

Status of 2017 Strategies for the Strengthening Families Act Committee

2017 Strategies		Update as of June 2018	Status
Priority 1: Monitor the Implementation of the State and Federal Strengthening Families Acts			
1	Serve as a collaborative forum to support the implementation of this important Act.	The Committee and subgroup membership consists of individuals from all levels of system stakeholders.	Implemented/ Ongoing
2	Engage with families and youth to receive their feedback and allow community members to participate actively in the implementation.	Family and youth voice is collected through membership, surveys, and outreach of our partners.	Implemented/ Ongoing
3	Receive updates from the Administrative Office of Probation on related initiatives and activities that support youth development.	Probation is represented on the Committee and subgroups and provide regular updates.	Implemented/ Ongoing
4	Collaborate and provide feedback on regulations required by LB225 and await the promulgation of regulations in accordance with state statute. These regulations are to require training for foster parents on recognizing human trafficking, including both sex trafficking and labor trafficking.	Regular updates are provided by DHHS representatives at Committee and subgroup meetings and feedback is provided by members. A review of current DHHS rules indicates this change has not yet been finalized.	In Progress
5	Provide in depth review and analysis of the Normalcy Plan reports as required by LB225.	The Committee will be reviewing Normalcy Plan reports at their July 2018 meeting.	In Progress
6	Conduct an analysis of existing grievance processes to determine if additional legislation or policy is necessary. The Committee continues to promote that Youth are regularly notice of their rights. The updated report of the Grievance Subcommittee is available at https://goo.gl/FrQg71 .	Recommendations were submitted and DHHS policy updated. Currently allowing time for implementation prior to collecting data to determine the need for additional recommendations.	In Progress
7	Support the Department of Health and Human Services and the Court Improvement Project as they create the Bill of Rights and Know Your Rights Guide in collaboration with the Youth Citizen Review Panel	The Committee continues to support this initiative and excellent progress is being made.	In Progress
8	The Community and Family Voice Subcommittee will remain available to serve as a forum for engagement and feedback from the community and families.	This subgroup is willing to reconvene if need arises and continues to be a resource to stakeholders.	Implemented/ Ongoing
9	The Strengthening Families Act Committee continues to recommend a comprehensive Bill of Rights that includes the rights identified in the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee Report from 2016, available at https://goo.gl/86CKRv .	The Committee continues to support this recommendation. In lieu of the comprehensive Bill of Rights, the Committee continues to support the DHHS and CIP collaboration to create the Bill of Rights and Know Your Rights Guide referenced above.	Ongoing
10	The right to cultural activities should include access to activities that reflect the cultural practices and religious beliefs of the youth and family.		

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11	Youth need to be regularly notified of their rights in a developmentally and age appropriate manner.	The Committee continues to support these overarching principle and best practices.	Ongoing
12	Youth need an enforcement mechanism and grievance or complaint process for their rights. See the Grievance Subcommittee's report for additional information on the best practices for grievance systems.		
13	Youth and families need more information and awareness of the resources that are available to them.		
Priority 2a: Promote normalcy as the foundation to prevent trafficking.			
15	Promote a system wide culture change where youth are treated as stakeholders would want their own children treated.	Training to implement this culture shift has begun. Coordination between law enforcement, Administrative Office of Probation, DHHS, PromiseShip, CACs, and other community organizations has begun to provide training and share information to implement a culture change around sex trafficked youth and youth at risk of being trafficked. DCFS created culture change within the Division to talk to and speak of the youth we advocate for in a positive way. Instead of placing another negative label on our youth, staff does not refer to youth as "runaways" or "on run" but as youth who are missing from care. Youth need to feel important and respected. The way we interact with our youth can help to keep them safe. DCFS and Promiseship have developed a partnership when youth in our care go missing from placement. Promiseship has a dedicated email address to help staff coordinate and communicate when a youth has gone missing and has dedicated staff to help in the process.	Ongoing
16	Normalcy activities should go beyond extracurricular activities, and should include acquiring life skills, such as driving, jobs skills and experience, and social activities such as prom and homecoming dances.	This philosophy is included in current training for both staff and foster parents.	Implemented/ Ongoing

