

Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast
Creating a Family First Prevention Plan – Washington, DC TRANSCRIPT

Speakers: Female Narrator; Tom Oates, Child Welfare Information Gateway; Robert Matthews, Washington, DC Child and Family Services Agency; Natalie Craver, Washington, DC Child and Family Services Agency

[00:00:00]: [Music Introduction]

FEMALE NARRATOR [00:00:02]: This is the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast, a place for those who care about strengthening families and protecting children. You'll hear about the innovations, emerging trends and success stories across child welfare direct from those striving to make a difference. This is your place for new ideas and information to support your work to improve the lives of children, youth, and families.

TOM OATES [00:00:33]: Over a decade, Washington, D.C saw their total of children and youth in foster care drop from more than 3,000 to 750. Their shift in approach and collaborative partnerships during that time set the District up to be in a good position to submit a Family First Prevention Plan - and receive approval from the Children's Bureau. Hi everybody, Tom Oates here and welcome into the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast. You can find us on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, GooglePlay and SoundCloud. Thanks so much for joining in. We are continuing to discuss the Family First Prevention Services Act. We've talked about guidance to help jurisdictions trying to develop their plans, tips from the Children's Bureau, and the experiences and lessons learned from jurisdictions whose plans to implement the provisions of the act have been submitted and approved. And we're gonna continue on that thread for a little bit here.

[00:01:31]: See, this episode we're gonna dive a bit deeper into the historical background, the additional partners and the approach that Washington, D.C.'s Child and Family Services Agency - and they refer to themselves as CFSA - took to develop their prevention plan. Now, clearly every jurisdiction is different. And that's a key tenet for any state or jurisdiction to recognize. So, plans have a better chance to succeed when they're developed specifically for the children and families you're working with. We got a chance to sit down with Robert Matthews, CFSA's Deputy Director and Natalie Craver, CFSA's Administrator for Community Programs. They took me through the ten-year journey of building city-wide partnerships, why a number of programs in their prevention plan are not included in the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse, and the approach taken to view Family First as a tool in the toolbelt - using what they felt fit best to support the journey that they are currently on.

[00:02:28]: Now, what I liked about this conversation is that one, their focus on Family First wasn't about strict compliance, but about taking advantage of what works. And, two, the recognition of collaborative partnerships. You'll hear Natalie Craver quote Brenda Donald - and she is CFSA's director - by saying, "we're the child welfare agency, not the child welfare system." Well, you'll hear it for yourself right now - Robert Matthews and Natalie Craver from Washington, D.C.'s Child and Family Services Agency discussing their Family First Prevention Plan, here on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast.

[00:03:07]: Robert Matthews, Natalie Craver - welcome into the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast.

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:03:12]: Thanks, it's good to be here, Tom.

NATILE CRAVER [00:03:13]: Yes, thanks for having us.

TOM OATES [00:03:15]: Let's start from really, before Family First and really going back, well, near a decade. If you guys could explain to me what CFSA did to kind of shift the approach to foster care.

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:03:32]: Sure. So, Tom, I think one of the important things to recognize is that CFSA has always had a footprint in infrastructure in the community. We've had our collaboratives who are community-based organizations that are situated and concentrated in all eight of our wards in D.C. We've always had this great partnership with them. And we've seen that particular model and apparatus evolve over time. So, initially, we had these organizations that were concentrated in our communities, they have the credibility, they know the families, they know the needs of these families and it was such a great partnership in us, CFSA being the government entity, the public entity to help inform the child welfare agency on here are the needs of families and here's how we can better support them. Understanding that there are particular wards, respective of wards seven and eight where we have most families that where children are removed for a variety of reasons, how would we provide targeted focuses on those particular families.

