

Section I – General Information

Introduction

Washington State Population & Population Growth

Washington State Demographics (U.S. Census Bureau)

The State of Washington has a population of approximately 6,664,195 (2009 estimate) which represents a 13.1% increase since the 2000 census. The state is comprised of 39 counties, nine counties lie within the “Interstate 5 corridor” on the west side of the state. These nine counties contain approximately 68% of the total state population.

There are six population centers with over 100,000 people:

West Side of State: Seattle (King County); Tacoma (Pierce County); Vancouver (Clark County) and Everett (Snohomish County)

East Side of State: Spokane (Spokane County) and the Tri-Cities - Richland, Pasco and Kennewick (Benton & Franklin Counties)

Child Population of Washington

Washington State Office of Financial Management

Estimated 2010 Washington State Population of Children / Youth by Race

Race	White	Hispanic Origin	Asian and Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	African American	Native American	Totals
0-4 yrs	354,395	66,427	37,203	36,005	17,925	8,349	494,030
5-9 yrs	351,675	66,589	36,106	29,258	15,715	7,994	483,627
10-14 yrs	352,154	71,298	31,959	26,495	21,229	8,916	481,906
15-19 yrs	378,644	66,068	36,285	23,297	22,925	10,443	504,294
Totals	1,436,868	270,382	141,553	115,054	77,794	35,702	1,963,857
Pop. %	69%	13%	7%	5%	4%	2%	100%*

*Percentages rounded to the nearest 0.0%

Percentage of children in care by race as of January 1, 2009:

Caucasian	53.20%
Native American	16.60%
African American	15.00%
Hispanic	11.80%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.10%
Other	0.60%
Unreported	0.40%
Unknown	0.40%

Department of Social & Health Services

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is an integrated organization of programs working in partnership for statewide impact to help transform lives. Each year, more than 2.2 million children, families, vulnerable adults and seniors come to DSHS for protection, comfort, food assistance, financial

aid, medical and behavioral health care and other services. DSHS programs are working together in new and effective ways to meet the complex needs of children and families in need. Washington is a state administered human services system.

One Department, One Vision, One Mission, One Core Set of Values:

The DSHS mission statement was changed in 2009, to reflect DSHS's values. The words "community" and "partnership" were added to clearly articulate the belief that government cannot and should not ensure human services and welfare alone. Child welfare is a shared responsibility. The department is committed to serve the state's citizens by acting as One Department, aligning services and leveraging resources within the department and throughout the community, to meet the multiple needs of the people of Washington.

- Vision
 - Safe, healthy individuals, families, and communities.
- Mission
 - The Department of Social and Health Services will improve the safety and health of individuals, families and communities by providing leadership and establishing and participating in partnerships.
- Values
 - Excellence in Service, Respect, Collaboration and Partnership, Diversity, and Accountability.
- Orientations
 - Early childhood development, Person- and family-centered, and strengths-based practices
- Our Impact
 - Together we will decrease poverty, improve safety and health status of citizens, increase educational and employment success and support people and communities in reaching their potential.

DSHS administrations and programs include:

- Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA)
 - Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
- Children's Administration (CA)
- Communications
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Diversity Affairs
- Economic Services Administration (ESA)
- Financial Services
- Government and Community Relations
- Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (GJJAC)
- Health and Recovery Services Administration (HRSA)
 - Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery
- Office of Indian Policy
- Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA)
- Planning, Performance and Accountability (PPA)
- Special Commitment Center; Specialized mental health treatment for violent predators
- Vocational Rehabilitation

Children's Administration

The Children's Administration is one of five administrations within DSHS and has the primary responsibility for protecting vulnerable children and strengthening and supporting their families. The Children's Administration is a state-administered child welfare system with case management provided by state employees and contracts for service delivery for all child protection and child welfare services in Washington.

The Administration engages in practices, provides services and resources, and works collaboratively with communities in alignment with the DSHS mission to improve the safety and health of individuals, families, and communities by providing leadership and participating in partnerships.

The Children's Administration interfaces often with the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA), Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA), specifically, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), and the Health and Recovery Services Administration (HRSA), specifically, the Division of Behavioral Health, for

placement and services needs of dependent children and their families. The Children's Administration collaborates on a consistent basis with the Economic Services Administration (ESA) to help meet the financial and other basic needs of our families.

Clients

About three percent of the Washington state population is impacted by Children's Administration activities. More than 209,000 individuals benefited either from direct or ancillary services provided by the Administration in State Fiscal Year 2008 representing 10 percent of the entire Department of Social and Health Services client population.

In Fiscal Year 2009, the Administration received more than 91,000 new requests for services. We received more than 75,000 referrals alleging child abuse or neglect and more than 16,000 voluntary requests for services. Nearly 37,000 allegations of abuse or neglect were accepted for investigation concerning more than 42,000 children.

On any given day during the most recent fiscal year, about 10,000 children were living in an out-of-home placement. Over 3,800 of those children were cared for by relatives. In Fiscal Year 2009 the Administration placed 406 children into new guardianships, facilitated the adoptions of 1,701 children and returned more than 4,700 children to their homes.

Values and Goals

Secretary Dreyfus appointed Denise Revels Robinson as Assistant Secretary of the Children's Administration effective October 19, 2010. Assistant Secretary Denise Revels Robinson has established the following themes and goals to guide the work of the Children's Administration.

The work of the Children's Administration is guided by the following themes:

1. Accountability
2. Partnership
3. Quality
4. Consistency

Child safety is at the center of CA's work. Cultural competency, early childhood development, and person and family centered strengths will be integrated into all aspects of our work.

