who are part of the Kansas Child Welfare System," said Hedrick.

*To learn more about FosterAdopt Connect's work supporting caregivers across Kansas, visit <https://kansascaregiverssupportnetwork.com/> or call (913) 717-0183*



**Kansas Caregivers  
Support Network**



# Stories from the Kansas Family Mobile Crisis Teams

As announced in the [issue 17 newsletter](#), the Department for Children and Families entered into a contract with Beacon Health Options, in partnership with the Community Mental Health Centers, to provide the Kansas Family Mobile Crisis Helpline. This contract helps avert tragedy and crisis for individuals and families experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Since its implementation on October 1, 2021, many families, children and youth have been served by Crisis Care Managers and/or Mobile Crisis Team clinicians when they call the Crisis Helpline.

Below are two recent examples of how the Crisis Helpline is working to provide hope to individuals who find themselves in hopeless situations.

- Responding to a call to the helpline, the Mobile Crisis response team was sent to the home of a family to talk to a teen who was suicidal and their parent. Through empathy, support and building trust, the Mobile Crisis team was able to make a connection with the teen while they were in despair. Through conversations, the teen discovered what was leading them to consider suicide. Together with the parent, the team was able to identify a safety plan and healthy coping techniques. By the end of their meeting, the teen was able to acknowledge reasons for living.

- Another situation involved a young adult who was thinking about suicide as well. After calling the Crisis Helpline, the Crisis Care Manager helped connect the young adult to their local Community Mental Health Center (CMHC). After speaking with the staff at the CMHC, the young adult agreed to come into the Crisis Center, but they didn't have a way to get there. The CMHC staff scheduled a car service to take the young adult to the Crisis Center. A seamless transition from Crisis Care Manager to the local CMHC allowed this young adult to get the support and services they needed to stay safe and healthy.

During her testimony to the Kansas Legislature at the Joint Committee on Child Welfare Oversight committee hearing on Oct. 5, 2021, DCF Secretary Howard stated the Mobile Crisis Helpline “will develop and grow to add adults through work KDADS (Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services) is doing so we will then implement Mobile Crisis response for both youth and adults across the State.”

*Help us spread the word about this valuable resource for Kansans.*

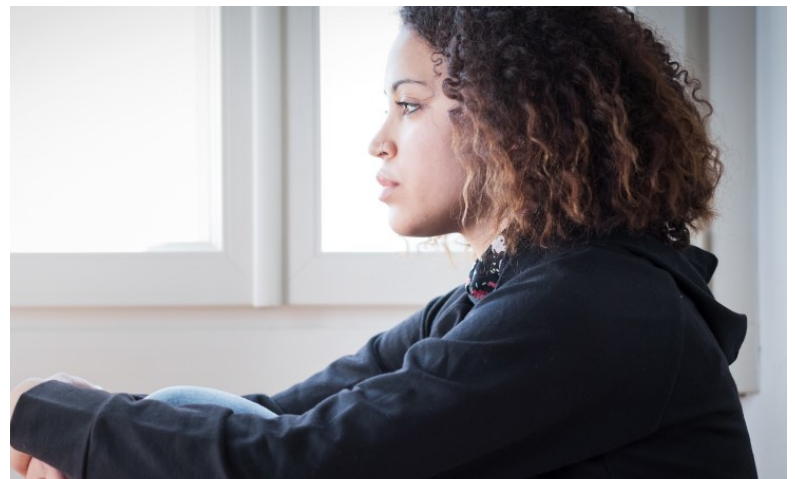
*The Helpline can be called at 1-833-441-2240*

## Family Mobile Crisis Helpline

Services are available for all Kansans 20 years old or younger, including anyone in foster care or formerly in foster care.

