



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

The Hon. Tinee Furbert, JP MP

Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors

DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Family Preservation Tier II Program Progress Update

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Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update this Honourable House on the progress of the Family Preservation Tier II Programme an initiative launched in alignment with the Government's 2024 commitment to strengthen supports within the social and youth development sectors.

Mr. Speaker, as part of this commitment, the Department of Child and Family Services was tasked with reintroducing an intensive, community-based model of family intervention, historically known as CMIT. This enhanced model—now formally established as Family Preservation Tier II, operates as a specialised extension of the Department's existing Family Preservation Team. Its purpose is clear: to provide acute, high frequency intervention to families whose circumstances place their children at elevated risk of future abuse or neglect.

Mr. Speaker, the need for this programme is grounded in clear and compelling data. Thirty percent (30%) of families served by Family Preservation were assessed as being at high risk for future child abuse or neglect. Family Strengths and Needs Assessments conducted during this period revealed significant concerns in parenting skills, coping skills and mental health, resource management and basic needs, and

substance use. **Mr. Speaker**, these findings mirror broader departmental trends, where parenting capacity and coping skills have consistently emerged as the most significant areas of need among families receiving services.

Mr. Speaker, families with these profiles require **intensive intervention**, defined by increased frequency of contact, in-home coaching, and community-based support. Research and practice both confirm that when contact increases, assessment accuracy improves, intervention becomes more effective, and the timeframe for reducing risk shortens.

Mr. Speaker, the Tier II programme aims to empower families to overcome adversity by addressing both immediate crises and long-term needs. The model focuses on building resilience, strengthening protective factors, and fostering meaningful community connections. Through direct one to one support, in home coaching, and community-based services, the programme provides practical assistance at a grassroots level. Families benefit from strengthened functioning and cohesion, enhanced parenting capacity through education, modelling and coaching, and improved advocacy and access to essential community resources such as housing, financial assistance, healthcare, education, and employment. The programme is designed to reduce risk factors contributing to child protection involvement and to promote sustainable change, improved coping, and long-term independence.

Mr. Speaker, staff onboarding for Family Preservation Tier II was completed in February 2026. All team members have undergone comprehensive orientation training to ensure they are fully equipped to deliver the level of service required for high-risk families. Training has included Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Families, SCARS, mandatory reporting and investigation skills, legislation training, court report writing, strategies for working with high-risk families, hoarding assessment and intervention, professional deportment and standards, activities of daily living, and structured approaches to in-home intervention. Ongoing in-service training will continue as the programme matures, with regular reviews of what is working well and areas requiring improvement.

Mr. Speaker, at present, ten (10) families have been referred to the Tier II programme from both the Family Preservation and Foster Care teams, with additional referrals

currently being processed. Early feedback indicates that families are engaging well with the model and that workers are advancing in building rapport with families to address complex needs through structured, high contact intervention.

Mr. Speaker, the Family Preservation Tier II Programme represents a significant step forward in our commitment to safeguarding Bermuda's children and strengthening families. By investing in intensive, community-based intervention, we are breaking cycles of risk, building resilience, and supporting families in achieving long term stability and wellbeing. This Government remains steadfast in its dedication to ensuring that every child in Bermuda is safe, supported, and given the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.