Goals

- Safely reduce the number of children in out-of-home care in Washington.
- Refine our efforts to keep children safely in their own homes and prevent out-of-home placement.
- Increase supports for relatives caring for children involved in the child welfare system
- Safely reduce the disproportionate number of children of color in the child welfare system
- Increase compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act
- Continue to improve communication with our partners
- Reinforce the role of social work supervisors regarding child safety
- Prepare adolescents and young adults with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to achieve their life goals.

Children's Administration - Structure

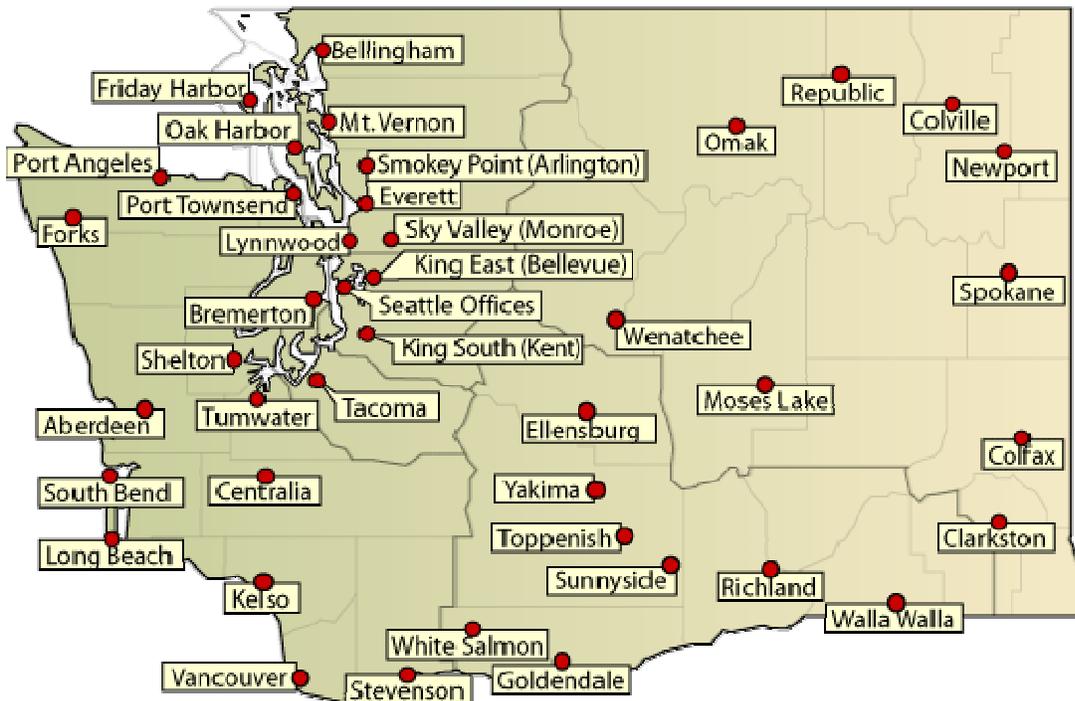
The Children's Administration has approximately 2,700 employees and is organized into six (6) geographic regions. All direct client services are being provided locally through forty-six (46) field offices.



The Children's Administration provides services to Washington children and their families in the following general areas:

- Child protective services
- Out-of-home placement services
- In-home services and supports
- Foster care licensure, monitoring, abuse and neglect investigation, and support
- Pre-adoptive and post adoptive services
- Supports for older youth, including those who are transitioning out of foster care
- Educational advocacy and services
- Domestic Violence services

All of the services Children's Administration provides, both direct and ancillary, are aimed toward the primary goals of keeping children safe, families stable, and improving overall well-being for the children and families serviced by the Department.



- Region 1 - Spokane, Colville, Newport, Clarkston, Colfax, Moses Lake, Wenatchee Republic, Omak
- Region 2 - Yakima, Ellensburg, Toppenish, Sunnyside, Goldendale, White Salmon, Richland, Walla Walla
- Region 3 - Everett, Lynnwood, Sky Valley, Smokey Point, Mt. Vernon, Oak Harbor, Friday Harbor, Bellingham
- Region 4 - King West-Harrison, King South-Kent, King East-Bellevue, Martin Luther King Jr., White Center, Office of Indian Child Welfare (ICW)
- Region 5 – Pierce East, Pierce West, Bremerton
- Region 6 - Tumwater, Centralia, Kelso, Vancouver, Aberdeen, Forks, Port Angeles, Stevenson, Long Beach, Shelton, South Bend, Port Townsend

Children’s Administration – Work Priorities

2106 Legislation

- Implement performance based contracts.
- Reduce number of service contracts.
- Build and strengthen service capacity statewide.

Braam Settlement Agreement

- Manage compliance with settlement requirements.
- Demonstrate improved practice in serving children and families.

Child Safety

- Improve safety assessment and safety planning with children and families.
- Complete initial face to face contacts with CPS investigations with emergent response times (i.e., 24 hours) at 100%
- Complete initial face to face contacts with CPS investigations with non-emergent response times (i.e., 72 hours) at 95%
- Complete monthly health and safety visits

FamLink - Washington's SACWIS

- Use data to inform day to day practice.
- Accuracy, integrity of data, and timely input of data to track and measure progress.

Federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR)

- Plan and prepare for on-site review the week of September 13, 2010.
- Maximize diverse community input and involvement in planning and on-site review process.

