

Accomplishments

The Children's Administration continually assesses policy, procedure and practice implementation for efficiency and effectiveness. Every year this report evidences the tireless work by the Children's Administration personnel and the positive outcomes that result.

What follows is a brief summary of some of the more notable accomplishments of Fiscal Year 2002.

Practice Improvements

- Rewrote foster home licensing standards
- Established licensing standards for emergency respite care centers (crisis nurseries)
- Granted 18 college scholarships through the Governor's Scholarship Fund to former foster youth in partnership with the Washington Education Foundation
- Distributed New *Guidelines for Activities for Children in Foster Care* to all staff and stakeholders to serve as a guide for foster parents when making decisions about activities for children placed in their care
- Increased visitation transportation budget in an effort to keep children in out-of-home placement connected to their siblings and other significant family members
- Developed a tool to monitor how long it takes for children to be adopted after parental rights have been terminated
- Improved data availability and communications by providing desktop access to outcome data for all field staff
- Increased federal funding by ten million dollars per year through increasing the Title IV-E penetration rate from 37% to 60%

Program Enhancements

- Implemented the Transitional Living Program for 18-21 year-old youth
- Added a foster care on-line application to the Children's Administration website, receiving over 100 responses per month from prospective foster parents
- Began development of a new model for supporting, recruiting and retaining foster parents through the *Foster Care Improvement Plan*
- Utilized foster parent website as a recruitment tool which is currently averaging five inquiries per day
- Bolstered minority foster family recruitment efforts through advertisements on Spanish language radio stations and recruitment booths at ethnic festivals

Major Initiatives

- Implemented *Foster Care Improvement Plan* to create strategies for long-term systematic changes in the foster care system
- Developed and implemented new risk assessment tools as part of the *Kids Come First Action Agenda*, including:
 - Initial Safety Assessment and Safety Plan
 - Investigative Risk Assessment
 - Reassessment of Risk
 - Reunification Assessment and Transition Plan
- Commenced development of an updated comprehensive customer satisfaction survey through the Division of Licensed Resources in an effort to identify successes and challenges in relationships with foster parents and other caregivers
- Continued efforts toward enhancing awareness and improving support for kinship care
- Developed Central After Hours/Intake in an effort to provide a more cost-effective single point of entry and consistent response to reports of child abuse and neglect across the state, scheduled for launch in early Fiscal Year 2003

Accomplishments

Accountability and Community Responsiveness

- Established process for conducting case record reviews statewide utilizing both peer reviewers and a central review team
- Passed the federal Title IV-E eligibility review
- Passed the Social Security Administration SSI and Title II representative payee review
- Conducted first ever comprehensive review of the Washington School for the Deaf in the fall of 2001 following which results were reviewed with the Governor's office and a written report was submitted in January 2002
- Began developing a revised data collection system and reporting format for constituent complaints and requests for information
- Completed evaluations on the IFPS/FPS, ARS, and Kidscreen programs as well as CPS decision-making and the 2000 Workload Study
- Developed statewide diversity plan
- Addressed increasing expenditures with Women and Minority Owned Businesses (MWBE)
- Revised the DLR Investigative Protocol Manual to make it more user friendly for the field regarding guidelines and expectations

Awards for Excellence

- Received additional recognition and merit for the "Journey Through the Healing Circle" video and book series regarding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects developed by the Foster Parent Training Institute
- Received \$858,419 Federal Adoption Incentive Award for adoptions finalized at the end of Federal Fiscal Year 2001
- Selected by the Casey Family Program as one of ten teams nationwide that will participate in their Breakthrough Series Collaborative one-year project focusing on systems change in the areas of foster parent recruitment and retention

Training Toward Excellence

- Provided training to private agencies and child care facilities regarding mandatory reporting requirements
- Implemented the PRIDE foster parent training curriculum in January 2002 developed in collaboration with the Child Welfare League of America and the state of Illinois
- Conducted statewide training regarding new state mandated licensing rules
- Developed a pre-service curriculum for prospective foster parents addressing the needs of gay, lesbian, transsexual, bisexual and questioning youth
- Conducted training toward the development of an effective, coordinated system for responding to public disclosure requests statewide
- Began development of a competency-based curriculum for training social workers and supervisors that includes a strong field component allowing support from experienced peers
- Selected five-member team from the *Foster Care Improvement Plan* Executive Committee to participate in the Casey Family Leadership Mastery Program in an effort to gain knowledge and skills regarding kinship placement
- Developed Foster Parent Training Institute web-based training on Sexually Aggressive and Physically Assaultive Youth in collaboration with Juvenile Rehabilitation Services available for staff and foster parents

Challenges

Despite the intentions and actions of committed, competent and caring administrators and direct service providers, the Children's Administration operates within the context of children and families with increasingly complex issues, budget shortfalls, and the effects of civil litigation.