[00:04:44]: And so, when we're talking about our foster care population probably over a decade ago, we had over 3,000 kids and today, we have a little under 750 children in out of home placement here in Washington, D.C. and a lot of that success comes from the partnership that CFSA shares with our community collaboratives, which we continue to have a standing good public/private partnership with. And so, as we continue to work with them through this prevention work, we're able to also have access to other evidence-based services, which I'm sure we will talk about later in this discussion as to how we can allow those families to be linked and served with those particular programs who have a lot of scientific evidence to show progress and success that we want our families to have access to. So, we look at how we work with our collaboratives, we look how we have formed our Four Pillars framework - which was in 2012, which we'll talk about - how well we work with our logical families as an extension of our collaboratives, as well as our focus on permanency. So, those are just some of the things that we look at over the past decade that has helped CFSA being one of the jurisdictions to continue to see a reduction of children in foster care.

TOM OATES [00:06:10]: Yeah, you mentioned the Four Pillars - describe them for me.

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:06:14]: Sure. So, the Four Pillars is a framework that we kind of live by. If you ask a police officer, if you ask some individuals in our mental health system what are the Four Pillars, they know them. So, the first pillar is called Narrowing the Front Door and this is kind of our front-end work with community. And so, what that really means is that as child welfare agency, we do not want to unnecessarily move children if we don't have to. We like to partner with our community partners on ways to connect families with services if they can be connected with services and keeping the child safe in their care in the community. If the child can't be serviced and remain safe in the community with their parent then we, of course, have to make that decision and that child has to be separated from the parent and a formal removal has to take place. And that child has to come into our system in our out of home placement population, which is also called foster care.

[00:07:15]: Which brings us to our second pillar, which is Temporary Safe Haven. And what that is, is exactly what it says. If the child has to come into foster care, we want that to be temporary. We want to be able to quickly reunify that child with their parent and working with that parent on whatever issues they may have connecting them with resources we have internally, as well as in the community. And,

while they're in our care, we want to ensure that we provide all the supports necessary. For instance, you have kids that need access to tutoring. You may have kids who need access to mentoring. They may need childcare. They may need therapeutic services. All of these services we are able to provide in-house - which brings us to our third pillar, which is called Well-Being. We want to ensure the well-being of these kids so that they have all of the types of supports and services that they need that help to build upon their social and emotional development.

[00:08:15]: And then, our last pillar is Exit to Permanency. Again, we want to reunify kids with parents. But, when that may not be able to happen, we look at adoption and guardianship as options for kids to exit with a forever family.

TOM OATES [00:08:28]: And just anybody listening, you can kind of hear how those pillars cross into the goals of Family First, as well. And a reminder for everybody, we're talking about pillars that were introduced in 2012 and so as we are in 2020 and as Family First was instituted, you know, just a short number of months ago, to see where D.C. has gone, or rather the journey that they're on. So, in that alignment with Family First, there's also - and I need to be careful when I discuss this with folks for the District because - Washington D.C. launched a companion prevention initiative called Family First D.C. So, how does this kind of work or, you know, where does the mesh with Family First D.C. and the provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act?

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:09:20]: So, I'm gonna also lean on my colleague Natalie Craver who is the Administrator of Community Partnerships to kind of fill in some gaps. One of the things that we looked at, Tom, is in trying to put together what we call a successful prevention model, it needs to be comprehensive. We definitely appreciate the feds in providing the flexibility to have Title IV-E funding reimbursement for certain evidence-based services. And so, we realize that that's just a small pie and a small piece of the pie. And we realized that we have other families that we want to serve further upstream which are primary prevention families that the particular Family First law does not necessarily allow us to serve. So, we began to engage our other sister agencies and our community-based agencies to help us develop our five-year prevention plan and I don't really wanna steal Natalie's thunder, I want to kind of, Natalie to kind of jump in here and provide a little bit more detail as to how that planning went.

