

CHILD WELFARE UPDATE

Title:	Parent Partner Child Safety Conference (CSC) Pilot Program
Publish Date:	December 28, 2020
Effective Date:	July 1, 2020
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Background Information:	<p>Background Information: The Parent Partner program is a peer mentoring program in which parents, who have previously had their children placed in foster care but have successfully been reunified, provide peer support to parents who are experiencing similar child welfare concerns. The program is unique because it not only celebrates individuals that have overcome obstacles through change, recovery, and accountability, but also uses their skills to mentor parents whose children are in foster care. The Parent Partner program has proven effective at reducing rates of re-abuse and increasing rates of reunification for children placed in foster care.</p> <p>The pilot to expand the Parent Partner Program provides peer support and mentoring to parents who are at risk of having their children placed in foster care. The pilot program allows for 250 families across Iowa who have been determined to be at risk of their children being placed in foster care to be assigned a Parent Partner mentor. These families are offered the service during the provision of a Child Safety Conference.</p> <p>Reason for the Change: Due to the passage of the Family First Prevention Services Act in February 2018, child welfare policy and practice is shifting to emphasize the importance and value of evidenced-based interventions that prevent placement in foster care. The Parent Partner CSC pilot program has been implemented as of July 1, 2020 as a foster care prevention strategy to support keeping families intact.</p>
What Is Changing:	What Is Changing: The Parent Partner Child Safety Conference (CSC) Pilot program is designed to enhance support to parents who are considered at high risk of having their children placed in foster care. These families are referred for a CSC, which is offered through a referral to Family Preservation Services.



	<p>The criteria for referral to the pilot is as follows: (1) parent is not currently receiving support from a Parent Partner, (2) the child is not formally or informally removed from the parental home, and (3) parent agrees to participate in the Parent Partner CSC Pilot Program on a voluntary basis. The Parent Partner CSC pilot program will serve up to 50 parents in each of the Department's five service areas.</p> <p>Who Is Impacted: Parents who are at risk of their children being removed and placed in out of home care due to safety concerns stemming from abuse or neglect are eligible for this voluntary service. The contractor for the Iowa Parent Partner Program has implemented the pilot program, which allows for a Parent Partner mentor to be at the Child Safety Conference. The CSC team, including DHS staff and Family Centered Service Contractors, ensure the Parent Partner is invited to attend the CSC. The Parent Partner Program then contacts the parent to see if they wish to have a Parent Partner at the CSC to provide support.</p>
<p>What Is Not Changing:</p>	<p>The traditional Iowa Parent Partner Program will continue to provide support and mentoring services to parents whose children have been placed in out of home care at the same level of service as previously provided.</p>
<p>Expected Benefits:</p>	<p>Through the support of a parent mentor to parents whose children have remained in the home, it is anticipated this support service will contribute to fewer children being placed in foster care and lower rates of re-abuse.</p>