Foster Parents

- Maximize communication and participation
- Increase support
- Expand partnership
- Promote professional development

Parent Mentoring and Advocacy

- Veteran parents are influential and vital to the process of engaging parents involved with Children's Administration
- Provide a necessary bridge between parents entering the system and child welfare staff

Indian Child Welfare

- Comply with all the federal requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).
- Improve practice and outcomes for Indian children and families.

Professional Development of Supervisors

- Reinforce role of supervisor regarding child safety
- Maintain learning environment
- Strengthen assessment skills and improve child safety.
- Cultural competency, early childhood development, and person and family centered strengths will be integrated in all aspects of our work

Racial Disproportionality

- Safely reduce the over representation of children of color in the child welfare system.
- Children of color are over represented at time of referral, decision to place, length of stay in out of home care.
- Achieve equitable outcomes at each decision point among children and families of all races and ethnicities

Redesign of Behavioral Rehabilitative Services for Adolescents

- Reduce out-of-home placement by increasing in-home family-based services, when appropriate
- Safely reduce length of stay in group and residential care using wraparound services
- Build capacity for therapeutic foster homes to serve adolescents

Relatives/Kinship Care

- Enhance services and supports for relatives caring for children
- Timely permanence for children placed with relatives

Practice Model - Solution Based Casework (SBC)

- Increase focus on child safety during case consultation, training curriculum and training
- Refine message in consultation provided by SBC coaches to Children's Administration staff

Collaborative Efforts

Children's Administration cannot accomplish this work in isolation. We need our partners, stakeholders, and community groups working collaboratively with us and we are looking for new ways to partner in improving the system.

Comprehensive Advocacy for Public Child Welfare

There is widespread advocacy for public child welfare in all three branches of Washington state government. This advocacy is evidenced by the ongoing support and commitment of the State Legislature, Superior Courts, Administrative Office of the Courts, the Governor and the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman. Year in and year out the State Legislature looks to provide greater support to children, families and social workers. From insuring staffing levels of social workers, funding innovative services and insisting on greater accountability by both State and private agencies the State Legislature is an active partner to improve child welfare in Washington State. The Superior Courts are active participants with Children's Administration in redesigning the processes and procedures at court. Ongoing participation by Judges, Commissioners and Court staff in both statewide and local efforts have resulted in a greater accountability to the wellbeing each child. When complaints are made concerning Children's Administration the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman is available to investigate these concerns in a fair and objective manner. The Ombudsman's office is an invaluable resource to children, families and Children's Administration to identify system-wide issues and recommend appropriate changes in public reports to the Governor, the Legislature and agency officials.

Commission on Children in Foster Care

Co-chaired by Justice Bridge and CA Assistant Secretary Revels Robinson, the Commission of Children in Foster Care plays a key collaborative role in the operation and practice of the Children's Administration. The Commission's mission and vision are in line with CA to assure that all children in foster care are provided with safe and permanent families to support, nurture, and guide their physical, emotional, intellectual development.

The goals of the Commission are to: monitor and report on the extent to which child welfare programs and courts are responsive to the needs of the children in care; to increase public awareness of, and support for, meeting the needs of children and families in foster care; and to institutionalize collaboration of individual agency directors and elected officials. The Commission also serves as an oversight body to Washington's CFSR process.

Tribal Partnerships

There are twenty-nine federally recognized tribes in Washington.

- Colville Confederated Tribes
- Confederated Tribes Of Chehalis
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Hoh Indian Tribe
- Jamestown Band Of Klallam Indians
- Kalispel Indian Tribe
- Lower Elwha Tribal Community
- Lummi Indian Tribe
- Makah Indian Tribe
- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Nooksack Indian Tribe
- Port Gamble Sklallam Indian Tribe
- Puyallup Indian Tribe
- Quileute Indian Tribe
- Quinault Indian Tribe
- Samish Indian Tribe
- Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe
- Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe
- Skokomish Indian Tribe
- Snoqualmie Tribe (Cziteus Clan)
- Spokane Indian Tribe
- Squaxin Island Indian Tribe
- Stillaguamish Indian Tribe
- Suquamish Indian Tribe
- Swinomish Indian Tribe
- Tulalip Indian Tribes
- Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
- Yakama Indian Nation

There are four tribes in Washington which have IVE status; the Lummi, Makah, Port Gamble Sklallam, and Quinault Indian Tribes. In addition to Federally Recognized Tribes/Nations, CA also recognizes through policy American Indian Organizations, and American Indian participants.

CA has a strong commitment to partnerships with, and the recognition of, Government to Government relationships between the State and Indian Tribes/Nations. Coordinated efforts to improve and strengthen child welfare services in all parts of the state are supported through the maintenance and monitoring of:

- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Washington State Centennial Accord
- Washington State Basic Tribal State Agreement

- Washington State Localized Tribal State Agreements
- DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01

DSHS staff support for these goals is provided through Indian Policy and Support Services (IPSS) staff and their director who serve all the administrations of DSHS in each of the 6 regions. The IPSS promotes communications between DSHS programs and all Indian people while recognizing unique government to government relationships. The Director of IPSS is on the DSHS Management Team and is able to bring up any issues that arise in Indian Country with the Secretary's Leadership Team.

Children's Administration has a statewide Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Manager located in Olympia and an Associate located in the field. The ICW Associate's major responsibilities are contract management and internal policy collaboration with Children's Administration and tribal staff for ICW matters throughout the state. The ICW Manager is part of the Assistant Secretary's Management Team and is able to convey ICW issues that arise from the Tribes/Nations or Regional staff. In addition there are ICW liaisons located in each of the six regions and several ICW units located in the larger urban offices of the State.

