

Ten Ways CHAMPS and Family First Promote Positive Outcomes for Children

In 2017, a multidisciplinary partnership of national organizations launched the Children Need Amazing Parents (CHAMPS) Campaign to promote state and federal policies that ensure high-quality parenting for children in foster care. In 2018, Congress enacted the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First), which reforms federal child welfare policy to emphasize the importance of keeping children safely with their families when they are at risk of entering foster care and ensuring the most family-like setting possible for children who need foster care. **Together, CHAMPS and Family First offer important new opportunities to significantly improve outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system.**

1. Family First and **CHAMPS** share the common goal of promoting positive outcomes for children through an emphasis on the benefits of family for children's development, health, and lifelong wellbeing.

2. Family First and **CHAMPS** both value the importance of safe, quality parenting for helping children heal, grow, and thrive.

3. Family First offers preventive services to keep children safely with their families.

CHAMPS helps ensure stable, quality foster parents can help children continue to heal if foster care becomes necessary for the child, and supports birth parents too.

4. Family First encourages the placement of children in foster family homes when placement in care is necessary. **CHAMPS** encourages the recruitment and retention of quality foster parents, including relatives, to keep children safe and supported and recognizes the importance of dedicated support workers to assist the critical role of foster parents.

5. Family First offers new opportunities for reunification services to assist children in foster care and those returning home to their families.

CHAMPS helps ensure foster parents will prepare children to achieve permanency through

reunification with birth families by maintaining and supporting healthy relationships with the child's birth parents, siblings and other extended family whenever possible.

6. Family First provides new opportunities and supports for kinship caregivers and reinforces their important role as licensed foster parents.

CHAMPS emphasizes the important role relatives ('kin') play as foster parents for children, and how placements with a relative or close family friend often give children in foster care the best chance of success.

7. Family First continues support for high-quality group care for children and youth with special needs – pregnant and parenting youth, victims of sex trafficking, older youth transitioning from placement, and youth with serious emotional and behavioral needs.

CHAMPS helps equip foster parents with the training, support and services they need so foster parents can provide quality care for children and youth with special needs who cannot return home when they leave group care.

8. Family First extends support for older youths transitioning from foster care to independence.

CHAMPS recognizes the importance of adolescent development and supports high quality foster parents who can help youth and young adults to acquire the skills and experiences they need to transition successfully to adulthood.

9. Family First's preventive services can help prevent children from re-entering foster care once they return home or move to adoption or guardianship.

CHAMPS promotes the important role foster parents play in helping children exit foster care successfully by working with birth parents toward reunification, considering adoption themselves, and supporting children's transitions to relatives and adoptive families.

10. Family First strengthens the Regional Partnership Grant Program, which is developing evidence-based services to address substance use challenges for children and families.

CHAMPS recognizes the ongoing need for foster parents across the country, and especially in communities affected by the opioid epidemic.

CHAMPS will equip foster parents with the training, help and support they need to ensure children's physical and behavioral health needs can be addressed.