Guidance on New Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Projects

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Dial: 888-437-3195 for webinar audio
Presenter

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Opportunity to Reframe Child Welfare through Waiver Demonstration Projects & Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Bryan Samuels, Commissioner
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Expectations from Congress for Child Welfare Waivers

• “The legislation renews [child welfare waiver authority], which is designed to improve State effectiveness in protecting children and assisting families as well as point the way to potential broader national reforms to benefit children and families in the coming years.”

• “[Child welfare] waivers present states with the opportunity to innovate, and they do so while laying a strong foundation for comprehensive reform of the child welfare system.”

• “My hope is that giving states flexibility in administering their title IV-E funding will not merely serve as experiments, but rather will become the blueprints of overall reform.”
  — Senator Hatch, Statement at Finance Committee Markup of Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, Sept. 20, 2011
Purpose of Waiver Demonstration Projects

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project is designed to accomplish one or more of the following goals:

- **Increase permanency** for all infants, children, and youth by reducing the time in foster placements when possible and promoting a successful transition to adulthood for older youth.

- Increase positive outcomes for infants, children, youth, and families in their homes and communities, including tribal communities, and improve the safety and well-being of infants, children, and youth.

- **Prevent** child abuse and neglect and the re-entry of infants, children, and youth into foster care.
Risk & Opportunity: Two Approaches

Comparison County Design

- If Federal reimbursements of title IV-E costs grow by X% in the comparison counties, then costs could grow by X% in the demonstration counties with authority to spend title IV-E flexibly and receive Federal reimbursement.
- Growth over X% in the demonstration counties would not be reimbursed.

Statewide Capped Allocation

- All title IV-E Foster Care costs, with the exception of SACWIS costs, are included in the capped allocation.
- The base amount is based on the Federal payments made to the State in a given fiscal year.
- Statewide growth over 3% would not be reimbursed.
A focus on well-being promotes the development of a child welfare workforce marked by:

• Focus on child & family level outcomes
• Progress monitor/screen for improved child/youth functioning
• Proactive approach to social and emotional needs
• Developmentally specific approach
• Promotion of healthy relationships

IMPLICATIONS FOR CASE-LEVEL WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

• Caseworkers are more aware of trauma, mental health needs, and evidence-based practices to get youth the right services at the right time.
• Caseworkers better understand, anticipate, and screen for the trauma-related challenges that children and bring with them when they enter care.
• Transition planning and promotion of social/emotional skills for adulthood begin well in advance of exit from care.
• Service plans include activities to promote relational competencies and efforts to find/engage siblings, relatives, etc.
Permanence: Children Already in Care, 5-Year Average

Percent Children already in care on first day of FY, still in care on last day of FY

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Reentry into Foster Care, 5-Year Average

Percent of children who exited in the 12-month period prior to the year shown that reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge.

Placement Stability, FY 2009

Average number of placements for children in foster care during the reporting period
De-scaling What Doesn’t Work, Scaling Up What Does Work

**INEFFECTIVE APPROACHES**
- Parenting Classes
- Generic Independent Living Skills Training
- Generic Counseling

**RESEARCH-BASED APPROACHES**
- Trauma Screening
- Evidence-Based Trauma, Mental Health & Parenting Interventions
- Functional Assessment

*De-scaling what doesn’t work*

*Investing in what does*
The Role Medicaid Can Play in Positive Outcomes

• Title IV-E agencies are encouraged to engage in a dialogue with State Medicaid and mental health agencies and consider new and existing opportunities in Medicaid and/or other program areas to complement Medicaid’s efforts to serve children with special needs.

• Proposals aligning a title IV-E waiver project with a Medicaid waiver will be strongly considered. Some strategies include:
  
  – Allowing for a behavioral health intervention to be provided in a Home and Community Based setting
  
  – Allowing parents to participate in an evidence-based intervention with their child
  
  – Targeting a particular part of a State without implementing statewide
Important Role Medicaid Plays in Serving Children and Youth in Foster Care

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Data source: HHS, 2010
Funding Opportunity Announcements

- Child Welfare-Education System Collaborations to Increase Educational Stability
- Child Welfare-Early Education Partnerships to Expand Protective Factors for Children with Child Welfare Involvement
- Regional Partnership Grants to Increase the Well-Being of, and to Improve the Permanency Outcomes for, Children Affected by Substance Abuse
- Initiative to Improve Access to Needs-Driven Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed Mental and Behavioral Health Services in Child Welfare
- Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System
What Can Child Welfare Agencies Do Today to Shift to a Focus on Improving Well-Being?

• Instead of classroom-based parenting classes, use evidence-based interventions that increase parenting skills

• Instead of generic counseling services, use interventions that have been shown to improve outcomes for specific populations with particular needs

• Restructure ILOs and TLPs to provide services that build relational skills and increase connections

• Train front-line staff and foster parents on trauma and social-emotional well-being

• Use contracts to require that group homes and residential facilities utilize evidence-based interventions

• Build consideration of social and emotional well-being into case planning and transition planning
Application, Review, and Approval of Title IV-E Waivers

- **May 14**: Release of Information Memorandum
- Technical assistance provided through application
- **June 4**: Letters of Intent due *(optional, but not required)*
- **July 9**: Proposals due *(may be submitted earlier)*
- Federal review begins promptly upon receipt of proposals
- Negotiation with States
- **September 28**: Waiver terms and conditions signed

See ACYF-CB-IM-12-05: Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Projects for Fiscal Years (FYs) 2012-2014
Questions?

Thank you for attending!
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Thank you!