

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program, established under the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997, provides federal funding to enable states to develop and establish, or expand, and to operate coordinated programs of community-based family support services, family preservation services, time-limited family reunification services, and adoption promotion and support services. The purposes of PSSF are aligned with the broad federal policy goals of safety, permanency and well-being, particularly maintaining children in their own homes, providing families with enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs, and facilitating timely exits from foster care to reunification, adoption or guardianship.

Georgia's Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program (PSSF) provides federal child welfare funding, training and technical assistance to help build state and community capacity to meet the needs of families at risk of child welfare intervention and families in crisis. An important element of Georgia's child welfare program improvements is the development of a strengths-based, prevention-driven community response to vulnerable children and families. Families at greatest risk of entering Georgia's child protection system often have complex and interrelated problems such as poverty, unemployment, domestic violence, substance abuse and teen pregnancy which increase family stressors, impair family functioning and place children in situations where they may be unsafe. Children have the greatest chance for a safe and stable home environment when their parents and caregivers are knowledgeable of and have access to essential supports and services in their own communities.

PSSF objectives include:

- **Family Support** services to prevent child abuse and neglect among at-risk families. PSSF Family Support services are community-based prevention and early intervention services designed to prevent and reduce the risk of child maltreatment by promoting the well-being of the entire family.
- **Family Preservation** services to assure children's safety within the home and preserve intact families when maltreatment has occurred when the family's problems can be addressed effectively. PSSF Family Preservation services are provided to families that come to the attention of child welfare because of child abuse or neglect, child or parent behavioral challenges, or serious parent-child conflict so that families at risk or in crisis can be preserved and children safely maintained in their homes when families receive intensive support and therapeutic services to improve family functioning and stability, as an alternative to placement in out-of-home care.
- **Time-Limited Reunification** services to address the problems of families whose children have been placed in foster care so that reunification, and other permanency options, may occur in a safe and timely manner in accordance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act and to help sustain reunification. PSSF Time-Limited Reunification services are time-limited, intensive support services provided to a child with a plan of safe, appropriate, and timely reunification or other permanency option and to the parents or primary caregiver of the child. These services may be provided to families while the child is in foster care to facilitate reunification and after the child returns from foster care to sustain permanency.
- **Adoption Promotion and Post-Permanency Support** to promote and support adoptions and other permanency options, to prevent disruption or dissolution, and to help prepare youth for the transition to independent adult living. **PSSF Adoption Promotion and Post-Permanency Support** services are designed to encourage and support permanency for children through adoption, when adoption is in the best interest of the child, or guardianship. Services may also be provided to support families after adoption to prevent disruption, and to provide additional support to youth who may not achieve permanency, pre- and post-emancipation.

PSSF resources have been strategically invested to enhance DFCS's capacity to identify and meet the needs of families at the community level and to expand state-funded child protection and placement service programs. Georgia PSSF funding is used to support DFCS priorities and support children and families most at risk. Contracts

with local service providers throughout the state make services available to children and families based on the State's priorities and coinciding local needs assessments.

For more information and a list of current PSSF service providers please visit our website at www.pssfnet.com