The ICW Manager works closely with the Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) Children's sub-committee with on-going issues and policies that affect ICW. This body meets on a monthly basis to collaborate and coordinate program issues, legislative issues, and issues specific to tribal communities and state relations.

IPAC membership is comprised of delegates appointed by resolution from the 29 Federally Recognized Tribes, and letters of appointment from the Recognized Indian Organizations Board of Directors. IPAC meets on a quarterly basis and also appoints representatives to Children's Administration workgroups, advisory committees, and ad hoc committees for the purpose of tribal representation.

Quarterly ICW meetings are held in each of the six DSHS regions to address the 7.01 Policy. The 7.01 Policy is a DSHS policy that outlines the implementation of the government to government relationship as directed in the Washington State Centennial Accord. Regional plans result from these meetings and the development of strategies to measure and track local accomplishments and identify barriers. IPAC also utilizes these regional plans to develop and address the two highest priorities identified on an administration wide basis.

Highlights of Accomplishments:

A remediation plan to address Indian Disproportionality developed strategies to reduce Disproportionality and disparity throughout the child welfare system has been developed by Children's Administration staff, the Disproportionality Committee, and the tribes. Implementation began in 2009 and continues with regular monitoring and review by all parties.

In 2004, as a result of the CFSR review, work begun to develop an ICW review tool by tribal and state staff to measure quality assurance for state compliance to state and federal ICW requirements. The first review was conducted in 2007. The results from this review lead to the development of regional and statewide implementation plans to improve ICW practice throughout the regions. This review will occur each biennium and is conducted by tribal and state teams.

Court Partnerships

Court Improvement Program (CIP)

The CIP in Washington has been working closely with Children's Administration for a number of years. The collaboration has led to significant court and service improvements for children and their families. Examples of CIP efforts include:

- Reasonable Efforts Symposia (RES) conferences held annually in 7 locations around the state. Symposium planning is at the direction of the local communities and is comprised of representatives from the juvenile courts, DSHS, Children's Administration, the Attorney General's office, public defenders, private service providers, and CASA/GAL programs. Judicial officers are encouraged to take a leadership role in symposium planning and participation. Using the same facilitator for all the reasonable efforts programs has provided continuity for each region and coordination between the regions.
- King County is a National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) Model Court
- Family Drug Treatment Courts established in several counties

- Funding a pilot for to evaluate parents' attorneys programs
- Funding the Office of Public Defense (OPD) to establish standards for professionals evaluating children and parents involved in child welfare cases, and conduct statewide training on these standards for experts and evaluators
- Providing funding to establish Parent to Parent Programs in Pierce, Kitsap, and Grays Harbor counties

The Court Improvement Training Academy (CITA)

CITA was established at the University of Washington - School of Law in 2006 and is funded by a contract with the Administrative Office of the Courts using federal Court Improvement Program training funds. CITA began serving the legal community in Washington State in September 2007.

One of a number of training offerings is, the "Table of 10," an innovative 2 day training and process involving judicial and court personnel, Children's Administration managers, and other community partners. The goal is for the group to identify ways to improve the court process and allow for safe reunification in a more timely way.

Each "Table of 10" consists of 10 individuals who are viewed as being leaders in a particular county's child welfare legal system. These individuals could be judicial officers, lawyers, GALs, CASAs, social workers, service providers, or any other person who is viewed in the community as a leader in the field. Table of 10 members choose desired outcomes to work on improving in the county and develop objective goals and implementation strategies as part of the program. Each table of 10 is supported by CITA on a quarterly basis with access to training by an expert in the field the Table of 10 designates.

A "Table of 10" is currently active in seven Washington counties; Kitsap, Lewis, Skagit, Stevens/Ferry, Thurston, Whatcom and Snohomish.

The Parents Representation Program

The Parents Representation Program, managed by the Washington State Office of Public Defense, has been in 25 of the 39 counties since 2007. The Parents Representation Program provides legal representation to approximately two-thirds of the parents involved in dependency and termination proceedings. Unique attributes of the Parents Representation Program include; attorneys access to Parents Representation Program Social Workers, expert funding, OPD support and enhanced child welfare and legal training.

The program was implemented by the Washington state legislators with five primary goals:

1. Reduce the number of continuances requested by attorneys; including those based on their unavailability;
2. Set maximum caseload requirements per full-time attorney. In 2003, OPD set the fulltime maximum caseload at 80 open cases per attorney.
3. Enhance defense attorneys' practice standards, including reasonable time for case preparation and the delivery of adequate client advice;
4. Support the use of investigative and expert services in dependency cases; and
5. Ensure implementation of indigency screenings of parents, guardians, and legal custodians.

Youth Partnerships

Passion to Action - For Young People - By Young People

Passion to Action is an advisory board developed in April 2005 by Children's Administration, in partnership with Casey Family Programs and College Success Foundation to serve in an advisory function, providing the Administration with input and recommendations regarding their policy and practices. The board consists of approximately twenty current and former foster youth from around the state who have experienced foster care. A full board will have at least two members from each of the six regions in WA. Ages of Board members range from 14 to 24.

As youth and alumni of foster care system, Passion to Action members, advocate for positive change and collaborate with others to develop innovative alternatives to existing and potential problems facing foster youth. Members hold a deep commitment to create and facilitate change to ensure that the needs of children/youth in foster care are met, and that they have opportunities to succeed in life.

