



Partnering with Families today to help foster growth and success for tomorrow.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

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Operating Highlights

- ❖ The agency transitioned our client medical records to a new, highly HIPAA compliant Electronic Medical Record (EMR) operating system called TheraManager for Mental and Behavioral Health Services. The agency is on schedule and expected to implement this software for Child Welfare services early 2020.
- ❖ Families First completed an Organizational Trauma Assessment to evaluate our agencies effectiveness at being not only trauma informed, but trauma responsive and trauma practicing. The results showed Families First is a trauma practicing organization and created action items for organizational enhancement.
- ❖ Families First strategically prepared and responded to the Department of Human Services Child Welfare Family Centered Services contracts in three Service Areas. If awarded contracts, the agency will serve an additional twelve counties increasing the total counties served from 43 to 55 of the 99 counties in the State of Iowa. The contract award announcement will be March 2020.
- ❖ Families First educated ourselves and aligned the agency with the new Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) federal legislation. FFPSA will significantly improve the way families receive services in Iowa's Child Welfare system and we have trained our employees to align our service implementation with the federal legislation.
- ❖ Families First continued to move the state of Iowa's only Kinship Navigation Program forward by forming partnerships with the University of Iowa research department, as the agency continues to move towards an evidence-based program. Families First was successful in securing funding for a second year of program and service delivery.
- ❖ Service integration and multi-disciplinary team practices were developed to help create stronger and more comprehensive service integration practices within the agency.
- ❖ Families First implemented regular agency wide leadership training to coach and develop the next generation of leaders by enhancing technical and adaptive skills.
- ❖ Families First expanded service options and new revenue streams by billing private insurance for our Intensive Outpatient Therapy program.
- ❖ Families First expanded our professional capacity by adding another Certified Trauma Trainer to our training team, expanding our ability to ensure all employees are trained in foundational trauma elements.
- ❖ A Peer to Peer Mentor Program was developed to help reduce organizational turnover while enhancing employee onboarding, training, and team dynamics within the first 90 days of employment.
- ❖ Families First continued our commitment to providing Evidence Based Practices/Programs (EBP) to those we serve. Families First received accreditation in SafeCare, outlining the highest degree of model fidelity for program implementation and proficiency. Furthermore, our CSE program completed training and are working towards certification for Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) practices for our clinicians.

WHAT DO THE STAFF THINK ABOUT WORKING AT FAMILIES FIRST?



Positive Feedback

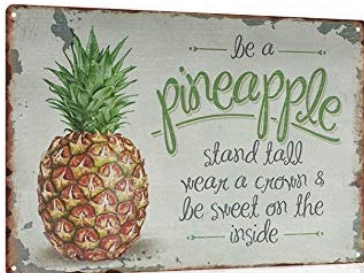
Over 90% of staff stated.....

- They would recommend Families First to a family member who needed services
- Families First is a reputable agency in the community
- They would recommend Families First as an employer

In 2019, we continue to focus and place emphasis on self-care and personal well-being. Employees have access to a licensed mental health therapist to provide debriefing for extremely challenging cases and incidents. They also have access to community resources.

Staff members are afforded opportunities for personal and professional growth through agency-sponsored in-service training, new hire orientation/training; conferences, workshops, and other staff development activities. In addition, clinical staff members are expected to strive to be licensed and/or certified within their own professional discipline. Employees are encouraged to seek higher education in their area of discipline and the agency is supportive of ongoing continued education.

During quarterly regional meetings, employees are recognized for years of service and presented with a certificate and marketing swag. Supervisors are recognized on a monthly basis for their leadership skills and are presented with a “traveling pineapple” that states:



LOOKING AHEAD

Mission Statement

Families First Counseling Services of Iowa is dedicated to the process of partnering with families today to help foster growth and success tomorrow.

Vision Mission & Values

Values

Dignity

Families First Counseling Services of Iowa (Families First) values the dignity of all individuals and seeks to establish and maintain positive relationships with its clients in order to reinforce the self-worth of each person. Families First employees will work to enhance the clients' capacity for self-determination and provide therapy and skills to allow each individual to become a healthy and productive member of our society.

Service

Families First places service to those in need of assistance above the needs of the agency. We believe in treating the individual and not the symptom and are dedicated to do our best to serve our clients.

Integrity

Families First places an emphasis on behaving in a trustworthy manner that is consistent with the ethical standards of the National Association of Social Workers. Our employees are expected to act in a manner that demonstrates that he/she is honest, responsible, and respectful.

Competence

Families First is dedicated to providing opportunities for personal growth and development as well as ensuring that its employees practice within their areas of competence. Families First provides opportunities for trainings to assist in meeting the requirements for continuing education.

