

Family Centered Services

Family Centered Services (FCS) are Iowa's in-home services for child welfare-involved families. HHS makes referrals to FCS contractors when a family requires support to achieve their HHS case plan goals. FCS includes Family Casework, SafeCare, Family Focused Meetings, Youth Transition Decision-Making Meetings, Family Preservation Services with Child Safety Conferences, Family Interactions, Kinship Navigator Services, Non-Agency Services and Non-Agency SafeCare. Descriptions of each service are provided below.

Family Casework (FMCW)

Family Casework is the primary service under FCS. This program encourages partnership with the family to assess their needs, evaluate and enhance their strengths, establish plans to accomplish HHS case plan goals, and support the family as they work through their plan. The Family Support Specialist (FSS) meets regularly with the family to assess progress and barriers to progress. The FSS then partners with the family to build a plan to overcome barriers and continue progress. Providers use Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidence-based intervention, to engage families in conversation about what the family sees as the pathway to achieving their goals and increasing the family's motivation to accomplish the steps necessary to meet their goals.

SafeCare

SafeCare is an evidence-based intervention for families who have at least one child in the home aged zero to five. SafeCare provides structured learning for parents who may need additional skill development in three modules: Health, Home Safety, and Parent-Child/Parent-Infant Interactions. Within each module there are six lessons to increase parental skills. In the Health module, parents learn how to track and monitor their child's health at home, when to make an appointment with the doctor and when to seek urgent care or go to the ER. In the Home Safety module, parents learn about common safety hazards in the home, practice identifying them and making changes to their home environment to keep their children safe. In the Parent-Child/Parent-Infant Interactions module, parents practice planning for and completing activities that encourage healthy bonding and child development.

Family Focused Meetings (FFM) and Youth Transition Decision-Making (YTDM) Meetings

Family Focused Meetings (FFMs) are opportunities to gather with the family and their supports to develop and discuss goals for the family and make plans for how the family

will accomplish their goals. There are two types of FFM, the initial FFM/warm handoff meeting and the comprehensive FFM.

Initial FFM/warm handoff meeting

The initial FFM/warm handoff meeting serves as the transition from the child protective assessment to ongoing case management. The CPW, SWCM, and FSS meet with the family to discuss the reasons for the transition to ongoing case management. They also discuss what must be accomplished to achieve safe case closure and develop a “next steps” plan for the family to begin working toward their goals.

Comprehensive FFM

The comprehensive FFM is a space to gather the family, their natural supports, and professional supports for case planning and to identify steps to meet the family’s goals. A trained facilitator leads the meeting and ensures that all attendees leave knowing the necessary steps to meet the family’s goals and what the attendee’s role is in supporting the family to achieve those goals. The family’s unique circumstances and strengths are the primary factors driving the plan. The family’s voice is critical to decision-making and families are encouraged to share what they believe their family needs in order to be safe.

Youth Transition Decision-Making (YTDM) Meetings

Youth Transition Decision-Making (YTDM) meetings provide an opportunity for youth who are 16 and older and in foster care to gather with supportive individuals and plan for their future. The focus of the initial YTDM is to engage the youth in planning and provide support in stabilizing the child’s placement until they reach adulthood. The focus of the second YTDM is on the youth’s future goals and what they will need to achieve self-sufficiency in adulthood.

Family Preservation Services with Child Safety Conferences

Family Preservation Services (FPS) are short-term, intensive, home-based, crisis interventions targeted to families who have children at imminent risk of removal and placement into foster care. Providers work collaboratively with the family to quickly reduce safety concerns and avoid out-of-home placement for the children whenever possible. FPS providers focus on assisting with crisis management, restoring the family to a minimally adequate level of functioning and building support for the family within their community.

Child Safety Conferences

Child Safety Conferences (CSCs) bring together the family, HHS, provider, and family's supports to identify what will work best for the family to address the concerns that have led to the child being at imminent risk of removal. At the first meeting, the group brainstorms ideas to address the immediate safety concerns and develops a plan that everyone agrees to follow. At the follow up meeting, the group discusses what worked and what did not work from the plan and what needs to happen next to assure ongoing safety for the child.

Family Interactions

Family interactions provide opportunities for parents and children to spend time together in a controlled, natural, home-like setting when children are placed with another parent, a kin/fictive kin caregiver, or in family foster care. Family interactions provide opportunities for parents to practice new skills and demonstrate the ability to provide safe, developmentally appropriate care for their children while in a supervised environment. As families progress with skills and consistency, supervision lessens, and families are able to spend more time together in preparation for reunification.

Kinship Navigator Services

Kinship Navigator Services support kin and fictive kin caregivers who care for children involved in a child welfare removal case. Kinship specialists meet with kin and fictive kin caregivers to identify needs the caregiver may have related to the care of the child. Kinship specialists connect kin and fictive kin caregivers with tangible goods, community services and resources to meet their family's needs. Kinship specialists also provide support to the caregivers through conversation and assist the caregiver in understanding what is happening in the child's case. Beginning July 1, 2025, kinship specialists will also provide support to kin and fictive kin caregivers as they complete the necessary steps to be approved for kinship foster care.

Non-Agency Services and Non-Agency SafeCare

Non-Agency Services function similarly to Family Casework and Non-Agency SafeCare is identical to SafeCare. Non-agency means HHS does not have an open case and the provider has full case management responsibility. Families involved in non-agency services and/or non-agency SafeCare chose to participate in the program after a child protective assessment was completed and the family is not eligible for ongoing services with HHS. Non-agency services and non-agency SafeCare connect the family with community supports so that the family is less likely to have child welfare involvement in the future.

To view the Family Centered Services contract or for more information on Family Centered Services, please visit the following link:

<https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/CPS/cps-contracts>