### A wealth of resources at your fingertips

- Over the phone support and problem solving to help resolve a child's behavioral health crisis
- Over the phone support with referral to community resources or a recommendation to engage in stabilization services
- In-person support via mobile crisis response if the crisis cannot be resolved over the phone
- In emergency situations, EMS, law enforcement and/or mobile crisis response unit will be contacted to assist



**Call the Helpline at 833-441-2240**

# The Kansas Practice Model and the Showcase celebration

Since 2019, DCF has been transforming the practice in which staff engage with families. The creation of the Kansas Practice Model (KPM) has provided a consistent and customized framework to support engagement, safety planning and decision-making to guide the work alongside families, children and youth. With family voice and practice approaches, practitioners use their skills to engage the family and assist with needed services to support family safety and well-being.

The KPM integrates aspects and tools from multiple practice approaches with promising evidence research and best practices to come alongside families, their natural supports and community on a journey toward improved safety and family well-being.

“As we move toward a more intentional character around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, it was absolutely refreshing to see our thoughts and ideas put into action,” said Brandi Turner, DCF Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer. “The Showcase was an inspiring experience that left me feeling motivated and with a sense of hope for our internal and external families.”

On Dec. 8 a virtual showcase took place to honor and celebrate the hard work and dedication DCF staff have put forth to implement the model. Secretary Howard welcomed attendees and shared data outlining how far they’ve come since implementation:

- 4,046 children and youth have been impacted by Team Decision Making (TDM) Meetings
- More than 2,200 meetings have taken place from Nov. 2019 to Sept. 2021. As a result of those meetings more than 60% of the recommendations were to maintain placement with family or relatives
- Since the fall of 2019, over 500 participants have attended the multi-day Family Finding Bootcamps
- Since July 1, 2021, almost half of the children separated from families are initially placed with relatives,

DCF staff heard from colleagues, families, and partners how the Kansas Practice model has positively impacted them.

“The Showcase was definitely a celebration of commitment put forth by our teams, but it was also unexpectedly a rejuvenating experience that provided more hope, deeper connection, and a great sense of community,” said Jenny Egan, DCF TDM Coordinator and Learning and Development Specialist.

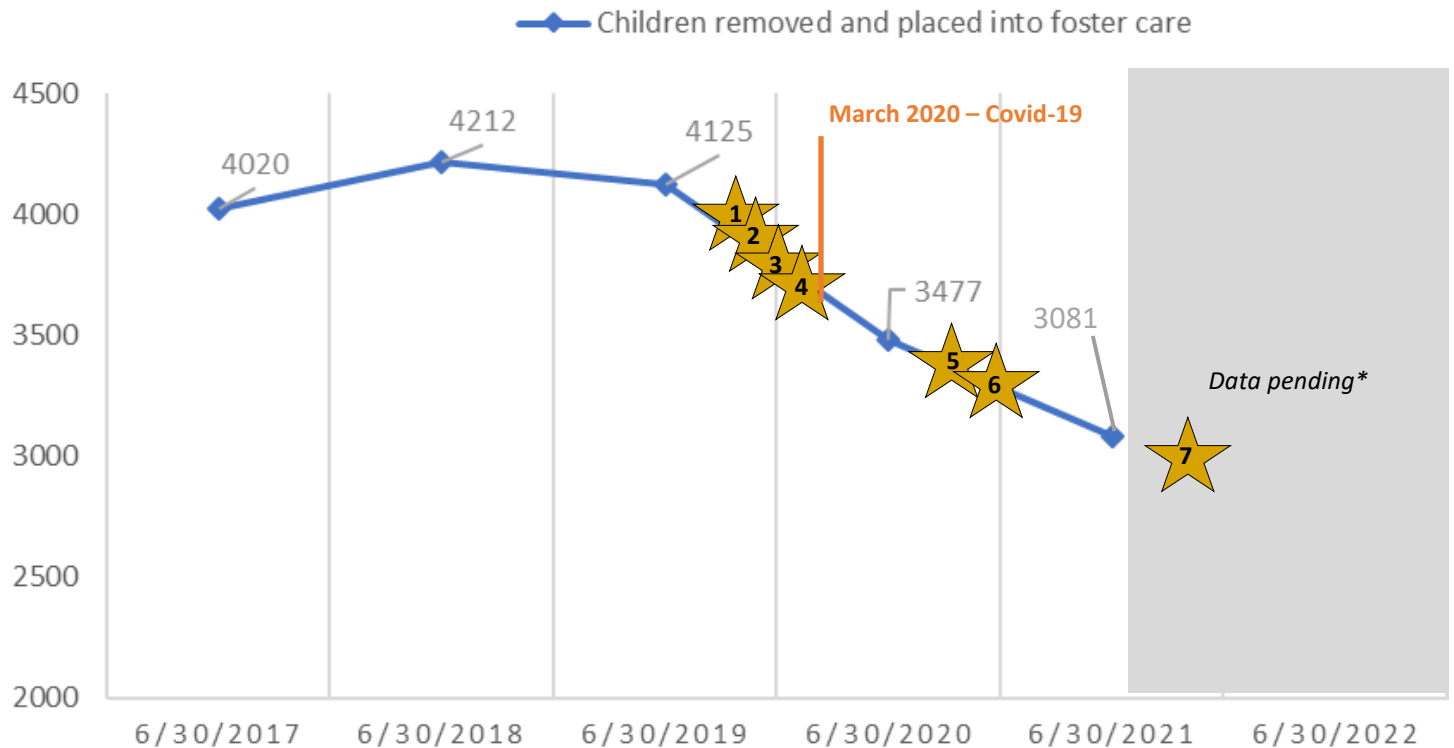
To learn more about the Kansas Practice Model, visit: <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/pps/pages/kpm.aspx>