Our philosophy of service is that we believe our families deserve the best we have to offer. Our goals and objectives consist of keeping children safe from

Re Abuse and providing them assistance in experiencing long term, safe, and stable living environments.

In 2020 and beyond, we are committed and dedicated to maintaining this philosophy and our continued growth and success which is a team effort. We would be remiss without acknowledging our support staff, care coordinators, area supervisors, therapists, Executive Team and Advisory Board members. You are all integral partners and at the heart of our growth and success!

2020 Projects/Goals & Objectives

- **March of 2020 the Department of Human Services will announce the contract holders for the new child welfare services for the next five years**
- **Anticipating the award of the contracts, implementing changes to coincide and compliment the new contract**
- **Strategic planning for increased service areas and infrastructure**
- **Opening two additional satellite offices in the southern counties**
- **Preparing for the Council on Accreditation audit Sept**
- **Implementing and maintaining national partnerships that will allow us to develop and test innovative practices to improve service delivery to Iowa's children and families**
- **Implementing new opportunities for those with mental health issues but don't qualify for Medicaid services by adding several new private insurance companies to our list of billable entities**
- **Enhanced leadership development and training to build the next generation of leaders within the agency**
- **Strengthen and grow our leadership practices across the agency**
- **Enhancing current technology services & developing & implementing new technology**
- **Enhancing training opportunities to support evidence-based practices**
- **Maintaining under 30% turnover. Developing creative practices to retain employees in an increasingly challenging environment & industry**
- **Remaining proactive & involved in community services. Enhancing & expanding current involvement**
- **Maintaining marketing initiatives to support the agency's brand, mission, vision and values**
- **Continue to enhance and strengthen all services: Child Welfare, Behavioral Health, Family Preservation, Integrated Home Health, Kinship, etc.**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Families First continues to experience continued growth of services, revenue, technology and infrastructure. This doesn't go without "growing pains" or challenges and barriers; however, we possess strength; accountability; forward thinking; resourcefulness; and stability in an effort to maintain our success. We would like to take this opportunity to share and highlight our accomplishments as follows:

- ❖ Revenues for 2019 totaled \$13 million which resulted in a 0 percent gain from 2018.
- ❖ In 2019 our quarterly profit margin averaged three percent (3%). This was a decrease from 2018 primarily due to the addition of infrastructure in our CSE program; continued reduced cases in Child Welfare; benefit participation increased which resulted in a six percent (6%) agency increase; and payoff of mortgage notes. The agency is debt free as of 2019.
- ❖ Our CSE programs continue to experience growth and revenues increased in 2019 by 5 percent (5%). This was due largely to expansion in therapy services.
- ❖ Investing in an EMR software and adding infrastructure in the billing department has proven effective for the agency in electronically collecting revenues. With child welfare services we collect one hundred percent (100%) of all revenues and with CSE services, ninety-five (95%) of revenues. Iowa introduced new MCO'S this year and one in particular, Iowa Total Care, has struggled with processing claims.
- ❖ Families First successfully completed our independent audit; two cost reports; Child Mental Health audit; workers compensation payroll audit; and a 401K audit all in good standing with no major concerns noted.
- ❖ A Financial Review committee was formulated and its members consists of Administrators. This provides them insight of their programs from a financial perspective. It also allows them an opportunity to recognize challenges/barriers and develop a plan of resolution. As a team we provide oversight of billing and collections. We then send our monthly financials to our CPA firm who reconciles with the bank and our Quicken software program.



AGENCY PERFORMANCE

Family, Safety, Risk & Permanency Services (FSRP)

Families First has successfully participated in the 2007, 2011, and 2015 Family, Safety, Risk and Permanency Services contracts. Families First has developed a strong partnership with the Department of Human Services. Through this partnership and open communication, Families First has experienced many accomplishments in keeping children safe.

Families First served the following number of families for FSRP services in 2019:

Service Area	Total Referrals made in '19	Average of Open in 2019
Eastern	535	398
NorthWest	220	221
NorthEast	270	212
Cedar Rapids North	216	225
Agency Total	1,241	1,075

As part of our contract, we provide Family Team Decision Making Meetings to children and families to help give families a voice while developing their case plan to reach safe case closure. Families First randomly sampled 75 participants from surveys for Family Team Decision Making Meetings ranging from January through July in 2019 with the following results:

- ▽ 92% of parents and youth felt they were involved in deciding who would attend their family team decision making meeting.
- ▽ 92% of parents and youth felt their facilitators met with them before the meeting to explain the purpose and the process of the meeting.
- ▽ 100% of parents and youth noted the time and location worked for them and the people they wanted were at the meeting.
- ▽ 100% of team members believed the facilitator created the opportunity for the family and youths' strengths and needs to be clearly identified.
- ▽ 100% of team members noted the plan developed successfully addressed the family and youth needs.

