



Thriving Families, Safer Children (TFSC) Kentucky

Thriving Families, Safer Children Kentucky is a collaboration of statewide partners, including individuals with lived experience, rethinking child welfare by creating conditions for strong, healthy communities where families are supported and children are free from harm.

Site Team History

Kentucky was one of 18 sites in 16 states selected to participate in Round Two of the national Thriving Families, Safer Children movement. The Kentucky-specific TFSC priorities strive to promote family well-being and prevent unnecessary child welfare agency involvement. All of our prevention efforts aim to be family, youth, and community driven to be effective and ensure alignment with needs.

Group Agreements

As a team we commit to the agreements in order to practice inclusion and to set equitable, transparent standards for participation and engagement during our time together. We will...

- Encourage open dialogue and assertive communication through the use of "I" statements, speaking from our own lenses.
- Honor each individual's desire to be respected, included, heard, understood, and comfortable in this space.
- Address situations in real time while also discerning whether the issue is a teaching opportunity or better handled through private discussion.
- Be open to each other's perspective, accepting it as their truth relating to this work and seeking to appreciate differences and embrace discomfort.
- Individually commit to combat our own defensiveness and extend patience to others while they are also learning to work through their own.

Team Goal

To connect and engage a core team of supporting partners with a vested interest in both the Thriving Families, Safer Children national movement and in infusing its guiding principles into statewide efforts through family serving initiatives.

Overall 2023 goals

Self-assess our priorities, clearly define the roles of all the involved partners, improve both internal and external communication, and advance our equity goals for both racial disproportionality and engaging lived experience.

Monthly Core Team Meeting Objective

Identify opportunities for partner collaboration amongst our prevention initiatives and stay informed on state and national prevention effort progression and learning.

TFSC KY accomplishments 2020-2023

- Created formalized structures for collaboration through the **Statewide Prevention Collaborative, Regional Prevention Collaboratives**, and regular Thriving Families, Safer Children Kentucky team meetings.
- **Grew the Thriving Families, Safer Children Kentucky team** from 6 starting core partners in 2020 to >25, including over 10 diverse organizations.
- This year, in March 2023, Kentucky launched the **Lean on Me campaign**, an effort to shift the cultural mindset to foster a **community of support**, where every Kentuckian views themselves as an active participant in offering a helping hand as a first step in the prevention of child abuse whenever safely possible.
- Formed a **statewide birth parent council** in June 2022 which includes a diverse group of biological parents with lived experience with the child welfare system.
- Signed into law by Gov. Andy Beshear in 2022, **SB8** revised the statutory definition of abuse and neglect to clearly **differentiate poverty from neglect**.
- Finalized the **Statewide Prevention Collaborative Plan** in December 2022.
- Through Visioning Sessions, Action Planning, and the formation of Regional Prevention Collaboratives, brought together community leaders and advocates to develop and execute strategies for **community-led efforts on child and family wellbeing** to strengthen conditions for families to thrive before coming to the attention of the child welfare agency.
- Began delivering **Community Response** with 4 counties (now up to 10) in July 2022 serving families who may benefit from additional support, such as parent skill building or meeting concrete needs, when a report is called into the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) that does not meet the statutory criteria for an investigation. This model delivers assessment and/or services through community based agencies including Family and Youth Resource Service Centers (FRYSCs), Brighton Center, and Gateway Children's Services.
- Brighton Center, DCBS, Family Nurturing Center, and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago partnered to develop the **Building Community Well-Being Among Families Project**. The Project will **serve and strengthen the primary prevention system** (including the child welfare system), as well as individuals and families in the community by lifting the voices of those with lived experience and improving access to and responsiveness of reimagined primary prevention services.
- Recognized the continuously emerging research on the impact of **responsible fatherhood** on maltreatment reduction as well as its increase in positive family and child outcomes. We are taking significant steps to increase father engagement in families and standardize human-centered and **father-friendly practices, policies, and procedures** through community collaborations such as the Commonwealth Center for Fathers and Families.
- The **Division of Prevention and Community Well-Being (DPCW)** was created out of a legislature approved agency reorganization during the 2022 legislative session, and began in January 2023. There are 3 branches within the division, over primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. The division is currently building staffing capacity. Division priorities include **moving upstream, building robust primary and secondary prevention initiatives and branches** and leveraging relationships, supporting families, supporting communities, **relationship building with true community partners/members**, quality improvement, and equity work.