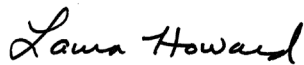


# Sedgwick County Task Force Final Recommendations for Foster Care- April 2022

The Kansas Department for Children and Families has put significant effort into improving the child welfare system, including work that aligns with many of the task force recommendations. We are encouraged to see the positive impacts of these changes as they have been introduced. Like all things in a complex system such as child welfare, these changes take time, and DCF is committed to continuously working with our partners.



Laura Howard, Secretary

## Task Force Recommendation

**Fully funding evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs for youth and families before youth are placed in the foster care system, including intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) services, support for families in the home, behavioral programs, and substance abuse programs, among others. Doing so will build stronger families and alleviate stress on the foster care system – allowing for improved levels of care.**

## DCF Efforts as of July 2022

Funding for evidence-based prevention programs through Family First in the DCF budget for SFY23 increased \$7 million all funds to a total of \$20 million. Family First Prevention Programs are federal and state funded programs to support children remaining safely in their home through in-home prevention services. Programs are designed to address areas of risk for family systems, including:

- Substance use by caregivers or the youth
- Behavioral needs of the youth
- Parent Skill Building
- Mental Health
- Kinship Navigation

[Family First Prevention Services Act - Prevention and Protection Services \(ks.gov\)](#)

Family Preservation services are offered to families where there are identified needs that place the child(ren) in the home at risk for removal. Family Preservation offers in-home treatment and/or case management services to support the family. These services also address areas of risk for family systems, including:

- Substance use by caregivers or the youth
- Behavioral needs of the youth
- Parent Skill Building
- Mental Health

[Family Preservation - Prevention and Protection Services \(ks.gov\)](#)

TANF Grant funds are utilized to help support prevention services (Families First and Family Preservation), as well as after school and community-based programs, including Communities in Schools, YouThrive, Kansas Early Head Start, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), Heartland RADAC, KS Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, Project Rise (KVC). Youth and Stability TANF Grants support programs which include: The Mirror Inc Work for Success Program, The International Rescue Committee (IRC) Trauma Adapted-Family Connections, Mental Health Association Strengthening Families Program, Healthy Families Program (KCSL), Connections to Success.

**Requiring the Child Placing Agency and/or Case Management Provider has a local contact trained in mental health crisis response on call by phone 24/7 to guide foster families facing a mental health crisis toward mobile mental health responders and other local resources; and create consequences for any agency not following this requirement. Additionally, developing protocol that states if a Child Placing Agency worker is not available during a crisis, a supervisor will be called.**

**As part of this requirement, DCF and local law enforcement officials need to determine which agency has jurisdiction over where and how a youth will receive services, ultimately following KSA 59-2953, which references not leaving someone with an identified mental crisis at a non-medical facility.**

[https://www.ksrevisor.org/statutes/chapters/ch59/059\\_029\\_0053.html](https://www.ksrevisor.org/statutes/chapters/ch59/059_029_0053.html)

DCF has implemented the Family Crisis Response Helpline- 24/7 crisis line that offers crisis intervention and mobile response to families and individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, as well as connection to local Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs).

[Welcome - Family Crisis Response Helpline \(ks.gov\)](#)

Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) has a free, confidential support line for families in the state: 1-800-CHILDREN. This information is provided to Foster Care Case Management Providers and Child Placing Agencies to share with foster and birth/kinship families.

Foster Care Case Management Providers and Child Placing Agencies have protocols in place regarding having an on-call crisis staff available to families.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline became available on July 16 across the state and nation. This line is available for anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis. Information on this resource has been provided to CPAs and CMPs to share with families.

DCF will consider and develop further protocols through our grant and provider agreement processes, as well as community conversation sessions which will be held in Summer of 2022, as required by HB2510 omnibus for DCF to gather information on performance-based contracts.

KSA 59-2953 defines the Kansas Probate Code. Chapter 59 of the Kansas Code also defines treatment facilities and gives a definition for a person who is suffering from a mental health crisis. These statutes also relate to the involuntary commitment statute, K.S.A. 59-2953.

The Child In Need of Care Code gives clear guidance to the agency and law enforcement, which includes but is not limited to: K.S.A.38-2230, Duties of DCF; 38-2231, When law enforcement officers or court services officers may take child under 18 into custody; 38-2232, Children under 18 taken into custody/processes; 38-2233, Filing of petition by local prosecutor.

