

 <p><b>Children's Services Agency</b></p> <p><b>Communication Issuance</b></p> <p><b>20-071</b></p>	Subject/Title	Rapid Reunification and Modifications to Family Preservation/Reunification Programs
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During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that programs and services adapt to meet the changing needs of those being served. The Rapid Reunification initiative seeks to safely reunify children with their families as quickly as possible. Family preservation and reunification programs are essential complements to this project.

In conjunction with existing foster care policy, when a child is transitioning home and a support service is needed to assist the family, a referral to Family Reunification Program (FRP) should be made if there are openings and the service is available in that county. To support this project, the following eligibility and procedural changes have been made to existing reunification and preservation programs:

- If FRP is unavailable, the family can be referred to Families First of Michigan (FFM). During the FFM intervention:
  - The family will receive the standard 28 days of service including ten hours of weekly face to face contact subject to current guidelines for face to face contact with families.
  - Prior to the conclusion of the 28-day intervention, the referring worker, service provider and family must assess and determine if additional services and supports are needed.
    - If the family requires additional short-term support to prevent subsequent removal and/or long-term support is needed and FRP or Families Together Building Solutions-Pathways (FTBS-P) are not available, FFM may be extended an additional 30 days. Face to face contact with families will be reduced to five hours per week, subject to current guidelines for face to face contact with families.
- If FRP and FFM are full, the family may be referred to FTBS-P if available or another local community service.

- Experienced workers in FFM may carry a caseload of three families. The providers have the discretion to manage the case assignment logistics between preservation and reunification cases among their staff.
- Exceptions from the family preservation specialists are not required to take a reunification case, extend FFM for reunification, or transfer services.
  - The specialists will provide consultation to providers to troubleshoot safety concerns, and unusual or challenging cases.
  - Disputes between referring staff and service providers regarding eligibility, case termination, service extensions, or transfer of services will be reviewed and decided by Family Preservation Program Office.
- FFM, FRP, and/or FTBS-P cannot remain open for the sole purpose of monitoring if the family has completed their program goals and no additional significant goals or unmet needs have been identified and the risk or subsequent removal has been reduced.

Unless extended, or amended within service contracts, these changes are in place through September 30, 2020.