Amid these and other barriers to success, the administration strives to improve outcomes within limited fiscal, tangible and human resources.

Fiscal Constraints

- Previous budget constraints resulted in reductions in revenue for Family Reconciliation Services, Home Support Specialists and after hours intake programs. It is anticipated that additional cuts will be made in response to new budget proposals.
- The implementation of Central Intake as a cost-effective response to budget cuts presents budget, staffing and logistics challenges statewide.

Resources to Support Children and Families

- Too few foster homes and other placement resources are available to care for children in out-of-home placement.
- There is difficulty in adequately partnering with and supporting foster families through training, mentoring and other community-based supports

Information System Capacity

- The Case and Management Information System (CAMIS) has limited capacity to meet the current demands for caseload information management. The administration has developed timelines and strategies to most effectively manage the available resources, but it is an ongoing challenge to provide the necessary functions with the limited resources available.

Public Perception

- Conflicting public perception about the roles and responsibilities of Child Protective Services has created a controversial operating environment.
- There is difficulty in maintaining local community connections with statewide Central Intake and ensuring staff in Central Intake are responsive to uniqueness of local communities.

Federal Mandates

- The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) established brief time frames and increased requirements on states.
- Children's Administration has increased its reliance upon federal funding over the past few years. Increasingly complex federal funding regulations require more time and resources from staff to maintain and further increase federal funds.

Child and Family Services Review

- Washington State is scheduled for a federal Child and family services Review (CFSR) in November 2003. The CFSR is a comprehensive assessment of the entire child welfare service system and includes a review of data measures, case review, and interviews with community partners, clients and stakeholders. The final report will be available to CA in early 2004 and will provide an analysis of CA's performance on seven federal outcomes and seven systemic factors. States not in substantial compliance on any outcome or systemic factor are required to implement a program improvement plan, which must be achieved to avoid fiscal penalties.

Civil Litigation

- Braam vs. State lawsuit claimed there was not adequate treatment for children while in foster care. Costs to litigate the case and potential losses as a result of judgement could negatively impact the budget. The judgement is currently under appeal.
- Keffeler vs. DSHS prohibited DSHS from using a child's Social Security benefits to help pay for the cost of care despite the fact that DSHS operates in compliance with federal rules and regulations. The case is currently before the United States Supreme Court.



Making a Difference

The children and teens who live out their young lives in peril only to emerge survivors, champions and ultimately teachers, are the reasons the Children's Administration exists. They remain our impetus for hard work, commitment, and system reform. These are a few of their stories.

The names of the children and family members as well as specific locations have often been changed or omitted in an effort to preserve the confidentiality of those involved. All of the stories strive to maintain the spirit and integrity of the people and circumstances described.

Megan

Abuse and neglect, a mentally ill mother and an incarcerated father all contributed to Megan's removal from the home of her parents and eight siblings.

She was placed in guardianship at the age of ten following a life of pain accompanied by physical and emotional hunger. Megan embraced every opportunity afforded her while in foster care. She became an excellent student, noted in the 35th edition of Who's Who Among American High School Students. She served as a page for a state Senator, won awards for swimming and is an accomplished concert pianist.

Megan moved to the Northeast to live with a caring relative and attend a prominent school of science and mathematics. Her Washington State foster parents helped Megan raise the costly tuition. In the summer of 2002, Megan traveled to Europe as a people-to-people ambassador.

From troubled beginnings, this seventeen year old has emerged an example of perseverance and strength.



Leilani

Those present could sense the electricity in the courtroom as aunts, uncles and other caring relatives awaited anxiously the final decision of the judge. A touching turnout indeed, but hardly surprising to those familiar with the Kakalaia family.

Leilani was removed from the home of her adoptive parents and placed with her adoptive grandparents on October 3, 1996. Nearly four years had passed since she first went to live with the people who would become Leilani's only "real parents".