NATILE CRAVER [00:10:24]: Sure, thanks, Robert. I think a big piece of our Family First prevention planning work was really centered around always from day one making this a city-wide strategy. This wasn't going to be focused only on the limits of the federal legislation but how can we as an entire district come together and have a comprehensive prevention plan. So, under the leadership of director Brenda Donald, we convened this wonderful stakeholder group with all of the sister agency partners in our Health and Human Services cluster and we really defined from day one what are the most critical primary prevention needs across the city. And, as we continued to develop our plan and saw what would be reimbursable under Family First federal legislation, we saw a gap that we really needed to fill as supporting the community more broadly. And, our mayor Muriel Bowser put forward that we would be able to have a companion initiative called Families First D.C., which really focuses on neighborhood-based, community led Family Success Centers.

[00:11:31]: So, we targeted services to our most vulnerable families in neighborhoods in the District, wards seven and eight specifically, where we see the majority of our substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect coming from to say how can we really bring services to the communities, supports to the communities where risk is highest, but not dictate what that looks like. So, how do we engage our

families in creating really dynamic services to meet their needs that they define. So, we're standing up community advisory committees to help us really frame out and design what these Family Success Centers will look like, how they'll function and this year is really a planning year to work with the communities to define that together. We're not planning to launch these Family Success Centers until the fall, but at this point we have spent the year really working to define what do Family Success Centers look like in the District, how do we really support primary prevention and wrap that around the federal legislation so that we have a footprint.

TOM OATES [00:12:33]: So, if I'm hearing you right, you know, a lot of times the legislation comes down and I literally am talking about coming down, it comes down and then it's at state level and then at local levels. And so, it becomes a top down reaction. But, it sounds like with the District, it's become okay, we've got something from the federal government, this is good, how do we use this in our own bottoms up strategy, so it becomes - and it was, you know, something that when we were talking earlier before we recorded - it's a tool in the toolbox. And so, approaching Family First that way allows, like you mentioned, you know, city-wide and someone can interpret that by well, big state-wide, so it comes from the state capitol. That's not necessarily true if you're really talking about neighborhood communities and building up at the local level because you are truly trying to treat prevention as a community aspect. So, am I hearing that right?

NATILE CRAVER [00:13:28]: Absolutely. And, I think you saying a tool in the toolbox is absolutely right because we recognize that there's not gonna be one silver bullet to how prevention is going to be able to play out in a community, that's going to need to look different ways and different strategies will need to be put forward to really support families with different needs. So, Family First is going to meet the needs of some specific families that have engagement with our agency and may no longer be engaged but have previous involvement or are known to the child welfare system. And, as our director likes to define, you know, we are the child welfare agency but we are not the child welfare system. That takes all of our partners, all of our city-wide efforts and our social service agencies to come together and really support families and children. So, Families First D.C. really is one of those pieces to help strengthen families in their community so that child welfare involvement never has to occur or we're able to really help redirect families to community resources so that child welfare's involvement is very limited.

TOM OATES [00:14:35]: And so, D.C. has been on this journey, you know, we mentioned since 2010 and the pillars come introduced in 2012. In 2014 is when D.C. also began a Title IV-E waiver and so, CFSA has just wrapped up that five-year demonstration project. Can you walk me through what that entailed and really what did, you know, what did CFSA and what did the District learn from that?

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:15:01]: Sure, Tom. So, in the beginning stages of our Title IV-E waiver, CFSA was already thinking about how do we look at our prevention model, because it definitely incorporated some evidence-based services such as Project Connect, which is a substance use treatment type of modality and Home Builders, as well. And so, we actually targeted families who were substance use or substance exposed because we realized when you look at our child welfare data, there were a number of families where children were removed because of that particular reason and what type of evidence-based programs could be suited to assist in addressing some of those concerns and issues. What we recognized is with all of our efforts, these are good models - Project Connect, Home Builders are great models. However, what we realized in terms of the utilization and because of the duration of time of which families had to be involved was somewhat concerning or challenging for our families.

[00:16:16]: So, for instance, how many of our families that come to our attention were going to an office-based setting or be engaged with a substance use program for 9-12 months, taking into consideration a parent who has a history of addiction issues. So, we realized that prior to referring or getting them engaged to a program, how do we get the buy-in from those particular bio parents? How do we get them one, to first understand that they do have an addiction issue, that they're not in denial and then not being in denial, how do we then get them to buy-in to that you need help and assistance? And how can we as a child welfare agency assist in getting you that report. And we realized that most of the families did not necessarily want to be involved for 9-12 months, which in many terms was the definition for success. So, we realized that we had to redefine what success was.