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17	Members of the public must be able to identify the trafficking of minors, and understand it as child maltreatment that requires reporting to law enforcement or the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline.	NHTTF is working on a standard trafficking 101 curriculum that is in progress to be available to the public. The DCFS Program Specialist has provided community trainings to educate the public on the indicators of trafficking, how and when to report possible situations of trafficking and information about foster care youth who are missing from care and its relation to trafficking.	In Progress
18	Child placing agency and DHHS-CFS staff must have access to the training they need to identify and support foster parents who can provide placement to this vulnerable population.	Trainings are available to staff; Operation Youth Success (OYS) has a "runaway taskforce" doing education on missing youth; The National Runaway Safeline is also being reviewed as a training resource. The Administrative Office of Probation has provided resource materials to their staff and are preparing to implement training being developed by the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force.	Implemented
19	The Committee commends the DHHS-CFS for their efforts in establishing training for foster parents related to identifying and responding to trafficking.	The Subcommittee continues to be a resource for DHHS in supporting their trafficking related initiatives. DHHS has increased efforts to include youth voice in their placement decisions. DCFS created a Human Trafficking for Nebraska Foster Parents training, this was mandated by NRS 43-4715. All Nebraska foster parents and Nebraska Foster Agency staff were trained to understand the definition, indicators and the risk factors of human trafficking, how to prevent trafficking and the resources available in Nebraska. Over 1300 foster parents received this training.	Implemented
20	The Nebraska Children's Commission should work with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Administrative Office of Probation, providers, families, and other stakeholders to make recommendations on a treatment level out-of-home placement for youth who have been victims of trafficking.	Further work and collaboration is needed in order to implement this. The Treatment Foster Care workgroup of the Foster Care Rate Reimbursement Committee is currently evaluating the service definition and Medicaid regulations for treatment family care.	Delayed
21	DHHS-CFS and the Administrative Office of Probation should establish processes for the youth to work with caseworker or probation officer, foster parents, biological parents (if applicable), Strengthening Families Act Advisor/Advocate (if youth is child welfare involved) to create a plan to prevent youth from going missing from care by allowing them to designate a "cooling off" area.	Probation has recently implemented this practice into policy for youth under supervision; DHHS training includes practices of identifying safe spaces to go in times of high stress or crisis.	Implemented
22	Professionals support youth in out-of-home placements by allowing them to designate a code word that signals a need to have a confidential conversation outside of the placement.	Work is in progress to integrate this practice into training for workers.	In Progress

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23	Design or designate a centralized procedure to receive reports and coordinate the response to trafficked minors.	There is currently no overarching central navigator for all cases of sex trafficked minors. Cases of sex trafficking are directed to the hotline. From there, DHHS becomes the lead coordinator for cases involving caretakers and Law Enforcement become the lead coordinators for cases involving third party perpetrators.	Delayed
24	DHHS-CFS should respond to reports of trafficking with an investigation within 24 hours, whether or not the trafficker is a third party perpetrator or a caregiver, and whether or not the trafficker is living in the home.		
Priority 2b: Promote normalcy as the foundation to address disparate impacts on minorities.			
25	Normalcy activities and family contact should be used to attain the goals set forth in the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and foster connections for youth with tribal affiliation to their families and tribes as much as possible.	The Committee will further explore disparate impacts on minorities in 2018 and 2019, in coordination with other Nebraska Children's Commission Committees.	Delayed
26	Minority youth deserve to have their holistic identities understood and respected.		
27	The diversity of family structures of youth who are minority, refugee/immigrant or youth with tribal affiliations should be recognized. Every culture has a distinct concept of who is included in a family, and may be broader than just immediate blood relations.		
28	Support the work of the communities and stakeholders to reduce the disparate impact of the child welfare system on minorities and prevent disproportionate amounts of minority families from entering the child welfare system or out of home placements.		
Priority 2c: Promote normalcy as the foundation to support the successful transition to adulthood.			
29	All stakeholders should continue to focus on legal and emotional permanency for youth transitioning out of the child welfare system, regardless of the court approved permanency goal.		
30	All conversations about youth's permanency are youth driven and informed.		
31	Stakeholders consider the identification of significant supportive connections at each point in the case, including at the start, throughout, and at the close of the case, regardless of the youth's court approved permanency goal.		