**Creating an eco-system that connects community resources, grassroots organizations, advocates, coaches, champions, and others with the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF), Law Enforcement, Sedgwick County COMCARE, Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC) and Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) and other systems that serve foster care children in a mental health crisis.**

The Interagency and Community Advisory Board (ICAB) is a Kansas cross-system multi-agency and community collaboration, including law enforcement and corrections sectors, that was established to support two statewide implementations: the Family First Prevention Services Act and Kansas Strong for Children and Families. The ICAB's overarching goal is to support and activate a comprehensive service array that spans a broad continuum of care for families by: (1) building cross-sector knowledge of needs, gaps, challenges and best practices; (2) using data and continuous quality improvement to monitor processes and outcomes; and (3) developing and executing action plans to address service gaps.

Sedgwick County has its own board, with a feedback loop to the Statewide board and other regional boards in the state.

The ICAB membership guidelines state:

The Statewide ICAB shall include representatives who are in advanced and/or executive leadership positions within the agency or organization. Membership should be broad based so as to represent a cross-section of interests related to the prevention, mitigation of child maltreatment, and permanency, including delivery and oversight of services that support children and families. ICABs will represent the gender, racial, ethnic, county populations, and geographic diversity of Kansas. Foremost, the Statewide ICAB should comprise members with sufficient authority and decision-making power to enact needed policy and procedure changes.

Regional ICABs shall include representatives of key stakeholder groups as determined by each region to represent their local constituents and community leaders in the region. The regional ICAB should comprise members with local/regional authority to enact policy changes within their organization and members who can provide critical feedback on the delivery of Family First and Kansas Strong services and the local/regional service array.

DCF works in collaboration with several agencies in the Sedgwick County Community to bring systems and community supports together to address the needs of cross-systems youth. This group has been designated as a Multidisciplinary Team and meets monthly to discuss processes and protocols related to serving cross-systems youth in the community. This work is done in conjunction with the work done in the Crossover Youth State Implementation Team.

DCF is a participant in the Individual Justice Plan (IJP) workgroup facilitated by Sedgwick County Department of Corrections. The efforts of this group is focused on bringing community entities together to create a support system around the youth who has a diagnosed mental health or developmental disability, creating clear crisis and support plans to prevent arrest of a youth for behaviors triggered by their diagnosis.

**Formalizing standard procedures so both the Child Placing Agency and Case Management providers are legally responsible for the foster children in their care.**

Both the Child Placing Agency and Case Management Providers have guidelines that reflect their responsibilities for children in foster care in Kansas. Both entities have requirements to ensure safety and wellbeing for children in care placed in foster homes in Kansas.

[Placement Standards July 2021.pdf \(ks.gov\)](#)

[CPA Regulations \(ks.gov\)](#)

[Policies - Prevention and Protection Services \(ks.gov\)](#)