[00:17:21]: If we had a substance use parent that was involved for six months and over time, they were able to cope or ensure the safety of their child, well, that's success. Just because they were not involved for 9-12 months doesn't mean it was not successful. So, as we began to look at the close of our IV-E waiver, we realized sure, we want to continue with Project Connect - which we now have brought in-house, versus contracting out. And we realized that not many of our families may want to stay involved that long. So, how do we then carve out a time or time frame for families that would be successful? So, we get the mother or the father engaged, not just necessarily in Project Connect, but could they get involved with another type of program as well? And it's looking at the level of intensity, too. So, you have to assess on the front end, is this the level of intensity that this parent needs taking into consideration everything else that they need to do.

[00:18:30]: And so, what we also learned, too, is that we need to bring our families to the table and the workers early on in the process, right? And so, there is an engagement period that we need to have with the families prior to. And, that allows there to be trust and a rapport with the worker and with the client. Because, we know if that trust is not built, they're not gonna follow through with any plan that they agency may, you know, suggest to them. So, with that, we've tried to really beef up our engagement and as a result of that, Tom, what we have internally are family peers. And these are individuals we've hired on a full-time basis who are parents who've had their kids removed but successfully reunified. They understand the child welfare agency, they understand the system and they can better relate to parents versus sometimes a worker and we've seen a lot of success in those parents who have a parent advocate to assist them through when they're involved with our agency.

TOM OATES [00:19:33]: Yeah, there is a great deal - and for folks listening, I want to make sure that I point you to some other episodes where we focus on exactly, you know, parent advocacy or parents as guardians. Or, I shouldn't say guardians, I'm sorry wrong word, guardians, but as mentors and where it's you know, somebody's got somebody else to talk to who's literally the lived experiences and can help them navigate the system, as well. So, now we start to shift in developing the Family First prevention plan and, you know, Natalie had mentioned, you know a stakeholder group and I understand that there was a Family First workgroup. Help me clarify, was the stakeholder group the same as the workgroup? Or was there a difference?

NATILE CRAVER [00:20:14]: That's right. So, our Family First prevention workgroup was our broad internal and external stakeholder engagement process. And, we brought together representatives from our mayor's office, our D.C. city council, our Health and Human Services cluster agencies including our homeless services and public benefits administrations, our Department of Health, a behavioral health administration who worked with mental health and substance abuse treatment and our Healthy Families Thriving Community Collaborative organizations that Robert spoke about earlier. So, we wanted to make sure that we had - and our family court system - so, we had full representation from all the

really key child welfare system partners to make sure that we from day one were defining a Family First city-wide plan that represented not just how we were gonna define candidacy in our target populations for Family First, but the broader needs of the District and how this Family First plan meets some of those needs and how we're going to address those other needs in other ways.

TOM OATES [00:21:18]: So now that the plan has been developed, what is CFSA doing to take advantage of, kind of, this collective group?

NATILE CRAVER [00:21:26]: That's a great question. So, we, during our planning process, which was about ten months - and we started early, in June of 2018, we brought that stakeholder group together which is a few months after the legislation passed - and we met for ten months until we submitted our plan in April of 2019 and we brought that group together about once a month to talk about candidacy, evidence-based services, we leaned on the findings Robert talked about from our waiver demonstration project to really understand what do we wanna do differently, now, how do we wanna offer services in a different way? Or what services do we think our target populations really need? So, we had a number of subcommittees that met that focused on exactly those questions, a target population subgroup, an evidence-based services subgroup and an upstream services subgroup so we could really think about primary prevention in that context.