Above left: Secretary Howard opening the event. Top Middle : Harold Murphy, Northwest Region Supervisor. Top Right: Myra Snedecker, Wichita Region Child Protection Specialist. Bottom Left (L to R): School Counselor, Kelsey Abitz and Kieli Frey Northwest Region Supervisor Bottom Right: All presenters from the day closing the event.

# WHAT KANSAS IS DOING TO PREVENT FOSTER CARE

Number of Children Placed in Foster Care over the Years



The above graph illustrates the number of children removed from their homes and placed in foster care since 2017. The gold stars represent statewide milestones Kansas has implemented during this administration cycle to move DCF toward a culture of prevention, to keep children in the home or with their families whenever safely possible, and providing access to services which promote child and family well-being.

- October 1, 2019-** Kansas implements the Family First Prevention Services Act. DCF awards sixteen grants to provide the State with evidence-based services in mental health treatment, parent skill-building programs, kinship navigation, and substance use disorder services. [Refer back to issue 1 of the](#)

[newsletter for the awards.](#)

- November, 2019–** DCF begins implementation of the Kansas Practice Model (KPM), which provides a consistent and customized framework to support engagement, safety planning and decision making to guide work alongside families. Practice approaches were implemented in phases across the state beginning in November of 2019. [Read more in issue 8 of the newsletter.](#)
- January 1, 2020–** Family Preservation implements new contracts which include evidence-based models and the Tier 1 and Tier 2 options for families. [See issue 3 for more details.](#)
- February 2020—** Kansas hosts the 2nd 4 day in-person *Family Finding Bootcamp* with Kevin

Campbell, which includes 250 participants. [See issue 5 of the newsletter for more.](#)

**March 2020–** As Covid-19 descends on the country, DCF and providers alter the ways in which they provide services, training, and other in-person events.