The Passion to Action organization and the network of individuals and groups that work to empower youth advise Children's Administration on practices, policies, and procedures impacting youth. They meet every other month in

with Children's Administration representatives to discuss strengths, challenges and needs of the agency. Examples of input and perspective provided:

- Feedback New policies/practices
- Representatives serve on various committees within Children's Administration and other governmental agencies, as well as community agencies to provide input on new practices, policies, etc.
- Review documents to be put in to practice (ex. House bills, policies, brochures, etc)
- Mentor foster youth on services/supports available
- Presence on local action/support groups for foster youth and alumni in our regions
- Provide presentations at various functions within Children's Administration, as well as, in the community to share their stories, offer their expertise, and provide feedback on current issues

The Mockingbird Society

Children's Administration is fortunate to have a long standing partnership with The Mockingbird Society which holds a deep seeded belief and commitment that a world-class foster care system is possible. That vision is key for all child welfare partners to move closer to that goal. Change is brought about by engaging youth, alumni and families involved in the foster care system in public policy development and improvement. Such leadership has created programs such as The Mockingbird Network and The Mockingbird Family Model to improve the current and future lives of children, youth and families and to ensure their voices are heard.

This approach for positive change includes:

- System reform of public policy and legislation
- Creation of a new foster family service model, and
- Involvement of youth, alumni and caregivers in advocating for system improvement and reform

Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Administrations (JRA) Partnership

In order to increase cross-system collaborations to improve response to youth and families jointly served by Children's Administration and Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration efforts are underway to:

- Improve discharge planning for youth exiting JRA facilities and county detention centers by revising local agreements to:
 - clearly identify lead responsibility,
 - develop a process to begin discharge planning at entry,
 - involve families in meeting the needs of youth, and
 - create opportunities for joint involvement in shared planning meetings.
- Increase joint placement resources by recruiting and retaining foster families skilled to care for adolescents with criminal histories.
- Work to increase availability of mental health services.
- Increase capacity to comprehensively search for relatives of youth by leveraging joint system resources.

Children's Administration and the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

38,000 Washington residents have a qualifying developmental disability. About 18,000 are under age eighteen and 20,000 are eighteen or older. When issues arise concerning child abuse or neglect with parents and or children who are developmentally disabled; or when a child's fragile medical condition requires specialized care, the coordination of services between DDD and Children's Administration is critical to child safety. To support this partnership policies and procedures are in place from in-home services, daycare and educational advocacy to out-of-home placements, respite care and independent living services. DSHS will continue to strive to meet the needs of the family by the efficient coordination of case management and services.

Casey Family Programs

Casey Family Programs has been a key partner in efforts to achieve positive outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system in Washington. The financial support from Casey Family Programs has allowed Children's Administration to implement many system improvements in a number of areas:

- Practice Model Implementation
- Disproportionality Committee Remediation Plan
- Safely reducing the number of children in foster care
- Safely reducing the length of stay

- Ensuring more timely permanency

Partners for Our Children

Understanding the effectiveness of innovations to child welfare practices is essential to make lasting changes for the safety, permanency and wellbeing of children. Partners for Our Children at the University of Washington - School of Social Work, has partnered with Children's Administration to:

- Evaluate the impact of the Solution Based Casework practice model
- Development an effective Solution Based Casework curriculum for training Children's Administration Staff, Administrators and our community partners
- Research issues around Family Reunification, Placement Stability and Youth "aging out" of care

Among a number of POC's research/surveys, is a baseline survey of Solution Based Casework (SBC), which illustrates a disconnect between what social workers identify as issues for parents/families to address, such as mental health and drug and alcohol issues as the most important needs to be addressed by parents, and what families identify the most pressing and critical issues to be addressed, such as basic needs; food, housing and transportation. This is of significance as SBC always starts with the plan to address family level Objectives and then moves to the individual issues that are hindering the person's ability to adequately address child safety issues. As child safety is paramount, both must be addressed if lasting change is to occur.

Annie E. Casey & Stuart Foundations - Family to Family (F2F)

Washington began implementing F2F in 2004. The Children's Administration is working to build the F2F infrastructure into the child welfare practice in each region of the state. This initiative supported by the Stuart Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation encompasses principles, strategies, value driven goals and tools to achieve improved outcomes for children and their families.

At its core, F2F applies four basic principles:

- A child's safety is paramount;
- Children belong in families;
- Families need strong communities; and
- Public child welfare systems need partnerships with the community and with other systems to achieve strong outcomes for children.

F2F relies on a variety of strategies for reforming child welfare systems. The initiative's technical assistance team has developed numerous tools to assist partner sites in implementing these core approaches. Although each of these strategies has proven effective in one or more sites, 4 strategies are deemed integral to the initiative:

- **Building Community Partnerships**, which entails establishing relationships with a wide range of community partners in neighborhoods where referral rates are high, and collaborating to create networks of supports for families involved with the child welfare system.
- **Family Team Decision Making**, which involves not just foster parents and caseworkers, but also birth families and community members in all placement decisions to ensure a network of support for children and the adults who care for them.
- **Recruitment, Development, and Support of Caregivers**, which involves recruiting and maintaining foster and kinship homes that can support children and families in their own neighborhoods.
- **Self-Evaluation**, in which teams of analysts, data managers, frontline managers and staff, and community partners collect, analyze, and interpret data about key Family to Family outcomes to assess whether we are making progress and to determine how policy and practice needs to be changed to bring about further improvement.

Between 2004 and 2009, Children's Administration benefited from funding and substantial technical assistance from both Annie E. Casey and Stuart Foundations. The assistance was well received. Nevertheless, the development and implementation of the F2F initiative has been inconsistent, with wide regional variations in resource allocations and results achieved. Without a comprehensive plan, consistent commitment and ongoing program management, essential follow-up and consolidation suffered.