[00:22:15]: So, those groups met for ten months and then we wrote our plan, we submitted our plan and we've been bringing the prevention workgroup back together quarterly to give them updates on how our implementation is going. We started this year after October of 2020 (2019) when Family First officially launched, we started a robust CQI subcommittee that meets each quarter to analyze the data we're seeing from service referrals so far and we meet with representatives from each of those sister agencies and community-based organizations to talk together about how we can continue to improve performance and look at where we may need to amend our plan in the future and add new services for our target populations. So, we're continuing to meet, we actually just met yesterday for our quarter two workgroup meeting.

TOM OATES [00:23:03]: So, this really gets back to that, you know, tool in the toolbelt of how does this group recognize what Family First can do for the District but also where the, kind of, what's a requirement, what's guidance and how you apply that, as well. And, a lot of times those questions come in for these workgroups for these states and jurisdictions working on their plans is about selecting programs and services. And looking at, you know, evidence-based versus something that may have some historical value to your constituencies. So, explain why you've got a number of programs in CFSA's plan that aren't part of the Title IV-E Clearinghouse right now. Give me a sense of why that's so and what's being done right now to address, you know, maybe funding some of these programs?

NATILE CRAVER [00:23:55]: Absolutely. Well, I think a really interesting piece for us in the District - and I know a number of other states and jurisdictions have similar situations - is we have a really robust implementation of both Medicaid funded services under our Department of Behavioral Health as well as MIECHV, the Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting grant. So, we already in the District had a number of different departments that receive federal funding for similar services. So, when we sat down together around the table to look at what's the existing service array in the District, what programs do we need additional funding for, where can we leverage Title IV-E specifically to support us under the new Family First legislation? We saw that a number of the well-supported programs already on the docket to be rated by the Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse were Medicaid funded or MIECHV funded.

[00:24:49]: So, we looked at what our capacity needs were, we looked at the services already existing in the District and we saw that really, we, to start off in year one had what we needed to really make sure our pipelines and our referral infrastructure was in place but we didn't necessarily feel like we needed to expand capacity right out the gate. We wanted to assess how well we were doing with our existing partnerships. And then we saw that we have a number of locally funded programs that we, through our partnerships over the years with our collaborative community have been funding a number - the parenting programming models, some now listed on the clearinghouse like the Nurturing Parenting Program. Others, like Effective Black Parenting that aren't currently listed on the clearinghouse, but we've seen evidence of effectiveness in the District. So, we weren't going to only put forward in our plan programs that we knew were going to be rated or had the potential to be rated, we wanted to put forward what's working here in the District, what do we already trust and believe in and see that families engage in and what we're seeing from our data is that Effective Black Parenting is the number one most requested service so far in our first two quarters of implementation and it's not yet on the list to be rated by the clearinghouse.

[00:25:58]: So, we weren't going to only put forward programs that would be claimable or allowable, we wanted to showcase all the interventions that currently are offered to our families and track those so we can see do we want to put forward an independent systematic review in the future while the clearinghouse is still rating programs? But, we are using local dollars to supplement and help fund some of those interventions that we, that are tried and tested and we believe in in the District.

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:26:26]: And Tom, if I could add - because I think Natalie just said a lot that is so important for other jurisdictions to also consider - that although the feds have this clearinghouse of evidence-based programs that are rated that right now you can use to get reimbursement, it is so critically important that states and jurisdictions actually take an assessment of first, what are the needs of your families? It is not important just to have such an array of services just to say you have so many services to choose from, but the services that you should have are those that address your current population - and that's what D.C. did. We looked at not only the services that we have but we also took an environmental scan on what are the needs of our families to ensure that both align and as you just stated, we do have within our plan services, evidence-based programs that are rated where we can get the federal reimbursement, but we also have those others that have not yet been rated but we know that these are supports that our families do need and then it is our job as a city - since we happen to have a city-wide plan - as to how can we resource those and fund those to ensure that our services is comprehensive enough, whether we get reimbursement or not, to address the needs of our communities.

