



Building Evidence for Practices that Matter to Colorado's Children, Youth, and Families – *Spotlight on TF-CBT*

Background

The [Family First Prevention Services Act](#) incentivizes state systems and local agencies to move intentionally toward child welfare approaches that prioritize keeping kids safe and families together. This legislation authorizes federal reimbursement to states for the delivery of evidence-based services aimed at preventing the need for foster care. Colorado has put together a bold [Prevention Services Plan](#) for realizing this vision and maximizing prevention investments in child welfare that help Colorado's children, youth, and families to thrive, together.

The Colorado Department of Human Services has partnered with the Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab (Colorado Lab) to coordinate rigorous evaluations necessary to meet the evidence-based aspects of Family First requirements and ensure strategic investments in evidence-building for services/programs positioned to meet the needs of Colorado's children, youth, and families.

Programs included in Colorado's 5-Year Prevention Services Plan that are rated as "promising" or "supported" by the [Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#) require ongoing rigorous evaluation to build evidence towards a "well-supported" designation.

Why TF-CBT

As the coordinating hub for rigorous evaluation efforts, the Colorado Lab has selected the [Center for Policy Research](#) (CPR) to serve as the research team to build evidence for Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). TF-CBT was identified by stakeholders as a [mental health service positioned to drive well-being outcomes](#) for Colorado's children and youth. The practice is utilized throughout Colorado and targets children/youth ages 3 – 18 with a continuum of trauma histories. The programmatic, reach and access potential are high.

- TF-CBT is rated by the Title IV-E Clearinghouse as a promising practice.
- A Colorado-based ongoing rigorous evaluation of TF-CBT is among the federal requirements that are necessary to be met before Colorado can consider including this program in the state's Prevention Services Plan.

To build evidence towards a well-supported designation, the Center for Policy Research is designing and implementing a rigorous evaluation of TF-CBT that will help Colorado meet Family First requirements, identify what outcomes are best driven by this practice, and build capacity to scale, sustain, and lift this service in areas of need in Colorado.

The evaluation is being conducted on behalf of the State of Colorado, Colorado Department of Human Services, under the coordination of the Colorado Lab.