Initiatives

The Children's Administration is implementing several strategic initiatives which support quality practice and form the foundation to meet the critical tasks incumbent upon the public agency charged to provide safe homes for vulnerable children.

Disproportionality- Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee

In response to legislation passed in 2007 the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee (WSRDAC) was established in order to analyze and make recommendations on the disproportionate representation of children of color in the Washington State child welfare system. The primary goal of these efforts is the elimination of racial Disproportionality and racial disparities in the state child welfare system without compromising child safety or lowering the quality of services.

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) conducted research which was published in the June 2008 **Report on Disproportionality in Washington State** that detailed these findings:

Disproportionality exists for African American, American Indian, and Hispanic children in the child welfare system. The greatest Disproportionality for children of color occurs at three points:

- When the decision is made to refer a child to CPS
- When the decision is made to remove a child from home
- When a child is in placement for longer than two years

Additional key findings included:

- African American, American Indian and Hispanic children are referred into the child welfare system at disproportionate rates, indicating that Disproportionality exists even prior to a case being accepted.
- American Indian children are almost three times as likely to be referred to CPS as White children. 1.6 times as likely to be removed from home and 2.2 times as likely to remain in foster care for over two years.
- African American children are almost twice as likely as White children to be referred to CPS and are 1.2 times more likely to be removed from home and 1.5 times more likely to remain in foster care for over two years.
- Hispanic children are 1.3 times as likely to be referred to CPS as White children; however, they are no more likely to be removed from home or to remain in foster care for over two years.

The WSRDAC established a 10 point remediation initiative plan:

1. The practice of Structured Decision Making (SDM) should be studied to determine impact on reducing Disproportionality for affected children at the decision point of removal from home.
2. Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) should be assessed to determine impact on Disproportionality at the decision point of removal from home and on length of stay.
3. Kinship Care policies should be implemented to ensure equitable services and supports for children and families in kinship care in order to impact both removal from home and length of stay
4. Compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA): The Indian Child Welfare Case review Model developed in collaboration with Tribal partners and the Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) should be the anchor for an enhanced ICW quality improvement/compliance measurement system.
5. Consider enactment of a Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act: Study the impact that a state-level ICW act has had in Iowa.
6. Expand Cultural Competency and Anti-racism training. Ongoing anti-racism training such as Undoing Racism for all Children's Administration and child placing agency staff, volunteers, contractors, and others involved in the child welfare system.
7. The Mandated Reporter Training should be revised to increase awareness of racial disproportionality and the impact of race and racism on reporting decisions.
8. The Children's Administration's service providers and child placing agencies should assess their organizational cultural competency and commitment to the elimination of racial Disproportionality. The assessment is to be conducted using the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators' (NAPCWA) Disproportionality Diagnostic Tool.
9. DSHS and other agencies should implement the Racial Equity Impact Analysis Tool to review policies and practices.

10. Explore implementation of in-home community- based services as a preventative measure to reduce the need for out-of-home placement and study impact that these services have had on reducing Disproportionality and disparity in other states.

Remediation Plan Implementation Progress

Each region has established a Disproportionality group with representation from Children's Administration leadership and community partners. A partnership agreement has been established with Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity to obtain technical assistance and is working with DSHS Planning, Performance and Accountability to develop measurement criteria.

DSHS and Children's Administration leadership and many regional staff have participated in Undoing Racism. Complete cultural competency anti-racism training will be developed after conclusion of agency assessment.

The Children's Administration Practice Model

In 2005, Children's Administration staff and management adopted, designed, and implemented Solution-Based Casework (SBC) as the new practice model. The introduction of a clinical model of practice is a major and fundamental change to the way that the Administration approaches social work practice. The implementation included training to support the model, ongoing coaching and consultation, and incorporated advanced investigation and assessment training for CPS workers.

The objectives of this improvement initiative, "The Practice Model" was to provide an overarching framework for child welfare practice in Washington and give social workers the tools, skills and support they need. Practice Model elements include SBC, Structured Decision-Making (SDM), and Solution Focused Management (SFM). The foundation of this framework is a clinical model that sets out the philosophy and theory of practice and directs the policies and procedures of the agency toward family centered practice. SBC is a model of child welfare assessment, case planning, and ongoing casework. The model targets specific everyday events in the life of a family that have caused the family difficulty. SBC combines the best of problem focused relapse prevention approaches that evolved from work with addiction, violence, and helplessness with solution-focused models that evolved from family systems casework and therapy.

Current policies, practices and proposed changes will be evaluated in the context of how well they support the clinical model of SBC.

Implementation of SBC, includes the following:

- Training, case consultation and coaching of staff to increase clinical skills with which to build on family strengths and support engagement while, at the same, making decisions about child safety
- Clinical skills and practices that staff can use in working in partnership with families
- Development of a family assessment and case planning tools, placement resources, adolescent approach, and intake framework consistent with and supportive of the clinical model, and the integration of these tools in FamLink
- Review and revision as needed of policies and procedures to ensure they support solution based casework
- Revision to training curriculums, procedures, and practice guides to integrate solution based casework
- Ongoing review of all facets of the Children's Administration, including organization, structure, staffing, and contracts to maximize the effectiveness of the model
- Revision of Position Description Forms and Performance Evaluations to reflect expectations and professional development within the practice model
- Outcomes related to the implementation process, reunification, recurrence, safety, and permanency are measured and analyzed through ongoing research studies conducted by Partners for our Children.
- In partnership with the Court Improvement Training Academy and Partners for our Children, development of curriculum and SBC training for judicial staff
- Quality assurance system to ensure best practice within the practice model

Partners for Our Children, at the University of Washington - School of Social Work, is partnering to evaluate the impact of this new practice model on children and families over a four-year period. The evaluation design included a baseline (i.e., before SBC implementation) survey of social workers, supervisors and families conducted in 2008

to assess family needs, casework approach, and service delivery. These surveys will be repeated after SBC is fully implemented to measure improvements and identify opportunities to improve practice.

