

# The Adams County Foster Care Connection

VOLUME 3 FEBRUARY 2021



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## Connect with our Division Director, Kari Daggett's "Nuggets of Knowledge"

So, what is this Family First thing I am hearing about? Family First is legislation which was signed into law in 2017. It will guide child welfare practice for years to come. Our new Division Director, Kari Daggett has been sharing her "Nuggets of Knowledge" with staff, so we wanted to share it with all our foster parents.

### **Three fundamental principles that Family First is built around.**

#### **1. Help families whose children are at risk of removal stay together safely.**

Family First expands eligibility for Title IV-E, previously restricted primarily to out-of-home foster care placements, to be used for services to strengthen families and prevent children/youth from being separated from their parents. To ensure that federal funding is used to support effective services, Family First also requires new evidentiary standards for critical substance use, mental health, and parenting supports. Critically, Family First does not apply the income eligibility requirements used for foster care to these services, meaning that income does not dictate whether a family can access them.

##### **a. What this means:**

We have always provided prevention services to the children, youth, and families we serve – think: assessments that don't have to be opened to cases and families are referred to services in the community; in-home cases (both court involved and non-court involved); cases where children/youth return home from out-of-home placement; post-adoption cases where we are supporting families; outreach and providing resources for PA3. Before Family First, if prevention services were requested by or provided to families, then state and county funding had to be used to pay for these services. Now, federal funding will be provided to the state to pay for prevention services to support families as long as the services provided are on the Family First Prevention Services Clearinghouse and the child/youth has a prevention plan. Think about it this way – instead of federal funding only being for out-of-home placement, it will now be available to keep families together. Imagine that!

##### **b. What this DOESN'T mean:**

This doesn't mean that children/youth will remain in unsafe situations or homes. This doesn't mean we will stop placing children/youth in foster care if they need this level of care. This doesn't mean we will stop using the Colorado Family Safety Assessment to inform our decisions about safety and if safety concerns can be mitigated. You all have always worked hard to keep families safely together and this will not change.

## **2. Ensure children in foster care can live with a family.**

Family First reinforces long-standing federal and state laws prioritizing family-based care, preferably within a child's own family network. It also requires additional steps by child welfare agencies and the courts to ensure non-family settings are only used to meet specific treatment needs by limiting federal funding for non-therapeutic residential placements.

### **a. What this means:**

Children/youth should be raised in families in their own community, and, if they can't be safely raised in their family, they should be raised by kin or in foster families who can keep them safe- not in institutions or facilities.

### **b. What this DOESN'T mean:**

This doesn't mean we will keep children/youth in their own homes if they are not safe there. This doesn't mean children/youth will be placed in unsafe kin or foster homes.

## **3. Improve access to high quality residential treatment:**

Family First recognizes some children and youth may require high-quality residential treatment to stabilize them before they are able to return to their families and communities. For the first time, federal funding is limited only to high-quality residential treatment programs that are short-term, meet minimal standards for quality of clinical care, involve families in treatment plans, and work toward helping children and youth return to family-based settings as quickly and safely as possible.

### **a. What this means:**

If a child/youth needs residential level of care, an independent assessment (which is still being worked on by the State) will be used to determine if the child/youth needs that level of care or if the child/youth can be safely maintained in their own home, a kin home, or a foster home. Group homes, group centers, and residential treatment centers that do not become Qualified Residential Treatment Providers (QRTPs) will not be eligible for federal funding.

### **b. What this DOESN'T mean:**

This doesn't mean children/youth can/will never be placed into residential settings for their needs to be met. This doesn't mean we will keep children/youth in their own homes if they are not safe.

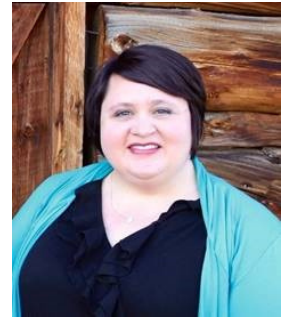
## **So why do foster parents need to know this?**

We need foster parents to begin thinking seriously about expanding their age range preferences to consider taking older children, who may have more challenging needs, but nonetheless need to live in family- like settings. There will be support and services to assist you in this new endeavor. If you are interested, please reach out to Michelle Champagne, Foster Parent Recruiter, at [\*\*mchampagne@adcogov.org\*\*](mailto:mchampagne@adcogov.org)

# Connect with Training

# KP's Korner

Adams County Foster Parents are brave, flexible, and face challenges head-on! Our prospective foster parents faced the challenge of training over Zoom, during a pandemic. We have trained 34 brave and flexible new families via Zoom in 2020!



## Meet our 2020 Zoom Families



## ICEBREAKER MEETINGS

Everything you need to know to use this great resource!

### What is an icebreaker meeting?

An icebreaker meeting allows birth parents and foster parents to exchange information about the child's needs such as daily routine, family history, and medical care. The depth of discussion makes an icebreaker Meeting different than just talking in passing during a transition, such as a medical appointment or visitation.

### What are the benefits?

Children, whose parents and foster parents sit down and meet, can have more stable placements, be more successful in school, and experience better emotional development. Birth parents feel more at ease about their child's placement, and foster parents are better informed, allowing for better care of the child.

### Who attends Icebreaker Meetings?

Icebreaker meetings include the biological parents of the child(ren), the foster parents of the child(ren), and the facilitator. These meetings aren't case staffings, and therefore, don't involve the case professionals.

### Can foster parents refuse/choose not to attend?

Foster parents are expected to participate in icebreaker meetings. The only reason an icebreaker should not occur is when the biological parents/primary caretakers/family members have made an outward physical threat toward the foster parent's safety or recently demonstrated behavior that is threatening, harassing, and/or violent in nature.

### Are there different types of icebreaker Meetings?

Yes! Typically, most icebreaker meetings occur soon after a placement or change in placement is made. They may also occur when a child is being reunified (a reverse icebreaker) or when there's an adoptive placement from foster care.

[Ask your certification worker to get one scheduled!](#)

## Connect for Support



**TUTORING NEEDS?**



**LET US HELP YOU SOLVE IT**

ADAMS COUNTY NOW HAS TUTORING RESOURCES.  
ASK YOUR CERTIFICATION WORKER FOR A REFERRAL!

Grade Potential and Sylvan Learning



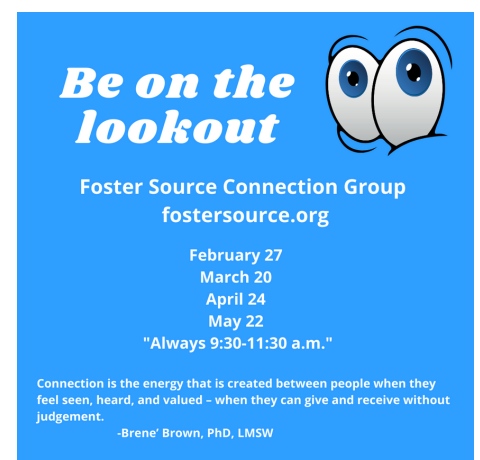
Coming Soon...




**Adams County Foster Care Mentoring Program**



"A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself."  
— Oprah Winfrey



**Be on the lookout**



Foster Source Connection Group  
fostersource.org

February 27  
March 20  
April 24  
May 22  
"Always 9:30-11:30 a.m."

Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued – when they can give and receive without judgement.  
—Brene' Brown, PhD, LMSW