TOM OATES [00:27:51]: And, I think the lesson out of this for - and thank you, Robert and Natalie for diving in so deep - the lesson for any other jurisdiction or state that's still working on their plan is you have the ability, in fact, you have the power to be flexible that you can leverage programs if you choose. But in turning around and saying what's your mission, your mission isn't exactly do everything that's listed in a document, in guidance, that's guidance and its provision and it tells you what can be reimbursed. So, go back to that phrase of tool in the toolbelt. Use it where you can, or apply it where you can. But, Robert, you bring up a great point of realize where you are as a state and so, you know, I'll point people to an upcoming episode that we're gonna have this exact conversation with folks from the State of Utah. Clearly a, you know, a different demographic - it's a, for one thing, it's a state versus what we're talking about, you know, the District of Columbia, which is unique in and of itself. And so, their

plan will be different just like every state's and jurisdiction's will be different and just giving the chance to be flexible on that.

[00:29:07]: So, you know, doing a little looking back, if you think about the development and the fact that the plan was approved, what would you look at as, kind of, the key to success, the must haves, that CFSA needed if you're kind of do this all over again? What would be the must haves to be able to develop and get approved your prevention plan?

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:29:30]: Well, let me start this. I would suggest everyone get them a Natalie Craver to start off with. Natalie came to CFSA really at the beginning of the stage but she has such, she's brought such energy and she's brought a lot of excitement to this, which for some may not have been as exciting. But, she was able to come in very quickly to understand and learn our system. She was able to quickly engage our partners. So, number one, being able to engage the partners that need to be at the table and not only that but to ensure that everyone has a voice at the table. Our work in child welfare is having meetings all day, every day. But I always say we need to have a meeting with a purpose. So, when we bring people together, we need to make sure that if we have a request and an ask that it's very clear and that everyone understands the objective and goal that we're trying to meet.

[00:30:32]: And, Natalie was able to do that in such a great way in a very short amount of time - and, again, it's probably because, too, that the District had this infrastructure built. So, we didn't feel like this was a real heavy lift, we've always had our partners at the table, they've always had a seat at the table. So, but it is a matter of to check and see who is missing from the table and once we were able to determine that, I think Natalie was able to bring them in and for us to have really focused discussions on what do our communities need, what do our families need and then what does everyone bring to the table to kind of fill in some of those gaps and holes. So, Natalie, I'm sure you probably want to fill in some other things.

NATILE CRAVER [00:31:18]: Thank you, Robert. That's extremely kind and I want to echo that I think one of the biggest drivers for success in the District I think really goes back to our leadership's commitment - so, director Donald, deputy director Robert Matthews - and really having that torch carried from day one to say we're committed to this, we're going to do this. Which makes it much easier for implementation staff like myself to be able to carry that mission and vision forward because we had all of our leadership at the table from day one. And it wasn't just an initiative that was child welfare is going to submit this plan and we're gonna send it to you, but it truly was leadership driven and the buy-in from every agency around the table so that individual staff who we'd have to call upon later and say come to this workgroup, let's answer some targeted questions knew that their leadership was also committed and bought into have them there. And, it wasn't a secondary priority but it was truly something that everyone in the District was rallied around and we were able to submit our plan so successfully, I think, because we had that consistent leadership commitment and staff at the table.

[00:32:29]: I think some of the other really important pieces were that we, as Robert said, had really focused and consistent meetings. We didn't let too much time go by, we kept our finger on the pulse of what questions we needed to answer and we had a rhythm. So, we were able to get our work done, submit our plan and then we've kept people engaged on a rhythm so we've had that consistent presence that people know to expect to hear from us and that we're gonna keep them engaged and informed. And then, two more pieces I'd say. Commitment to staffing, so including myself, having positions within your organization that can really focus on this work. And, we've built up the Community Partnerships Administration at CFSA, which is really focused on prevention and monitoring our

prevention service array, continuing to invest in CQI cycles to see how effective we can continue to make the programs.