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32	Intensive and ongoing efforts to return the youth home or place the child with a relative, legal guardian, or adoptive parent should include a youth driven staffing process.	The Committee continues to support these overarching principles and best practices.	Ongoing
33	The staffing is youth driven, youth informed; opportunity focused and takes a team approach. This process will include approximately three staffing meetings. Based on youth feedback, the first meeting should consider all permanency goals, the second should review the progress made toward permanency goals, and in the third meeting the youth and team will make a decision.		
34	The required transitional living plan is essential to the youth's success and should support the youth's growth into adulthood and independent living, with a heavy focus on life skills.		
35	The transition plan must include planning for life skill attainment, and an assessment to determine gaps in skills.		
36	Life skill attainment should be tracked as youth move from placement to placement. This tracking can be achieved through a paper form but would ideally be through a web-based application or other electronic/digital means.		
37	Each family team meeting includes a discussion of an independent living skill, and creates a goal to attain an additional independent living skill.		
Priority 3: Coordinate implementation with other policy making bodies.			
38	Data sharing amongst agencies within Nebraska must be a central part of statewide response to trafficking. Several data and information sharing endeavors are occurring, and the Trafficking Subcommittee commends these efforts and recommends they continue.	Work to share data is under review with LB225, the Children and Juvenile Data Feasibility Study; DHHS and Probation provide regular updates to the FCRO on trafficked youth.	In Progress
39	The Strengthening Families Act Committee is dedicated to ensuring that implementation is youth informed, and encourages this through this engagement with youth members.	The Committee continues to support this overarching principle and best practice.	Ongoing
40	The APPLA Subcommittee and the Trafficking Subcommittee will collaborate to identify and recommend best practices for the role of the Strengthening Families Act Advocate/Advisor, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1311.03(2). The groups will work with DHHS-CFS, youth, families, and community partners to make recommendations.	Membership overlap has occurred and communication between groups has assisted mindful conversation and joint goals. (Ex: the need for trafficking education for the APPLA Advisor)	Implemented

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41	The Committee and Subcommittee support the work undertaken by the NHTTF to create and implement pre-screening and screening tools.	In addition to the training for law enforcement, the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force has engaged in significant amounts of collaborative work in creating a statewide official screening tool and in in-depth screening tool. The subcommittee supports the work of the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force as they develop these tools, collect and analyze the data, and supports DHHS and law enforcement as they implement screening tools.	Ongoing
42	The Committee has created the Court Implementation Subcommittee to collaborate with the Courts in supporting Normalcy and achieving improved outcomes for youth.	The Court Implementation Subcommittee continues to meet and is making great progress.	Implemented
43	The Trafficking Subcommittee has identified youth with Tribal affiliation as an important population. The group will pursue partnerships with the tribes and the Indian Child Welfare Act Coalition to support these youth.	The group members who attend Nebraska ICWA Coalition meetings and report out. Additional work is needed in this area.	Delayed
44	The Trafficking Subcommittee is exploring the Department of Education as a partner to identify numbers of homeless youth for prevention efforts. The Subcommittee will also explore training for educators and trafficking prevention education for students.	Some of this data was reviewed at the 9/7/2017 meeting, but additional work is needed in this area.	Delayed
45	The Committee will support the DHHS-CFS as it works to create a Youth Bill of Rights, and to support the Court Improvement Program as it updates its "Know Your Rights" guide for youth.	The Committee continues to support this initiative and excellent progress is being made.	In Progress
46	The Grievance Subcommittee has created a comprehensive guide to best practices available at https://goo.gl/FrQg71 . The group will reconvene to review data and update its recommendations. The Subcommittee works with providers and state agencies to ensure that youth in foster care can enforce their rights.	Recommendations were submitted and DHHS policy updated. Currently allowing time for implementation prior to collecting data to determine the need for additional recommendations.	In Progress
47	The Committee will actively review and analyze the Normalcy Plans provided pursuant to LB225 and thoroughly identify areas where stakeholders need support and advocacy to ensure that all youth have as much access to normalcy as possible.	The Committee will be reviewing Normalcy Plan reports at their July 2018 meeting.	In Progress
48	The Committee will support efforts to connect youth in the child welfare system to driver's licensing services, car insurance, and automobile access and purchase. If the Nebraska State Legislature approves LB226, the Committee will accept the statutory tasks related to this important topic.	LB226 (Wishart) is postponed indefinitely.	Delayed