

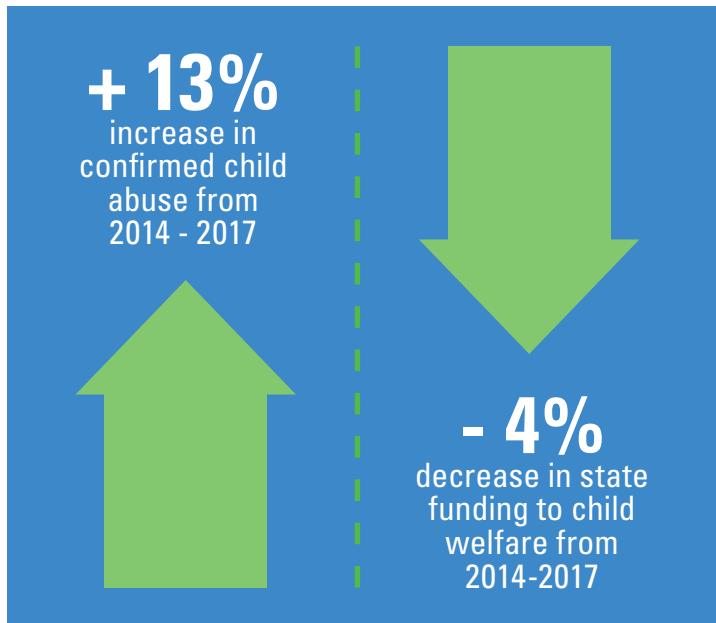
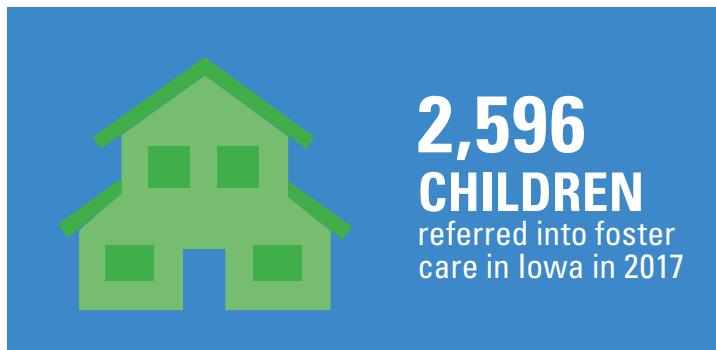


INVESTING IN A STRONG CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE



Iowa already faces critical shortages in its human services workforce. The state must invest now in order to prepare for sweeping changes to the child welfare landscape.

The Family First Prevention Services Act will take effect in July 2020. This federal legislation will dramatically alter how child welfare services are delivered in Iowa. In partnership with DHS, providers can be ready to meet the demands of this important law. But we can't do it without support.



The Family First legislation places an immense focus on keeping children in their own home and wrapping services around the entire family. It prioritizes prevention and necessitates that providers invest in intense new levels of training in evidence-based practices.

This requires a major shift from DHS and the providers with which it contracts. With the support of the state, providers are up to the challenge of helping Iowa meet its goals.

However, the system is stressed. Founded child abuse cases are on the rise. The state has a critical shortage of child welfare workers, including direct care workers, nurses, child psychiatrists, and mental health therapists. DHS child welfare budgets have remained flat, not accounting for the increase in case volume.

Iowa must invest now. Providers like LSI must have the start-up and maintenance funds and the time to prepare our workforce to meet the demands of Family First. This will require a significant fiscal investment to support evidence-based practices: \$10 million in FY2020, an additional \$10 million in FY2021, and an additional \$5 million in both FYs 2022 and 2023.

Now is the time to stabilize Iowa's child welfare system and prepare us for a bright future. That means supporting the dedicated workers who perform some of the most challenging work with the most traumatized children in the state.