[00:33:24]: So, having your staff be focused on prevention and making that a core part of the agency's business is something CFSA has done for a long time but with Family First has continued to expand, including the hiring of our staff for our Families First D.C. Initiative, which lives with CFSA. We're able to actually have dedicated staff to running and implementing that new program. And then finally, I think, which we spoke about earlier - vision first. So, we asked for forgiveness and not permission and I think that's a really big part of our work is we led with what we in the District needed and didn't look to the legislation to drive what we were going to submit as part of our plan.

TOM OATES [00:34:02]: And on the flipside, if you look back and were to start all over again, what would you have done differently?

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:34:08]: Well, that's a good question, Tom, and I'm probably pondering that as you asked it.

TOM OATES [00:34:12]: Besides hiring Natalie earlier.

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:34:14]: Right. I think what we would have done differently, because even as we began to build it out more, there's some technological needs that we probably could have thought early on instead of kind of doing it in a parallel. And I don't think we are the only jurisdiction that's had to grapple with that, because prior to this, I don't think jurisdictions thought about how do you track and monitor prevention factors in the area of child welfare. So, it's really trying to build out a whole technological apparatus to really track and monitor that and then be able to figure out how do you measure for success with that. So, it's also bringing your minds in the IT world to the table, as well during the development phase to ensure that they understand the business model so that you're not coming in on the backend trying to, you know, get them acclimated to understanding that. And that would just be for anyone, I think that would be so critically important.

TOM OATES [00:35:20]: This gets back to a little bit of a theme that here you guys mentioned in terms of the stakeholder group, in terms of the pillars and you know, Robert, you just mentioned roping in data and IT. Something you had credited director Brenda Donald was saying of we are the child welfare agency, we are not the child welfare system, the system is larger. So, I think one of big lessons that you've got here is being flexible and being holistic. Holistic in the entire approach and having a commitment that you guys have demonstrated here. And, guys, I thank you for your time, I thank you for your energy and everything that you have been going on and for folks who know a little bit about Child Welfare Information Gateway, we are, you know, most of our staff is located outside the D.C. area or right inside the District, as well, so these are our neighbors, here, and we're feeling pretty good and so glad you guys could spend the time here with us on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast. So, Robert Matthews, Natalie Craver, thank you guys so much for your energy, your dedication and your time.

ROBERT MATTHEWS [00:36:27]: Thank you, Tom.

NATILE CRAVER [00:36:29]: Thank you.

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Creating a Family First Prevention Plan – Washington, DC TRANSCRIPT

TOM OATES [00:36:31]: If you want to hear more about this check out recent episodes of the podcast where we share a webinar providing tips and experiences developing Family First implementation plans. Now, in those episodes titled “Family First: Title IV-E Prevention Plan Implementation Updates” - and that’s a two-part series - you’ll hear from Brenda Donald, the director of CFSA and Cosette Mills from the State of Utah, whose prevention plan has also been approved by CB. There’s also an episode surrounding a guide to implementing Family First developed by a series of organizations led by the Children’s Defense Fund. A lot of tips and questions answered about interpreting the Family First Prevention Services Act and the provisions within the act.

[00:37:14]: We’ll have a link to all those episodes and links to the District’s prevention plan and other resources surrounding prevention and Family First and you can find it all at www.childwelfare.gov, just search ‘podcast’ and you’ll find all our episodes there. We’ll also link you to another episode featuring Robert Matthews. We spoke to him specifically about the District’s community collaborations, which are funded in part from community-based child abuse prevention programs. Again, hey, you can subscribe to the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast on Apple Podcasts, GooglePlay, Spotify, Stitcher and SoundCloud. My thanks again to Robert Matthews and Natalie Craver with Washington, D.C.’s Child and Family Services Agency for their time and as always, my thanks to you. We appreciate all of you for being a part of this community and spending your time with us here on the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast. I’m Tom Oates, have a great day!

FEMALE NARRATOR [00:38:15]: Thanks for joining us for this edition of the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast. Child Welfare Information Gateway is available at www.childwelfare.gov and is a service of the Children’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. The views and opinions expressed on this podcast do not necessarily reflect on those of Information Gateway, or the Children’s Bureau.