Mr. and Mrs. Kakalaia were also present at the hearing. They were, no doubt, the most anxious to hear the judge's decision.

When the judge spoke, he turned his attention to young Leilani and asked her directly why he should allow the Kakalaia's to adopt her rather than place her with another family. Without hesitation and in a very loud voice, she replied "because I love them!"

Todd Henry, Regional Administrator for Region 3 was struck by how relaxed, happy and self-assured Leilani appeared. He said, "Children's Administration did a good thing. Sometimes it just takes a whole village to **adopt** a child."

Guadalupe

When she was nine years old her mother gave her away to a man in Mexico who smuggled her into the United States illegally and abused her. She was taken into care and found to be dependent.

Once a petition to terminate parental rights was filed, Guadalupe's status as an illegal immigrant emerged as a possible barrier to permanency. Children's Administration staff began to research immigration law and learned that even if she was adopted, without a "green card" she risked deportation on her 18th birthday.

The state retained an immigration attorney on Guadalupe's behalf and after three years of international red tape, Guadalupe was granted legal status in the United States.

In May 2002, an entire courtroom wept as Guadalupe's adoption was finalized. The only dry eyes in the place belonged to Guadalupe whose ear-to-ear smile illuminated the courtroom.

Guadalupe's case is another example of the dogged determination exhibited by Children's Administration staff, foster and adoptive families and the amazing children for whom they work.

Brian

He was born three months premature and suffered from a bleeding brain. He spent the first three months of his life in a neonatal intensive care unit. His biological mother, a fourteen year old girl, could not possibly care for a child suffering from such catastrophic medical problems.

His CPS social worker called a local foster family who had cared for over 300 children and adopted several of those children. The foster family and social worker had a long-standing relationship built upon mutual respect and admiration. The social worker knew that if there was a family who could care for Brian it was this one.

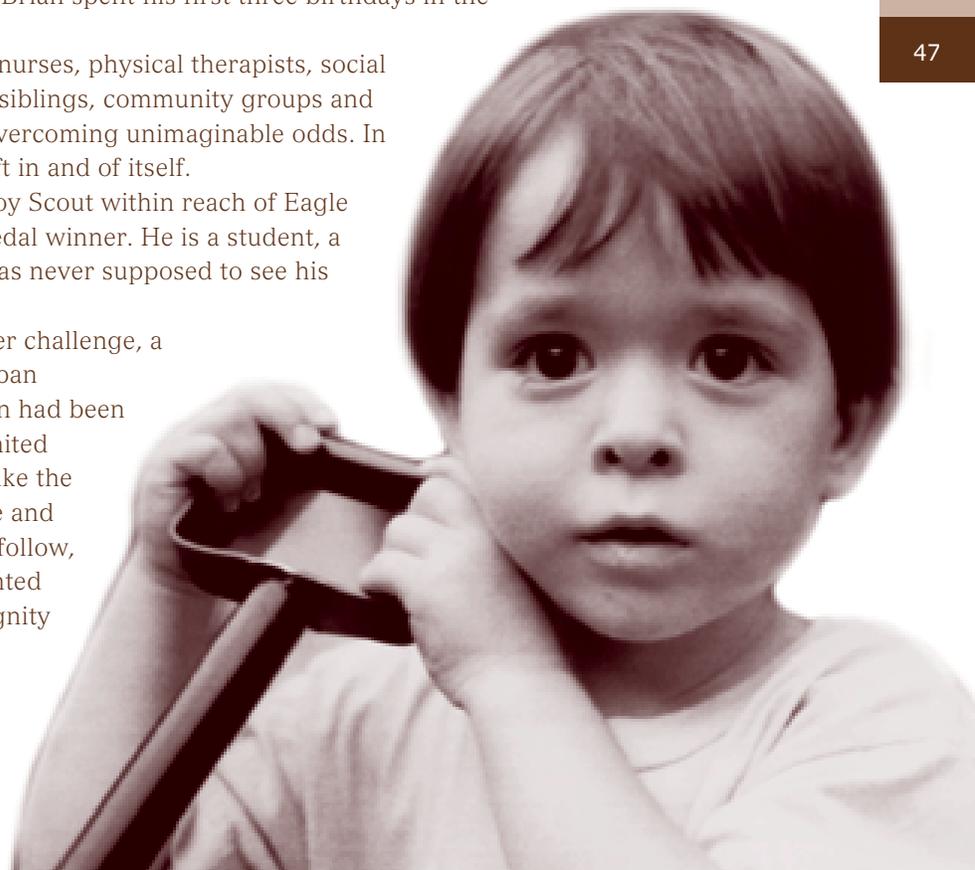
Brian came into foster care with cerebral palsy, asthma, seizures and a feeding tube. Doctors said he would never walk, talk, stand or eat and would likely die before his fourth birthday...he came close...several times.

