

# Sedgwick County Task Force Final Recommendations for Foster Care



## Task Force Recommendation

## DCF Efforts as of October 2023

**Fully funding evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs for youth and families before youth are placed in the foster care system, including intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) services, support for families in the home, behavioral programs, and substance abuse programs, among others. Doing so will build stronger families and alleviate stress on the foster care system – allowing for improved levels of care.**

DCF announced grants for Family First Programming to take effect July 1, 2023. These grants provide an array of services for families throughout the state, to include services focused on mental health services, parent skill building, kinship navigation, and substance use services. Please see attached information regarding the Family First Prevention Services Act Referral and Outcome Summary for more information on how these in-home services are impacting families throughout the state.

**Requiring the Child Placing Agency and/or Case Management Provider has a local contact trained in mental health crisis response on call by phone 24/7 to guide foster families facing a mental health crisis toward mobile mental health responders and other local resources; and create consequences for any agency not following this requirement. Additionally, developing protocol that states if a Child Placing Agency worker is not available during a crisis, a supervisor will be called.**

Foster Care Case Management Providers and Child Placing Agencies have protocols in place regarding having an on-call crisis staff available to families. DCF, the Child Placing Agencies and Case Management Providers are engaged in ongoing policy workgroups to continue to address timely access to mental health services.

**As part of this requirement, DCF and local law enforcement officials need to determine which agency has jurisdiction over where and how a youth will receive services, ultimately following KSA 59-2953, which references not leaving someone with an identified mental crisis at a non-medical facility.**  
[https://www.ksrevisor.org/statutes/chapters/ch59/059\\_029\\_0053.html](https://www.ksrevisor.org/statutes/chapters/ch59/059_029_0053.html)

DCF has implemented the Family Crisis Response Helpline- 24/7 crisis line that offers support to families and individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, as well as connection to local Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs). [Welcome - Family Crisis Response Helpline \(ks.gov\)](#)

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline became available on July 16 across the state and nation. This line is available for anyone who needs support for a suicidal, mental health and/or substance use crisis. Information on this resource has been provided to CPAs and CMPs to share with families.

DCF, SFM, the Wichita Police Department, Sedgwick County Sheriff's Department and Sedgwick County JIAC have been regularly meeting to better partner around how to more effectively address crisis situations that involve calls to SFM on-call and law enforcement. Policy and process are being reviewed to ensure each agency has a clear understanding of how other systems are required to respond and where we can make improvements to ensure youth and families receive the response needed for the situation.



**Creating an eco-system that connects community resources, grassroots organizations, advocates, coaches, champions, and others with the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF), Law Enforcement, Sedgwick County COMCARE, Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (JIAC) and Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) and other systems that serve foster care children in a mental health crisis.**

DCF continues to engage with the Sedgwick County Department of Corrections and other community stakeholders to evaluate the use of an Individual Justice Plan (IJP) to create better cross-system support for youth diagnosed with mental health and/or developmental disability. Wichita State University's Community Engagement Institute (CEI) has been facilitating community-based discussions around processes and protocols for how best to respond to this population in a crisis situation.

The Interagency and Community Advisory Board (ICAB) is a Kansas cross-system multiagency and community collaboration that was established to support two statewide implementations: the Family First Prevention Services Act and Kansas Strong for Children and Families. The ICAB's overarching goal is to support and activate a comprehensive service array that spans a broad continuum of care for families by: (1) building cross-sector knowledge of needs, gaps, challenges, and best practices; (2) using data and continuous quality improvement to monitor processes and outcomes; and (3) developing and executing action plans to address service gaps. Sedgwick County has its own board, with a feedback loop to the Statewide board and other regional boards in the state. The Sedgwick County group is focusing efforts on prevention work for youth ages 13-17 who come to the attention of DCF for "child problem behaviors," and youth ages 10-12 who may need additional support in their home to strengthen the family's capacity to address the needs identified. Work is currently being done to compile resources and services available in the community to serve this population, as well as develop a plan to distribute the information widely so others in the community could utilize and access these resources, as well.

**Formalizing standard procedures so both the Child Placing Agency and Case Management providers are legally responsible for the foster children in their care.**


Both the Child Placing Agency and Case Management Providers have guidelines that reflect their responsibilities for children in foster care in Kansas. Both entities have requirements to ensure safety and wellbeing for children in care placed in foster homes in Kansas.

[Placement Standards July 2021.pdf \(ks.gov\)](#)

[CPA Regulations \(ks.gov\)](#)

[Policies - Prevention and Protection Services \(ks.gov\)](#)