<p><b>Developing and implementing standardized training for foster care, law enforcement, 911, JIAC and JDF personnel, to include topics on de-escalation, mental health first aid, adolescent brain development and destigmatization of mental health, as well as when and under what circumstances a youth can and should be taken to Ascension Via Christi St. Joseph, as opposed to JIAC. [See also in Recommendations for 911, WPD, Juvenile Corrections]</b></p>	<p>DCF will work with the other entities identified on partnership with training to ensure a shared understanding across agencies. Trainings around de-escalation, mental health first aid, adolescent brain development and issues related to mental health and wellbeing are frequently offered by provider agencies; further work can be done to extend invitations across agencies to open up trainings to those identified by the Taskforce.</p>
<p><b>Requiring foster families to complete a standardized program in adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and trauma-informed care that are culturally relevant, and gender-responsive. If they don't participate, they are disqualified from participating in the foster care program.</b></p>	<p>Children's Alliance of Kansas offers an array of trainings to address these areas for foster parents. In addition, the Child Placing Agencies also offer training and support for their foster families. ACES is addressed as part of the TIPS-MAPP curriculum, which is the required pre-services training for all foster parents.</p> <p><a href="http://childdaily.org">Education — Children's Alliance (childdaily.org)</a></p> <p>Kansas Administrative Regulations (K.A.R.) 28-4-806 sets out Training requirements related to licensure of foster parents/families.</p> <p>These recommendations will be shared with existing advisory groups for further exploration.</p>
<p><b>Requiring DCF and its contracting foster care agencies to ensure employees, foster families and foster children receive benefits that include mental health and mindfulness coaches; additionally, ensure staffing to cover employee caseloads so that employees can utilize benefits such as mental health/mindfulness, vacations, etc., and not return to a backload that prevents them from providing the best care to youth and families.</b></p>	<p>DCF has an employee assistance program (EAP) that offers supports to employees, which includes mental health services.</p> <p>Foster children are referred to the appropriate services at CMHC's and local providers, based on their needs and location in the state.</p> <p>The State Budget has included \$7.5 million in funds to help with recruitment and retention of DCF and provider staff. Market increases were provided to DCF Child Protection Specialist staff and supervisors.</p>
<p><b>Expanding the Crossover Youth Practice Model for sharing data and system protocols between DCF, school districts, and the juvenile justice system, to allow those agencies to effectively serve the foster youth in their care.</b></p>	<p>DCF, Kansas Dept. of Corrections Juvenile Services (KDOC-JS) and the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) are working with Georgetown University on bringing the Crossover Youth Practice model (CYPM) to the entire state of Kansas. The CYPM work is being developed in Sedgwick County, and there are pilot sites in Shawnee and Montgomery County.</p>
<p><b>Supporting the passage of HB 2468 and HB 2469, which establishes the foster youth and foster parent bill of rights and requires distribution to each foster youth and foster family; ask Sedgwick County to add HB 2468 and HB 2469 to its 2023 Legislative Agenda.</b></p>	<p>DCF policy outlines rights as a foster youth in care in Kansas (DCF PPM, Appendix 7D): <a href="http://ks.gov">Rights for Kansas Foster Youth (ks.gov)</a>, as well as rights of a foster parent in Kansas (DCF PPM, Appendix 50): <a href="http://ks.gov">Appendix 50.pdf (ks.gov)</a>.</p> <p>DCF has supported both bills and provided testimony in favor of 2468; however ultimately, neither bill became law.</p>
<p><b>Administering an assessment (using disaggregated data) of the youth in the foster care system that allows root cause issues to be identified and a strategic plan developed that will address barriers and systemic issues.</b></p>	<p>Current efforts are underway with the Capacity Building Center for States in examining roots causes related to placement instability for youth in foster care. Through that, data and information around reasons for entry into foster care are being reviewed.</p> <p>TFI and the University of Kansas recently completed a study regarding youth who are absent from placement, looking at root causes and factors related to instability in placements for youth. The findings will be provided to others through research briefs and webinars.</p>

<p><b>DCF design and disseminate a roadmap to assist foster families in accessing local community services and support to aid in the care of youth in the foster care system.</b></p>	<p>Roadmaps were created by DCF and KDADS to provide information about the Family Crisis Response Helpline and crisis response services. These were provided to Child Placing Agencies and Foster Care Case Management Providers to share with foster families and birth/kinship families.</p> <p>Each community is unique and offers different types of general support services through non-profit organizations that may assist families, such as food banks, rental assistance, and other opportunities. In each community, DCF contractors may connect families with the United Way 211 resources to help identify what is available in their local communities for services and supports: <a href="#">Call 211 for Essential Community Services   United Way 211</a></p>
<p><b>Supporting the enactment of SB 12 (approved in 2022), which requires DCF to develop an implementation plan for a set of performance-based contracts to provide an array of evidence-based prevention and early intervention services.</b></p>	<p>DCF begins conversations with stakeholders and community agencies in Summer 2022 to gather feedback and information on performance-based contracts related to SB12 (origin language) which ultimately passed in omnibus bill.</p> <p>Foster Care has 15 data child and family outcomes (many federal) monitored for performance and we report those on the DCF website. <a href="#">Foster Care\Adoption Case Management Contract Performance Outcomes - Prevention and Protection Services (ks.gov)</a></p> <p>Case read reviews are conducted for quality performance. Performance improvement plans are developed and monitored as needed.</p> <p>Standards of service are contained in our grant documents, policy and procedure manual <a href="#">Policies - Prevention and Protection Services (ks.gov)</a> and Placement Services standards manual <a href="#">Placement Standards July 2021.pdf (ks.gov)</a></p> <p>The grants have provisions of penalties and incentives related to progress with grant outcomes.</p> <p>More information on DCF quality assurance procedures is located at in Section 8000, Continuous Performance Improvement <a href="#">CFS PPM2 (ks.gov)</a></p>
<p><b>Extending a thank-you to foster families for the support and sacrifice they make in providing homes for children in need of care.</b></p>	<p>CPAs regularly host events to show gratitude and thanks to foster parents for their commitment and care for children in Kansas.</p>
<p><b>Developing and implementing a pre/post survey to evaluate satisfaction of families who participate in Family First and Family Preservation programs. Utilize feedback to enhance program and service delivery.</b></p>	<p>This recommendation will be shared with our advisory groups for further exploration.</p>