

## **FAMILY FIRST**

### **QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAMS**

#### **Understanding the new requirements for QRTPs and what they mean for youth congregate care in Iowa**

In an effort to reduce out-of-home placement and keep children with families, Family First provides new directives on services eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement. Federal reimbursement for foster care payments is limited to children placed in:

- ▶ A foster family home;
- ▶ A specialized setting providing prenatal, postpartum, or parenting supports for youth;
- ▶ A supervised apartment setting for youth ages 18+;
- ▶ A specialized setting for children who have been, or are at risk for, sex trafficking; or
- ▶ A Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP), if determined to meet the child's level of need.

#### **What is a QRTP?**

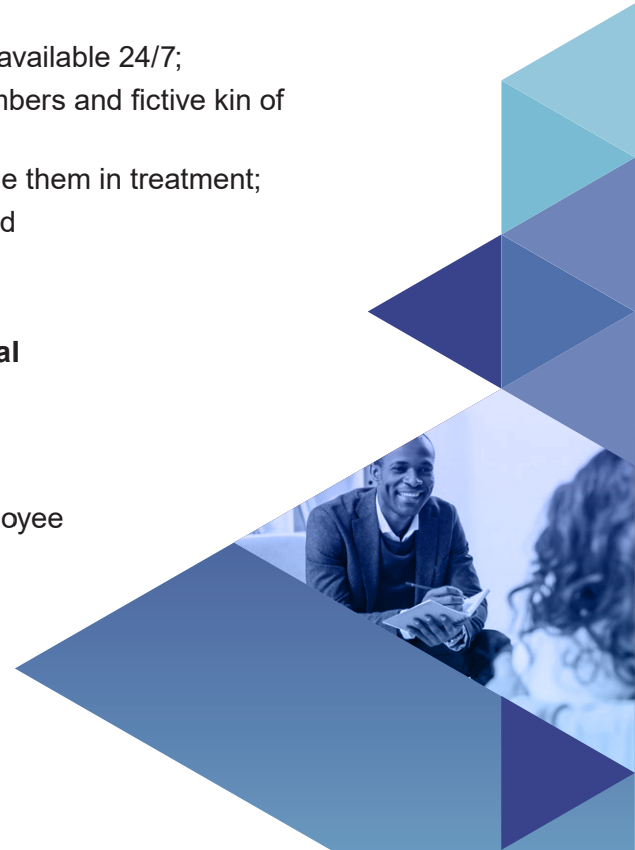
Qualified Residential Treatment Program, or QRTP, is a new term introduced by the Family First legislation. QRTPs place greater standards on foster group care to determine eligibility for matching federal Title IV-E funding. This will impact many of the current residential treatment facilities that have child welfare contracts with the Iowa Department of Human Services.

#### **Family First requires a QRTP to meet the following:**

- ▶ Utilize a trauma-informed treatment model that meets the clinical needs of children with serious emotional or behavioral disorders;
- ▶ Maintain registered or licensed nursing staff on-site model and available 24/7;
- ▶ Maintain contact information for all known biological family members and fictive kin of the child;
- ▶ Facilitate and document outreach to family members and include them in treatment;
- ▶ Provide family-based support for six months post-discharge; and
- ▶ Be licensed and accredited.

#### **Family First requires children placed in QRTPs receive a clinical assessment that must:**

- ▶ Occur within 30 days of placement;
- ▶ Utilizes an evidence-based assessment tool;
- ▶ Be completed by a qualified practitioner who is not a state employee or affiliated with the placement setting;
- ▶ Ensure the child's family and permanency team works with the qualified assessor; and
- ▶ Document the reasons why the child's needs cannot be met in a family or family-like setting.



## If a QRTP is determined necessary, the following requirements apply:

If a QRTP placement is determined unnecessary by an assessment or court order:

<b>30 days</b> Within 30 days of referral	Assessment by a qualified practitioner
<b>60 days</b> Within 60 days of placement	Judge approves or disapproves of placement determination
<b>After 60 days</b> Every placement hearing after 60 days	Judge approves or disapproves of placement determination
<b>12 months</b> After 12 consecutive or 18 cumulative months in QRTP placement for 13+yo	Approval by the state Child Welfare Director
<b>After 6 months</b> of placement for children under age 13	Approval by the state Child Welfare Director

The state has 30 days from the determination to transition the child to a lower level of care or to a higher level that better addresses the child's needs. The state must pay the full cost for the child after those 30 days if the child remains in the current placement.

### **Are there any foster group care or shelter care settings in Iowa currently qualified or positioned to become qualified as QRTPs?**

Quality residential treatment remains an important component of Iowa's continuum of care for children with intensive therapeutic needs. DHS and child welfare providers are committed to partnering to support the best outcomes for Iowa's children. Along with the Coalition for Family and Children's Services in Iowa, which represents a number of child welfare providers in Iowa, many group care and shelter care agencies are planning for successful implementation of Family First and conducting assessments of their services and facilities.

