



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Wolf Administration Approved to Delay Implementation of Family First Prevention Services Act**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Wolf Administration today announced that approval was received from the United States Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children and Families' to delay opting into full implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act until July 1, 2021, to give child welfare stakeholders the necessary time to implement these critical reforms.

"We want to be sure that the commonwealth's child welfare system meets the needs of children and families and helps them on a path to safe, healthy lives." said Secretary Miller. "We are committed to continue the implementation of the historic reforms outlined in the Family First Prevention Services Act, but we want to be sure that our counties and providers have the resources and time they need to implement them successfully and safely. This additional time will help DHS and our partners ensure that we can implement the important provisions in the law."

The Family First Prevention Services Act is a federal law that prioritizes providing services to children in families in the least restrictive manner and with their families as much as safely possible. It allows states to use federal payments for trauma-informed evidence-based prevention services to allow children who may otherwise be placed in congregate settings care to stay with their parents or relatives. In the event placement outside the home occurs, the law directs federal funding towards family-like settings or other specialized settings that are best suited to a child's individual needs.

The additional time will allow for interested providers for specialized settings to apply or to adjust their programs under the Family First Prevention Services Act. Specialized settings are trauma-informed child residential facilities or supervised independent living programs specializing in providing care and treatment for children and youth with special circumstances.

Additionally, the delay will support our efforts to build additional evidence-based prevention programs used by counties in a way that safely keeps families together, allows for staffing and data needs to be met, and will not result in the loss of federal funds.

DHS previously [released](#) a bulletin with guidance and requirements for providers that wish to become a specialized setting.

"Our commitment to protecting vulnerable populations will not waiver in the face of COVID-19. Thank you to the federal government for approving this delay request and giving Pennsylvania the time to implement the Family First Prevention Services Act in a way that is mindful of children, families, and to DHS' providers and workforce," said Secretary Miller.