Highlights from the baseline study include that while SWs see issues like mental health and drug and alcohol issues as the most important needs to be addressed by parents, the families identify the most pressing issues as basic needs such as food, housing and transportation. From an SBC perspective one would see the basic needs as Family Level Needs while the drug, alcohol, and mental health needs are Individual Level issues. SBC always starts with the plan to address Family Level Objectives and then moves to the individual issues that are hindering the person's ability to adequately address the Family Level. Both must be addressed if lasting change is to occur.

Improve Responsiveness to Relative Caregivers

The Children's Administration is committed to strengthening and tailoring our response to relatives who are caring for dependent children. In order to accomplish this, Children's Administration has begun and will continue to engage and work collaboratively with relative caregivers to identify barriers to licensure. One of the barriers identified at this time is the licensing process. In order to address this barrier, a licensing resource team will form that will actively address the issues and barriers identified by relatives. They will focus on:

- Concrete services to meet licensing safety standards
- One practice standard for relative, foster, and adoptive home studies that balances safe quality care for children and flexibility for relative caregivers; with QA process
- Caregiver training tailored to meet the unique needs of relatives

In addition, the Children's Administration will explore the use of TANF dollars for child-only cases and whether there are opportunities to support relatives differently through this resource. The administration is committed to establish legal permanency for children on dependency orders who are placed with relatives through subsidized guardianship.

In order to move forward in supporting relatives, the Children's Administration has started meeting with relative who are caring for dependent children. Staff training will be enhanced, as well as, tailoring training for relatives. This will provide a needed component in reaching the goal of increasing the number of licensed relatives by 20 percent and dismissing dependency orders and closing cases on 25 percent of children placed with relatives by December 2011.

Services to Adolescents - Behavioral Rehabilitation Services (BRS) Redesign

Children's Administration contracts with community agencies for behavior rehabilitation services (BRS) for children with extremely high level services needs. BRS provides necessary supports to allow the children to safely be served in their own home, foster home or a residential setting. BRS is a short term intensive support service designed to stabilize the child and safely move them to a Permanent resource.

During the spring of 2009 the BRS program was redesigned by inclusion of new procedural and contractual requirements and incorporation of Wraparound Model Principles into the program. With the use of wraparound, the redesigned BRS program will; safely keep youth in their own homes with wraparound support to the family; safely reunify or achieve alternate permanency in a more timely manner; safely increase family based care using wraparound principles; and to safely reduce the length of service by transitioning to a permanent placement.

Effective July 2009 policy changes were made to place an increased emphasis on the need for discharge and permanency planning upon a youth's entry into BRS. Changes also require that a targeted discharge date and transition placement be determined with the contracted provider at the first case planning meeting. Review of the youth's service level at least every six months to ensure continued progress and transition was also required. Regional Administrator approval is required to provide services beyond 12 months and every six months thereafter as services are needed.

Strengthen Response to Child Safety

The Children's Administration is strengthening its response to child safety through a redesign of the system and all components necessary to support supervisors and social workers in controlling threats to child safety, including a redesign of the approach to safety assessment and planning.

Following a review of child fatalities and near fatalities, Assistant Secretary Revel Robinson, grew concerned about the incompleteness of some safety assessments, particularly around the involvement of mother's boyfriends/significant other and their involvement with abuse and neglect of the children. This review led to several immediate procedural changes and longer term redesign efforts. Safety Plan Review - Children's Administration implemented a revised safety planning review and approval process. The process involved identified Children's Administration regional/management staff in each region to review safety plans. The extra level of review and approval was implemented to improve child safety outcomes.

- National Resource Center and Safety Assessment / Safety Planning – Children's Administration is receiving technical assistance from the *National Resource Center for Child Protection Services* to review and evaluate the tools used by CPS to assess safety and improve safety planning interventions. The goals of the technical assistance include improving the "Guide to Intake and Investigation", developing a statewide safety assessment and safety plan curriculum and implementing statewide training for supervisors and social workers. Supervisors are the primary source of critical support to social workers in providing services to children and families and are the key to providing strong clinical practice that focuses on child safety. Solid safety plans to control safety threats can prevent out of home placement and keep children safely in their own home.

Clinical Supervision Supporting Child Safety

Supervisors provide the most critical support to social workers in providing services to children and families and are the key to providing strong clinical practice that focuses on child safety.

The Children's Administration has implemented a training approach that recognizes the importance of supervisors in coaching and supporting their staff. When training all staff on new policy requirements, supervisors are trained first on the issues they need to respond to as supervisors. This is followed by training for social workers. All supervisors were provided ICW training through a contract with the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) that focused on strengthening ICW practice at the supervisory level.

Children's Administration is in the process of redesigning its approach to safety assessment and planning and supervisors are key to this effort, both in planning and in moving out this system. Children's Administration is working with the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services and will be developing new training for supervisors and social workers through this consultation

Accountability

Braam Settlement Agreement

The Braam Oversight Panel was created in 2004 to oversee a Settlement regarding Washington State's foster care system. The Settlement was reached after a 6 year period of litigation. The Settlement Agreement is intended to improve the conditions and treatment of children in the custody of the state's Division of Children and Family Services.