During 2019, the Eastern Service Area implemented a pilot project called Child Safety Conferences in partnership with the Department of Human Services as there was an increase in foster care placements. This effort would also align with the Families First Legislation passed in February of 2018. These meetings were not contractually required; however, leadership identified the need to find a way to help families create plans to keep their children home or if they were unable to stay in the home, identify a family member/friend who loves the child they may reside with. If the children are already safety planned out of the home, the meeting is to develop a plan to get the children back home as safely as possible. These meetings foster very creative planning in how to keep children home when they are near removal. For example, this may be moving a grandmother in to help supervise the child or to have a family member leave the home so the children may remain in the home. This pilot was successful in the Eastern

Service Area as Families First was able to keep 95% of the children in their homes or with loving adults who cared for them. Child Safety Conferences were included in the new Family Centered Services contract for 2020 due to their success and alignment with the Families First Act.

During the 2018 and 2019 calendar year, Families First quality assurance accuracy was 99% for Safety Plan Services and 98% for FSRP services. Families First exceeded the 95% accuracy reporting throughout the 2019 contract, achieving 98% accuracy or above for all reporting on contract requirements. Since 2007, Families First has never had a Program Improvement Plan due to performance falling below the 85% standard set by DHS.

Safety Services

Service Area	Total Referrals made in '19
Eastern	118
North West	58
North East	194
Cedar Rapids North	61
Agency Total	431

Safety Plan Services speak for themselves. Throughout 2018 and 2019, staff met with and engaged families in Safety Plan Services 94.53% of the time within the first 24 hours. Families First achieved a 2-year performance average of 98.2% for child safety throughout the provision of Safety Plan Services. In addition, Families First was able to help prevent removal and placement into care 96% of the time.

Counseling, Support & Education

Mental Health Services

- 97% had no founded child abuse
- 98% had no hospital placements during services

Behavioral Health Intervention Services

- 91% of families felt it was a helpful experience
- 85% of families reported they were given helpful tools, were provided resources and had input in to the services they received
- 97% did not have a founded child abuse or more to a higher level of care during services

We have updated some forms and processes including implementing an outcomes survey for BHIS at reauthorizations so that we can gather client satisfaction of our services. We also enhanced our supervisor report out forms and are now tracking weekly how staff are doing with meeting with clients.

Updated processes including the Waiting list process and the Short Authorization process.

Integrated Home Health

- IHH met all outcomes for the 2019 year.
- IHH has successfully provided safety plans for families and transitional case management to lower hospitalizations and repeat hospitalizations.
- IHH team has completed revised care plans and continuity of care document to align with the SPA and audit expectations.
- Maintaining and expanding our Facebook page.
- Improved our health and wellness outreach by including and educational mailing to each family every month.
- The team has continued to utilize QA/QI strategies to test new processes that allow the team to provide a more comprehensive case management plan for clients.
- Specialized monthly trainings from the MCOs and IME have allowed the IHH program to continue to grow in knowledge and expertise regarding integration of services and comprehensive case management.
- Disenrollment processes have been used consistently to ensure a robust and valuable service is being utilized by active members.

Quality Assurance

- Implemented new EMR – Replaced Visionworks with Theramanager. Initially only used for CSE services but will be expanding to all programs in 2020.
- Passed all audits for all services of Child Welfare and CSE.



Integrated Health Home
120 W Water St A2
Decorah IA 521012

Crisis and Referral Line 844-225-7444



Other Departments

Accreditation and Licensing

- Committee Chair continues to meet monthly with other PQI Committees and provide input regarding practice/policy as it relates to COA and other Standards.
- Child Welfare audits completed—for recommendation/report out see Child Welfare reports
- Policies and Procedures Manual updated along with Employee Handbook. Updates reviewed with staff who signed off an acknowledgement.
- COA Maintenance of Accreditation Completed
- HCBS Self-Assessment Completed
- Contracting and credentialing with IME and MCOs completed
- Contracted with PMI to credential and bill additional insurances
- Continue to monitor feedback from all service audits and take to appropriate committees for review and QI measures.

Training and Supervision

SafeCare®

SafeCare® is an evidenced-based behavioral parent-training program for families at risk or reported for physical abuse or neglect. The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare has rated SafeCare® as a two as it is supported by research study outcomes with a high child welfare relevance. The in-home skills-based program is provided by training SafeCare® in home visitors. The program consists of three modules targeting child, health, home safety and parent-child interactions for children ranging from 0 to 5 years of age. SafeCare® has a rigorous training and support model to ensure validity and consistent delivery.

Families First started implementation in February of 2017 in the Dubuque and Waterloo offices. We have expanded this service program to the offices of Fort Dodge, Mason City, Cedar Rapids, Bettendorf, Clinton, and Muscatine. We have 4 Master Trainers, 6 coaches and 52 home visitors.

