casey family programs

Family First Prevention Services Act summary

The Family First Prevention Services Act was passed and signed into law (P.L. 115-123) as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act on February 9, 2018. Below is a high-level summary of the provisions in the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Prevention activities under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act

- Allows states the option to use new open-ended Title IV-E funds to provide prevention services and programs for up to 12 months for children at imminent risk of entering foster care, any parenting or pregnant youth in foster care, and the parents — biological or adopted — as well as kin caregivers of these children.
  - The new Title IV-E prevention services, as well as training and administrative costs associated with developing these services, would have no income test (be "delinked" from the AFDC income eligibility requirement).
  - Eligible services would include evidence-based mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services, and in-home parent skill-based services.
  - The new option would take effect October 1, 2019, with the federal level of support set at 50 percent; effective October 1, 2026, the federal level of support would be the state's FMAP rate.
  - Tribes who operate direct Title IV-E programs would also be eligible to choose to operate a prevention program.

- Allows for Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments to be made for a child in foster care placed with a parent in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for up to 12 months. No income eligibility test would apply for receipt of these services.

- Permits Title IV-E support for evidence-based kinship navigator programs with the federal level of support at 50 percent of the state's total cost.

Enhanced support under Title IV-B

- Eliminates the time limit for reunification services provided during a child's placement in foster care and adjusts the start of time limits for family reunification services in the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program to the date of reunification instead of the date of foster care placement. This change will allow activities to be provided to a family for a 15-month period that begins on the date that the child returns home (is reunified).

- Requires that states, territories and tribes operating a Title IV-E program use an electronic interstate case processing system to expedite the interstate placement of children in foster care by FY2027, guardianship or adoption and provides $5 million in grants to states.

- Reauthorizes and makes changes to the Regional Partnership Grants to provide evidence-based services to prevent child abuse and neglect related to heroin, opioids and other substance abuse for FY2017 through FY2021.

Other provisions

- Requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to identify model licensing standards for relative foster family homes by October 1, 2018.

- Requires states to document steps taken to track and prevent child maltreatment deaths.

Ensuring the necessity of a placement that is not in a foster family home

- Establishes new procedures and protocols to promote placement in foster family home settings beginning October 1, 2019, by outlining conditions for what placements will be eligible for Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments for children placed in settings other than family homes known as Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP).

- Defines a QRTP as a trauma-informed treatment model that is designed to address the clinical needs of the enrolled children as identified by the assessment.

- Allows child care institutions to use contracts and consultants to meet the nursing standards.

- Requires that judges and attorneys and other legal personnel in child welfare cases are educated on these changes as a condition of the highest state courts receiving Court Improvement Program (CIP) funding.

- Requires criminal records checks and checks of any child abuse and neglect registries for adults working in child care institutions and other group care settings beginning October 1, 2018.

casey family programs

Continuing support for child and family services

- Provides $8 million in FY2018 for grants to states and tribes to support the recruitment and retention of high quality foster families.

- Reauthorizes Title IV-B programs and services, including the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Child Welfare Services Program, the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, the Court Improvement Program and the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (Chafee) from FY2017 through FY2021.

- Makes revisions to the Chafee program to emphasize more successful transitions to adulthood, including allowing states to provide services to youth who have aged out of foster care up to age 23, and allowing 5 years of eligibility for Education and Training Vouchers up to age 26. It also allows HHS to redistribute any unspent Chafee funds.

Continuing incentives to states to promote adoption and legal guardianship

- Reauthorizes and funds at the current level of $43 million per year the Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Programs through FY2022.

- Amends Title IV-B state plan requirements to include information about what the state is doing to address the developmental needs of all vulnerable children under 5 years of age who are receiving services under Title IV-E or Title IV-B (not just children in foster care).

Ensuring states reinvest savings resulting from the increase in adoption assistance

- Delays eligibility for Title IV-E adoption assistance that was enacted as part of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. The delay would affect children with special needs who are less than 2 years old when their adoption assistance agreement is finalized between FY2017 to FY2023; or in FY2024 in the case of a child 2 years old or for whom an adoption assistance agreement is entered into on or after July 1, 2024, of any age. In FY2025 and thereafter, children of any age would be eligible regardless of income.

- Directs the U.S Government Accountability Office (GAO) to examine whether states are reinvesting all of the state savings under this provision, and whether not less than 30 percent of these savings are used for post-adoption and post-guardianship services, and services that support permanency and other outcomes for children who would otherwise enter foster care.