**October, 2020–** KPM has been implemented statewide October of 2020.

**January, 2021–** Kansas takes steps to become a Kin First State. [Issue 14 has more information.](#)

*\*Data for FY 22 will be available after July 2022*

**October 1, 2021–** DCF contracts with Beacon Health Options and implements the Family Mobile Crisis Helpline and Response Teams. [See issue 17 of the newsletter](#)



# Crossover Youth Practice Model Update

**October 2021 Update** by Daniel Olson, Crossover Youth Coordinator/Specialty Courts Support, Office of Judicial Administration, [olsond@kscourts.org](mailto:olsond@kscourts.org)

Montgomery County and Shawnee County continue their path towards implementing the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM). They are making strides with information from the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR). These two counties are working towards developing “101” cross-system training, completing an inventory of assessments, and collecting data from youth and families through listening sessions. These sessions are an important part of implementing CYPM as it gains firsthand knowledge from individuals who were involved in the Juvenile Justice and/or Child Welfare systems. This information will be used to identify positive and negative procedures that affect the youth. By discovering barriers,

procedures can be updated to better serve the youth and family. Shawnee County hosted its first session at the beginning of October 2021 and has two more scheduled. Montgomery County completed its session in September 2021. CJJR will then evaluate the information from these sessions and present them back to the counties.

CJJR continues to provide information for Sedgwick County to have its current model become more in line with CYPM. Sedgwick County continues to explore options with its current system and make updates as needed. For the past couple of months, Sedgwick County has been creating an inventory of the assessments that are used in each agency that is involved with youth. They are compiling the assessments to gain a better understanding of what information each agency collects.

**December 2021 Update** by Michelle Montgomery, Crossover Coordinator, Kansas Department of Corrections [michelle.montgomery@ks.gov](mailto:michelle.montgomery@ks.gov)

A major accomplishment this year for The Kansas Crossover State Policy Team (SPT) is the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC), the Office of Judicial Administration, and the Department for Children and Families. This allows the exchange of specific data, which will provide a more comprehensive analysis of the recidivism rate for juveniles, as well as statistics regarding Kansas crossover youth. The data points are designed to answer three questions; 1) *How much work did the SPT do?* 2) *How well did the SPT do that work?* and 3) *Is anyone better off?* These questions will guide decision-making for Crossover Youth Policy Model (CYPM) implementation. The data collection team is composed of volunteers from the two CYPM pilot sites and the Program Analyst with KDOC’s Research and Behavior Analytics unit, Amilee Turner. The team will meet early in 2022 to further discuss and prepare data collection

The SPT meets monthly to brainstorm ideas to improve communication and collaboration between agencies, remove

barriers, and improve or identify effective services for crossover youth and their families. Kristen Powell, the young adult advocate SPT member, brought important topics to the team, including how to identify ways to enhance the process while reducing the costs of obtaining child welfare and juvenile justice records for young adults, and ensuring youth who crossover from child welfare to juvenile justice are aware of transitional services they may be qualified to receive through DCF.

Sharing information and collaboration between systems is challenging. While Kansas has statutes and codes which dictate how this is done, the Information Sharing Workgroup took on the task of reviewing and developing an “at a glance” tool based on those statutes. The tool is in review and there is hope for a test run in early 2022.

While the Information Sharing Workgroup focused on assisting staff from both the child welfare and juvenile justice system to improve information sharing, the Prevention Workgroup seeks to understand the impact of cross-system information sharing on those involved with systems. Members of this workgroup developed a brief, anonymous survey for distribution to pilot counties. The workgroup will review and

incorporate feedback from the survey into process that will promote effective communication between systems.

As the current workgroups look forward to 2022 and completes tasks, the SPT anticipate creating at least one new workgroup that will focus on Celebrating Crossover. This would highlight the accomplishments of crossover youth.

CYPM Kansas State Policy Team had a busy year in 2021. Developing and defining the target population of crossover youth, beginning the teams in the pilot counties of Shawnee and Montgomery, completing system assessments, recommendations and work plans were developed, focus groups were held, and ideas for strengthening communication and collaboration were shared. There is much excitement and anticipation for further implementing CYPM in 2022.

*To learn more about the Crossover Youth Practice Model, visit <https://www.doc.ks.gov/juvenile-services/crossover-youth-practice-model>.*