The Braam Panel was created to monitor improvements in selected services and ensure quality standards are met during the 7 year duration of the settlement. Next year will mark the 7th year of the agreement This independent Panel was mutually selected by both the Plaintiffs and the state of Washington. The Braam Panel, working in collaboration with the DSHS and with substantial input from the Plaintiffs and other stakeholders, issued an Implementation Plan for the six areas specified in the Settlement in February 2006. In July 2008, a Revised Braam Implementation Plan was published to reflect clarifications and modifications based on developments in the Braam process and discussions with DSHS, the plaintiffs and stakeholders.

Twice yearly the Braam Oversight Panel publishes a Monitoring Report identifying DSHS compliance with the outstanding goals, outcomes, and benchmarks from the Revised Implementation Plan. For each outcome/action step rated as non-compliance, DSHS, Children's Administration is required to submit a compliance plan that is approved by the Braam Oversight Panel. Over the years, different approaches have been used to develop the compliance plans. The Oversight Panel holds four public meetings each calendar year.

In early 2010, the Children's Administration began a new approach to improve practice through compliance with the Braam Settlement Agreement by integrating the Agreement into ongoing implementation, quality assurance and practice improvement activities. This change includes more comprehensive and deliberate efforts to collaborate with a broad representation of individuals involved in the child welfare system to develop and implement practice improvement strategies. The inclusive process involves social workers, supervisors, managers, and members of external advisory committees. Their involvement increases inclusiveness, creative contributions, and a shared sense of responsibility. It also demonstrates a commitment to have the compliance plans reflect the best thinking as how to achieve desired outcomes for children and families served. In addition to the new approach to improve the quality and consistency of practice, the Children's Administration is strengthening and developing monitoring and accountability systems. These systems are designed to improve the ability to generate information about performance, support evaluation of program and business practices, and make adjustments in order to achieve quality and consistency in child welfare practices.

Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP)

GMAP is a tool that helps all state agencies measure and improve their performance.

It is designed to hold state government and agency leadership accountable to customers, taxpayers, and citizens for the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of services. Washington was the first state in the nation to adapt management models from innovative local governments to improve the results of statewide programs and services.

The Governor and her leadership team hold regular, **public** meetings where the agency director's report in person on the most important management and policy challenges they face in achieving results. The meetings are organized around the Governor's highest priorities – including public safety, economic vitality, and the protection of vulnerable children. She holds the leaders of state agencies accountable for their agencies' results and for initiatives that require the collaboration of multiple organizations.

The discussions are candid and direct, and the concept of "business as usual" is never automatically accepted. Decisions are based on analysis of data and evidence about what strategies work best. Agencies are held accountable to follow-up and report back on outstanding issues.

The GMAP process gives the Governor and the public a clear, concise view of how government programs are working and whether citizens are receiving value for their tax dollars.

HB2106 - Transforming Child Welfare Services

House Bill 2106 was enacted to improve outcomes for children and families involved the child welfare system through: increased accountability by those providing services, ensuring all children have access to a wide service array, and good stewardship of state funds.

Phase I

In 2009 legislation was passed to improve the way services for Child Welfare services are contracted, measured and evaluated. By July 2011, Children's Administration is required to consolidate and convert all child welfare contracts into performance-based contracts. As a result, the level and timing of reimbursement for services is directly tied to a contractor meeting performance expectations.

Goals for Transformation

- Increase accountability
- Increase quality
- Safely reduce the number of children under dependency orders
- Enhance services and supports to help children and families
- Increase the efficiency in providing services to children and families.
- Increase the capacity and access of services for every child and family served across the state as a whole
- Increase culturally competent services to children and families

What does this mean?

- Greater support for social workers in providing timely and appropriate services to children and families
- Contractors will assist families with identifying services to meet unique family needs
- Performance based contracts will not result in reductions of highly skilled, professional social work positions
- Both Children’s Administration and contracted providers are held accountable for meeting agreed upon performance measures

To develop performance based contracts that will reflect the needs of families, providers, stakeholders and DSHS an emphasis is placed upon convening statewide community forums to solicit input. The timeline for Performance Based Contracts is highlighted below.

Timeline for Performance Based Contracting of Services

Timeline	Task
Oct-09 to Sept-10	DSHS & Stakeholders develop recommendations for contract performance measures
Oct-10 to Jan-11	Select contracted providers through a competitive process
11-Feb	Contracts completed with selected providers
Mar-11 to Jun-11	Contracted providers build capacity for services
11-Jul	Contracted providers begin to provide services

Phase II

Case Management Demonstration Sites: To evaluate the possibility of moving case management services (Not Child Protective Services) to the private sector two private-agency demonstration sites will be identified by December 30, 2012. Approximately half of the families in each site will be randomly selected to receive services from a private agency, while the remaining families will receive services from Children's Administration.

Timeline	Task
Dec-12	DSHS contracts for Child and Family Welfare Services (Not Child Protective Services) within 2 demonstration sites
Jun-12	Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) reports to the Governor and Legislature RE: Conversion of child welfare contracted services to performance-based contracts.
Apr-15	WSIPP reports to the Governor and the Legislature RE: Performance Data from the demonstration sites on the effectiveness of contracted Child Welfare case management services (Phase II).
Jun-15	Based upon reports from WSIPP, the Governor will decide to expand or terminate the contracting with private agencies for Child and Family Welfare Services (Phase 2 - Demonstration sites). However whatever DSHS will continue the use of performance-based contracts (Phase 1).