

**National Kinship Alliance for Children  
Position Statement on the Family First Act**

- **The Family First Act does not provide any support or services to assist the kinship families who step up to provide a home while the biological parents receive the preventative services authorized by the bill**

The FFPSA does not provide financial support or services to kinship caregivers while the child is placed in their home – even though they could be eligible for financial support and supportive services if the child were formally placed in their home as a foster child during this time. This takes unreasonable advantage of family ties, when data show relatives who take in abused children are overwhelmingly low-income.

- **The prevention services authorized by the Family First Act are focused on the needs of the biological parents and do not support the kin families that will be relied on to provide a safe home while the family attempts to recover and reunify**

The Family First Act limits the supportive services that at-risk families could receive to three categories (substance abuse, mental health, and parenting skills), two of which are already allowable under Medicaid. To truly support at-risk families, FFPSA should include a broader range of services and supports needed to help rehabilitate a family, such as crisis stabilization services, intensive family reunification and preservation programs, services to address mental health, domestic violence and housing needs, child care, and respite care. At the same time, FFPSA should provide for the care of the child in a relative's home if that move is necessary to keep the child safe while the family attempts to rehabilitate.

- **The Family First Act would formalize a system of diversion that takes advantage of relatives and compromises child safety.**

The Family First Act only authorizes a parent to receive the mental health services or substance abuse treatment authorized by the bill if the child remains out of foster care. Asking grandparents, aunts and uncles to increase their own financial hardship by taking in their relatives' children, in order to make these children's parents eligible for needed mental health or substance use disorder services, presents them with a terrible choice we should not force them to make.

- **The Family First Act would render many children placed with relatives ineligible for ongoing federal foster care support if the initial prevention services are unsuccessful**

Children can only receive federal Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments and subsidized guardianship payments if they are physically living in the home of removal in one of the six months prior to the removal petition being filed. But FFPSA allows a child to live outside the home of removal, in a kinship setting for up to 12 months, while the biological parent receives the newly authorized foster care prevention services – mental health, substance abuse or parenting training. Should those narrow and time-limited services fail to avoid foster care, many children will no longer have a link to the home of removal and will lose federal eligibility

- **Family First is prevention on the backs of relatives, not in support of relatives.**