As reported by our Home Visitor and Supervisors:

- As an agency, 93.28 % of cases that received SafeCare® programming did not suffer repeat maltreatment throughout service provision.
- 96% of the time, we were able to maintain a child's placement through the provision of services, for families receiving SafeCare®.

Kinship Navigation

Families First Counseling Services is pleased to announce our Kinship Navigator Program has provided supportive services to 156 Kinship Caregivers and 200 children during the first 18 months of service.

- 100% of Kinship Navigator Program participants felt valued by their Kinship Specialist and the Kinship Navigator Program.
- 100% of Kinship Caregivers reported increased understanding of resources available to them
- 91% of children involved in the Kinship Navigator Program were able to avoid placement in stranger care.
- 10% reduction in Kinship Caregiver stress through our program involvement.

Families First Kinship Navigator Program has successfully implemented peer-to-peer support groups, access to quarterly newsletters and connection to education and resources through a Kinship Navigator Program webpage.

According to reports from our Kinship Specialists and Kinship Caregivers there has been 0% repeat maltreatment in Kinship Caregivers homes during the provision of our services.

Risk and Prevention



- The agency reported 0 client grievances filed, and 0 employee grievances filed.
- There were 0 alleged HIPAA violations which resulted in reporting a violation to the Department of Human Services. There were allegations of a violation, however, it was quickly determined these were not violations.
- Training provided included Personal Safety, Documentation training, Trauma Informed Care Part 1 and 2 and Emergency response, incident reporting, grievance and accident reporting training also occurred in 2019. These trainings were held in a group or regional setting.
- The Employee Handbook and P&P were revised and reviewed by our attorney. This was shared in October regionals with all employees.
- Workman Comp claims continue to be higher in dog bites and slips, trips and falls and car accidents. The committee will continue to provide training on these issues not once a year but twice a year due to employee turnover. One slip, trip and fall resulted in an employee being off work and placed outside of her home due to her injury. This has led FF to create a policy of no more open toed shoes are allowed when providing direct service to employees.
- Supervisors continue, with the direction of HR, to post the employee rights and responsibilities and OSHA findings.
- See attached Incidents Reports

Families First had a total of 309 incidents in 2019 for Child Welfare and CSE services. Of those 309, 283 were major incidents with the leading factor being the need to call law enforcement and reporting potential child/dependent adult abuse as mandatory reporters.

Administrative and Service Environment



- Purchased new agency vehicle.
- Continued, ongoing maintenance checks conducted on vehicles and offices
- Continued, ongoing training provided for emergency responses, inclement weather, etc.
- Host monthly meetings and provide training for Administrative Assistant support staff

Human Resources



- Distribute a quarterly HR newsletter and distribute it in January/April/July/October
- Monitor and manage Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) Americans with Disabilities (ADA), unemployment claims and worker compensation claims
- Manage employee recruitment and retention. Maintain regular communication with Indeed account representative to identify issues/concerns; develop timely resolutions; enhance platform functions; and review platform changes in an effort to capitalize recruiting and hiring strategies.
- Maintain membership with the National Society of Human Resource Management and Cedar Valley Society of Human Resource Management. Attended the Iowa State SHRM conference in Des Moines in October, 2019.
- Built a network of external partners to utilize & share resources; broaden education & training efforts & networking opportunities. Stay abreast of local, state & federal legislation. Member of the employment law firm's telephone client services which is instrumental in seeking legal counsel on a wide array of human resource scenarios.
- Train/educate Supervisors, Directors & Managers on human resource topics. Attend monthly Supervisor meetings.
- Manage the agency's benefits; timely reconcile benefit invoices and schedule payment; and provide assistance, support & direction to employees benefit questions

Marketing/Community



The Year In Review

- As a strategy to retain current employees Years of service awards were presented to staff during our Regional Meetings



We recognized all employees at their:
1 year, 3-year, 5-year, 10 year and
15 years of service.



- We continued to invest our resources in Google and our business Facebook page. We have increased our search ratings on Google and have continued to share the great work our staff are doing across the state by posting pictures and agency activities.
- We have continued our partnership with the Waterloo Chamber of Commerce. Our video that was created in 2018 continues to be posted on the Chamber of Commerce website with a link to our website available to those wanting additional information about our services.
- Partnership with many local colleges to recruit staff. Attended job fairs and put up fliers on the college job boards.
- Sponsored the Fam Bam Color Jam 5k Color Run in Clear Lake.
- Christmas radio event, sponsored music on 5 stations and recorded a Happy Holiday message.
- BHIS supervisors, partnered with several community agencies to increase community awareness of Families First services.

Community



Volunteer



Outreach