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| <p><b>Developing and implementing standardized training for foster care, law enforcement, 911, JIAC and JDF personnel, to include topics on de-escalation, mental health first aid, adolescent brain development and destigmatization of mental health, as well as when and under what circumstances a youth can and should be taken to Ascension Via Christi St. Joseph, as opposed to JIAC. [See also in Recommendations for 911, WPD, Juvenile Corrections]</b></p> | <p>DCF will work with the other entities identified on partnership with training to ensure a shared understanding across agencies. Trainings around de-escalation, mental health first aid, adolescent brain development and issues related to mental health and wellbeing are frequently offered by provider agencies; further work can be done to extend invitations across agencies to open up trainings to those identified by the Taskforce.</p>  |
| <p><b>Requiring foster families to complete a standardized program in adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and trauma-informed care that are culturally relevant, and gender-responsive. If they don't participate, they are disqualified from participating in the foster care program.</b></p>   | <p>Children's Alliance of Kansas offers an array of trainings to address these areas for foster parents. In addition, the Child Placing Agencies also offer training and support for their foster families. ACES is addressed as part of the TIPS-MAPP curriculum, which is the required pre-services training for all foster parents.</p> <p><a href="http://childdaily.org">Education — Children's Alliance (childdaily.org)</a></p> <p>Kansas Administrative Regulations (K.A.R.) 28-4-806 sets out Training requirements related to licensure of foster parents/families.</p>  |
| <p><b>Requiring DCF and its contracting foster care agencies to ensure employees, foster families and foster children receive benefits that include mental health and mindfulness coaches; additionally, ensure staffing to cover employee caseloads so that employees can utilize benefits such as mental health/mindfulness, vacations, etc., and not return to a backload that prevents them from providing the best care to youth and families.</b></p>            | <p>DCF has an employee assistance program (EAP) that offers supports to employees, which includes mental health services.</p> <p>Foster children are referred to the appropriate services at CMHC's and local providers, based on their needs and location in the state. Policy changes as of July 1, 2023, dictate enhanced communication between the Case Management Providers and Community Mental Health Agencies, which includes a dedicated email box to communicate and refer children for services. Foster parents and relative/kinship providers are now able to provide for consent for mental health treatment for children in DCF custody, if efforts to obtain parental permission have failed. This will allow for more timely referrals to services for children in care.</p> |

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| <p><b>Expanding the Crossover Youth Practice Model for sharing data and system protocols between DCF, school districts, and the juvenile justice system, to allow those agencies to effectively serve the foster youth in their care.</b></p>                                     | <p>The CYPM Oversight Committee has almost completed the process for outlining protocols for how our overall system responds when a crossover youth is identified. We are currently working with Georgetown University to further refine the process and develop a system response to these youth. Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) staffings are occurring for crossover youth who meet certain risk criteria, to allow for planning and coordination of services amongst agencies. Representatives from Sedgwick County are participating in the Statewide Crossover Youth Policy Team meetings.</p>  |
| <p><b>Supporting the passage of HB 2468 and HB 2469, which establishes the foster youth and foster parent bill of rights and requires distribution to each foster youth and foster family; ask Sedgwick County to add HB 2468 and HB 2469 to its 2023 Legislative Agenda.</b></p> | <p>HB2194, the Rep. Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights, passed in the 2023 Legislative Session, which addresses certain rights for children in need of care and foster parents. DCF policy has been updated to reflect the provisions in the Foster Care Bill of Rights.</p>  |
| <p><b>Administering an assessment (using disaggregated data) of the youth in the foster care system that allows root cause issues to be identified and a strategic plan developed that will address barriers and systemic issues.</b></p>   | <p>DCF continues to work with the Capacity Building Center for States in examining data and information around why youth enter foster care and what factors contribute to placement instability. Continued partnership in communities across the state is occurring to examine the data and gather input from those who work with system-involved youth. The Wichita Region of DCF partnered with the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) to conduct a trustworthy engagement process to help us gain insights into the perspectives of stakeholders and identify the challenges and opportunities to impact the number of children and youth entering foster care in Sedgwick County. A diverse group of nearly 130 stakeholders came together over three days to engage in problem diagnosis and deep discussions about action steps that can be taken to protect children and strengthen families while reducing the need for foster care in the community. The campaign to safely reduce the need for foster care in Sedgwick County can be found by scanning the QR code below. Create an account and join the effort with your own action project or monitor campaign activity.</p> <div data-bbox="581 1276 878 1598" style="border: 2px solid yellow; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>Start an Action Project!</b></p>  </div> |

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| <p><b>DCF design and disseminate a roadmap to assist foster families in accessing local community services and support to aid in the care of youth in the foster care system.</b></p>   | <p>Roadmaps were created by DCF and KDADS to provide information about the Family Crisis Response Helpline and crisis response services. These were provided to Child Placing Agencies and Foster Care Case Management Providers to share with foster families and birth/kinship families.</p> <p>Each community is unique and offers different types of general support services through non-profit organizations that may assist families, such as food banks, rental assistance, and other opportunities. In each community, DCF grantees may connect families with the United Way 211 resources to help identify what is available in their local communities for services and supports.</p> |
| <p><b>Supporting the enactment of SB 12 (approved in 2022), which requires DCF to develop an implementation plan for a set of performance-based contracts to provide an array of evidence-based prevention and early intervention services.</b></p> | <p>DCF completed a number of community conversations during the Summer of 2022, as required by HB2510 omnibus to gather information on performance-based contracts. The information gleaned from those sessions was provided to the Legislature in the Performance Based Contracts Implementation Plan: <a href="#">DCF PBC Implementation Plan 2023.pdf (ks.gov)</a></p>  |
| <p><b>Extending a thank-you to foster families for the support and sacrifice they make in providing homes for children in need of care.</b></p>   | <p>CPA's regularly host events to show gratitude and thanks to foster parents for their commitment and care for children in Kansas.</p>  |
| <p><b>Developing and implementing a pre/post survey to evaluate satisfaction of families who participate in Family First and Family Preservation programs. Utilize feedback to enhance program and service delivery.</b></p>                        | <p>Family First and Family Preservation Providers have processes in place to evaluate program effectiveness and client satisfaction.</p>   |