**Foster Care**

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| Prevention #2: Collaborate across Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Divisions to expand services to youth residing in out-of-home placements, foster care, and adoptive family homes. |

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| **TEAM LEADERSHIP** |
| **Project Sponsors** | Jared Larsen, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare |
| **Team Chair(s)** | Laura Denner |
| **Team Reporter** | Alex Geffon |

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| **PURPOSE** |
| Connected Futures for Idaho Kids is a prevention-centered initiative designed to support Idaho youth residing in out-of-home placements—including foster care, kinship care, and adoptive homes—by strengthening collaboration across IDHW Divisions and with local nonprofits and community-based organizations.This project addresses the complex, interconnected needs of these youth by aligning efforts from state agencies and trusted community partners. Together, they will provide coordinated, trauma-informed, and youth-centered services aimed at preventing negative outcomes such as mental health crises, substance use, justice involvement, and disrupted transitions to adulthood.Through enhanced partnerships, early intervention, and culturally responsive care, the initiative builds protective factors like relational permanence, access to behavioral health care, life skills, and community belonging. The primary goals of this initiative are:1. Expand access to preventive and supportive services for youth in out-of-home care through cross-system coordination.2. Engage nonprofits and local organizations in service delivery, mentorship, advocacy, and aftercare supports.3. Prevent long-term system involvement, or system reinvolvement, by promoting stability, healing, and connectedness for youth and families.4. Strengthen collaboration between IDHW divisions and community partners to reduce service fragmentation and enhance impact. |

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| **ACTION ITEMS TO ACCOMPLISH** |
| **1.** | Mentorship opportunities for youth in out-of-home placements and at risk of being removed from the home (to prevent re-entry into placement) |
| **2.** | Improve engagement for caregivers (bio-families/foster caregivers/kinship/adoptive families) to access to existing support to prevent burnout and disruptive placement |
| **3.** | Platform for connecting faith-based communities with opportunities to meet tangible needs of Idaho families. |
| **4.** | Identify opportunities to minimize disruption to education involvement for children placed in out-of-home care. |

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| **PARAMETERS OR CONSTRAINTS** |
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| **HIGH-LEVEL RISKS** |
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| **IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS** |
| Laura Denner | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Family & Community Partnerships |
| Andie Blackwood | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Youth Safety and Permanency |
| Gina Judd | Friends of the Children (Eastern Idaho) |
| Ashtin Glodt | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Project Filter |
| Alex Geffon | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Family & Community Partnerships |
| Miriam Southern | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Behavioral Health  |
| Amy Curtis | Forever Bound Adoption |
| Taryn Yates | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Public Health, Idaho Home Visiting Program |
| Charlye Hahn | Kinship Resource Coordinator, lived experience expert |
| Casie Jones | Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Family and Community Partnerships |
| Kari Wardle | Lived Experience - Idaho Public Television |
| Megan Smith | Boise State University |
| Brenda Wilson | FYIdaho |
| Brandy Jones | Lived Experience – Student at Northwest Nazarene University |
| Beth Norton | Lived Experience – Idaho Office for Refugees |

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| **ADMINISTRATION** |
| **Meeting Cadence** | 4th Wednesday of each month |
| **Communication** |  |
| **Amendment Process** |  |
| **Dates Amended** |  |