Families and Children Letter FCL #1
OFFICE OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

December 21, 2020

To: Directors, PCSA, Private Agencies, IV-E Courts

From: Jeffery Van Deusen, Deputy Director
Office of Families and Children

Subject: FFPSA Prevention Services Updates

Background
The objectives of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) are to help keep children safely with their families and avoid entering foster care, emphasize the importance of children growing up in families and help ensure children are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to their needs when foster care is needed. Although the FFPSA is a great opportunity, it may be a shift in practice for some agencies.

As FFPSA is being implemented, evaluation and revisions will be needed throughout the process. The Office of Children and Families (OFC) will begin issuing information via this format so that it can be easily accessible. The information in this letter was previously presented in email communication or during stakeholder meetings.

Rule Implementation
Prevention Service rules will be effective in April 2021. It is important to note that this is NOT a requirement for all counties to implement Preventions Services. However, the rules will provide the option for all counties to leverage this opportunity. As we gain experience with identification and administration of Prevention Services, OFC will continue to hold routine meetings for feedback to identify areas of strength and challenges. This process will be an evolution which will require ongoing evaluation and revisions as necessary.

Pilot Partners
A group of PCSAs are piloting Prevention Services with at least one of the Phase 1 services outside of, or in addition to Ohio Start. Pilot counties can change their participation at any time. Participation includes agreement with the following: (1) case flow training(s), (2) identification of families for appropriate prevention services, (3) and the provision of feedback as to what is working, what may need revised and how services can be improved.
The pilot will offer the state and county another way to collaborate by “testing” the prevention services case flow, determine the prevention service population, and confirm that we are on track with the next set of services identified in Phase 2 that will have the largest impact on the families we serve. Additionally, the pilot will help in the preparation for future resource request (i.e. staffing and funding requests at both the state and county level) while we can leverage the Family First Transition Act funding.

Routine meetings will be held with the pilot partners to review, evaluate, and adjust the process as needed.

**Center of Excellence**
The Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), in conjunction with the Departments of: Job and Family Services, Medicaid, Youth Services, Developmental Disabilities Health, and the Family and Children First Council, is seeking a vendor to develop and implement a Center of Excellence (COE) approach for building and sustaining a comprehensive standardized assessment process, evaluating the effectiveness of services and expanding service and care coordination capacity for children with complex behavioral health needs and their families. The role of the COE will be to assist the State in system transformation efforts by providing the orientation, training, coaching, mentoring and other functions/supports needed by the provider network in order to build and sustain capacity in delivering evidence-based practices to fidelity within a system of care framework.

Additional information regarding the COE Request for Proposal can be found here: https://procure.ohio.gov/proc/viewProcOpps.asp?oppID=22038.

**Family First Transition Act Funding**
ODJFS has allocated Family First Transition Act Funding to finance evidenced based practices outlined in Ohio’s Title IV-E Prevention Services Plan. Phase 1 services of Ohio’s Plan include Ohio START, Multi Systemic Therapy (MST), Functional Family Therapy (FFT), Parents as Teachers (PAT) and Healthy Families America (HFA). Therefore, continued collaboration to determine future needs and the expansion of available prevention services will be critical. Additionally, the pilot as described above, will assist in the preparation for future resource request (i.e. staffing and funding requests at both the state and county level) while leveraging the Family First Transition Act funding. The COE will support the expansion and capacity building needs of the Ohio to increase access to the services available statewide.

If you have questions about the information in this letter, please contact Hannah Knies at hannah.knies@jfs.ohio.gov.