In February 2018, the Family First Prevention Services Act was passed and signed into law (P.L. 115-123). This legislation is ground-breaking because for the first time, child welfare agencies can use a funding source to pay for early intervention services for families with a child at imminent risk of being removed from their home and prevent unnecessary placements in foster care. States and tribes have a new option to claim federal Title IV-E funds for early intervention services to help keep children safely at home or whether to continue to use the current model, which only allows most services after a child enters foster care. As parents, we have a unique opportunity to help state and community leaders and partners understand and inform the directions of this new law. Parents have the opportunity to really help shape a robust set of services and ensure that service delivery is strengthening families.

**Key Opportunities for Families**

- **Strengthen families and keep them resilient and strong through Family First Prevention Services Act**
  - Choose to use funding for evidence-based prevention activities
  - Work with families earlier to get them the services they need and help prevent a child from entering foster care
  - Build system collaborations by developing a state prevention plan to support families and communities
  - Increase the array and accessibility of prevention and early intervention programs to meet the needs of children and families
  - Contribute to a community culture that includes a range of strategies and prevention supports for all families – help families before problems become too serious

- **New funding opportunity for evidence-based prevention services**
  - Services to address mental health challenges
  - In-home parenting skills-based programs which include parenting skills training, parent education and individual and family counseling
  - Substance abuse treatment

- **Who is eligible to receive these services?**
  - Children who are at imminent risk of entering foster care
  - Parents or relative caregivers of children at imminent risk of removal
  - Pregnant and parenting youth in foster care

- **Benefits for child welfare systems and all staff**
  - This new opportunity for providing early intervention has the potential to create stronger families and provide opportunities for child welfare staff to more effectively and consistently:
    - Work with parents as partners in keeping their children safe
    - Become more aware of strengths-based approaches in working with families and support for implementing new strategies
    - Assist all families with whom they come into contact to build strong protective factors
    - Help ensure that staff are connected to and taking full advantage of formal and informal community-based resources available to families
    - Develop family-friendly policies and practices

- **What YOU can do TODAY!**
  - Find out who you need to talk with to spread the positive news in your community
  - Start a blog about the Family First Prevention Services Act
  - Write op-eds to your local paper or letters to stakeholders and partners encouraging the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act and expressing your willingness to partner with them
  - Talk with other parents about the benefits of this new legislation
  - Facilitate group meetings and discuss the value of prevention services
  - Add the importance of fully implementing this legislation to your speaking points during speaking engagements
  - Go viral – share across all social media
  - Start conversations with child welfare staff, administrators and local leaders about using the parent voice in state and local implementation planning
  - Get connected to the Birth Parent National Network (BPNN) at bpnncffalliance.org

Join us in educating our states and communities about the Family First Prevention Services Act!