

TITLE IV-E PREVENTION SERVICES

Colorado's Family First Prevention Candidacy Definition

In 2020, Colorado's Prevention Candidacy Definition was submitted for initial review to the federal government as a part of Colorado's draft state prevention services plan. CDHS is planning to submit an updated plan for official review and approval before October 2021.

In Colorado, for the purposes of Title IV-E Prevention Services, a child/youth is a candidate for foster care when at serious risk of entering or re-entering foster care and who is able to remain safely in the home with provision of mental health, substance use disorder, or in-home parenting services for the child/youth, parent, or kin caregiver. Foster youth who are pregnant and/or parenting are also candidates. A child may be at serious risk of entering foster care based on circumstances and characteristics of the family as a whole and/or circumstances and characteristics of individual parents or children that may affect the parents' ability to safely care for and nurture their children.

Colorado's bold definition of candidacy includes the following circumstances or characteristics of the child/youth, parent, or kin caregiver that may put a child/youth at "serious risk" of entering or re-entering foster care:

- Substance use disorder or addiction
- Mental illness
- Lack of parenting skills
- Limited capacity or willingness to function in parenting roles
- Parents' inability, or need for additional support, to address serious needs of a child/youth or related to the child/youth's behavior or physical or intellectual disability
- Parental protective capacity compromised by basic needs challenges, i.e. homelessness, food insecurity, etc.
- Developmental delays
- Reunification, adoption or guardianship arrangements that are at risk of disruption

A child is considered to be a IV-E Prevention Candidate when:

- The child is designated as being at "serious risk" of out-of-home placement (For more information, refer to [CDHS's IV-E Candidacy talking points](#))
- There is a prevention/treatment plan in place for the child/family; and,
- The child and/or their family is receiving an evidence-based service (as identified through Colorado's prevention plan)

DCW has created a [Family First Candidacy Tip Sheet](#) and [video introduction](#) that provide caseworkers with best practices and guidance around Family First candidacy scenarios and how each scenario is entered in Trails.