



The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) changes the child welfare system by allowing states to use federal funds under Title IV of the Social Security Act to support families and prevent foster care placements. Georgia began phased implementation of FFPSA in Fall 2021¹ and the state's Title IV-E Prevention Plan was approved in October 2022². There are two main components of the act:

- 1) optional foster care prevention services and programs
- 2) required changes to congregate care

Family First services, offered in several counties across the state, will include Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT); two evidence-based treatments to address behaviors of youth at risk for out-of-home placement.^{3,4,5} As of Fall 2023, MST services are offered in Chatham and Richmond counties, and FFT services are offered in DeKalb and Cherokee counties.⁶

Evidence-Based Programs Included in Georgia's Prevention Plan⁷

Healthy Families America

Target population: Expectant families and families with a child up to 24 months of age, who are at-risk for child abuse and neglect and other adverse childhood experiences

Program: The overall goals of the program are to cultivate and strengthen nurturing parent-child relationships, promote healthy childhood growth and development, and enhance family functioning by reducing risk and building protective factors.

Parents as Teachers

Target population: Expectant families or parents of children up to kindergarten entry (usually 5 years)

Program: Parents as Teachers is an evidence-based, home-visiting parent education model that supports families with children prenatal through kindergarten age to develop positive parenting skills.

Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT)

Target population: Family with children or adolescents (6 to 17 years) who display/are at risk for developing problem behaviors including drug use and dependency, antisocial peer association, bullying, or truancy

Program: BSFT addresses family behavior, affect, and cognitions with the goal of restructuring interactions and change the family system. Plans are designed specifically for each family and are based on a structured diagnostic plan.

Multisystemic Therapy (MST)

Target population: Youth aged 12-17 with serious emotional/behavioral needs & their families

Program: Multisystemic Therapy (MST) is an intensive family and community-based treatment for juvenile offenders with possible substance abuse issues and their families. The primary goals of MST are to decrease youth criminal behavior and out-of-home placements.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

Target population: Children aged 11 to 18 years old with behaviors such as conduct disorder, violent acting-out, and substance abuse

Program: FFT is a family intervention program for youth with disruptive, externalizing behaviors. FFT has been applied to a wide range of youth and their families in various multi-ethnic and multicultural contexts.

Facts about Foster Care Prevention and Services Programs⁸

Who is eligible?



Children at imminent risk of entering foster care (children who receive ongoing family preservation services)



Children/youth post permanency and their caregivers



Expectant and parenting youth in foster care



Eligibility is **not** dependent on family income

What Services and Programs are Eligible for Reimbursement for Title IV-E funds?⁹



Mental health services



Substance abuse prevention and treatment services



In-home parenting programs

How does a state obtain funding for services or program?

- State must maintain a **written** prevention plan for each eligible child and collect data on programs and services administered.
- Services or programs must be **trauma-informed and evidence-based**.
- Services or programs must be based on promising, supported, or well-supported practices.

Half of the cost of prevention services, training, and related administrative tasks can be covered by Title IV-E funds.

Congregate Care

FFPSA limits foster care payments for group homes for up to two weeks only.* Although FFPSA limits federal reimbursement for foster care maintenance payments for group homes, the limitations do not currently impact the ability to place youth in group homes if it is determined to be the most appropriate placement.¹⁰

Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP)** must meet the following requirements:¹¹

- Use a trauma-informed treatment model
- Have registered or licensed nursing and clinical staff onsite
- Facilitate family outreach and participation
- Document family integration into the treatment process
- Provide discharge planning and family-based supports for at least 6 months after discharge
- Meet the treatment needs of children as determined by an assessment within 30 days of placement
- Be licensed and accredited by one of the following:
 - Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
 - Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations
 - Council on Accreditation
 - Other nonprofit accrediting organization approved by the Secretary

*This rule went into effect September 30, 2021.

**Georgia does not have a definitive timeline for implementing QRTPs. A decision regarding timeline and implementation will be made when concerns around QRTPs being subject to the Medicaid Institution for Mental Disease (IMD) exclusion are resolved with the Department of Community Health and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.¹²



References for Family First Prevention Services Act

Suggested citation: Voices for Georgia's Children. (2023). Fact Sheet: Family First Prevention Services Act. Voices for Georgia's Children. <https://adobe.ly/3GklYZ9>.

- 1 Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services. "The Family First Prevention Services Act in Georgia." Accessed November 16, 2023. <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/document/document/blueprint-family-first-one-sheet-may-2022/download>.
- 2 "Webinar: Blueprint got Family First Update, December 2022." Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/news/2022-12-13/webinar-blueprint-family-first-update-december-2022>.
- 3 Functional Family Therapy. Retrieved November 4, 2022. <https://www.fftlc.com>.
- 4 Title IV-E Prevention Services, Multisystemic Therapy - Prevention. Retrieved November 4, 2022. <https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/programs/422/show>.
- 5 "Webinar: Blueprint got Family First Update, December 2022." Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/news/2022-12-13/webinar-blueprint-family-first-update-december-2022>.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services. "Prevention Services Plan." Accessed November 16, 2023. <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/about-us/blueprint-family-first/prevention-services-plan>.
- 11 Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services. "Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTPs)". Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/about-us/blueprint-family-first/qualified-residential-treatment-programs-qrtps>.
- 12 Ibid.