The only reason that a two-and-a-half hour long seizure didn't kill him was because he was in the hospital at the time it occurred. In fact, Brian spent his first three birthdays in the hospital.

A team, an army really, of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, social workers, educators, foster parents and siblings, community groups and countless others, all assisted Brian in overcoming unimaginable odds. In return, they all got to know Brian...a gift in and of itself.

Brian does walk and talk. He is a Boy Scout within reach of Eagle Scout status and a Special Olympics medal winner. He is a student, a brother, a son and a 17-year-old who was never supposed to see his fourth birthday.

In January 2002, Brian faced another challenge, a welcomed quarter mile trek from an urban intersection to a local high school. Brian had been nominated and selected to be a 2002 United States Winter Olympics torch bearer. Like the many challenges that preceded this one and the countless others that will no doubt follow, Brian rose to the occasion and represented his community and his country with dignity and grace.



Appendix

APPENDIX A

Acknowledgements

The Children's Administration wishes to extend profound appreciation to the more than 2,100 region and field office personnel who every day invest compassion and commitment to ensure the safety and well-being of the countless Washington State children in need of its services.

Among those overseeing the best interests of Washington's most vulnerable children are social workers, supervisory, support and clerical personnel, Division of Licensed Resources investigators, foster, group and adoptive home licensors and licensing support personnel.

Moreover, a group of dedicated ancillary personnel comprised of information technology staff, researchers, other headquarters personnel, special projects staff, and quality assurance representatives are a vital part of the quality service continuum.

Special appreciation is extended to the following units and individuals for their contributions to the composition and publication of this volume:

Marianne K. Ozmun, Data Unit Communications Manager, for coordinating the planning process and acting as the Children's Administration Performance Report author, contributing creativity and continuity to a document that strives to capture the spirit of the children and the dedication of those who work on their behalf.

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Our profound gratitude to the foster parents, adoptive parents, Grandparents raising Grandchildren, relative guardians, respite providers, Guardians ad Litem, group care providers, CASA volunteers, Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman and other child service providers and advocates without whose efforts the Children's Administration could not begin to accomplish the daunting work at hand.

On behalf of the Children's Administration, thank you for your contributions to this report but more importantly thank you all for the tremendous work that this document attempts to represent.

APPENDIX B

Abbreviated Glossary and Frequently Used Acronyms

- *Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)*: Federal legislation passed on November 19, 1997 strengthening titles IV-E and IV-B of the Social Security Act. ASFA requires more accountability and better efforts and results from state agencies receiving funding as well as from parents who have children placed in foster care. The law focuses on the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in care and other positive outcomes.
- *Adoption Support*: Financial assistance provided to adoptive parents following the adoption of a special needs child.
- *Alternative Response System (ARS)*: Agency contracted services providing services to low-risk families. System is designed to provide family supports and keep families intact without intrusive CPS intervention.
- *Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS)*: Agency contracted services for residential rehabilitation services for children and youth with serious emotional, behavioral or medical difficulties who cannot be adequately served in regular foster care.
- *Case and Management Information System (CAMIS)*: Automated reporting and data tracking system for Children's Administration.
- *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)*: Federal legislation providing guidelines for states regarding child protection.
- *CA/N*: Child abuse and neglect
- *Child in Need of Services (CHINS)*: A part of the state's Family Reconciliation Act, RCW 13.32A. It deals with children over the age of twelve who are beyond the control of their parents, have run away and have substance-abuse or other at-risk behavior, or whose parents are unable, unwilling or unsuccessful in providing for their basic needs.
- *Child Protective Services (DCFS Program) (CPS)*: Entity which responds to reports of suspected child abuse and neglect and provides services and/or placement if warranted.
- *Child Welfare Services (DCFS Program) (CWS)*: Entity which provides appropriate out-of-home placement, adoption and/or ancillary services to children and families.
- *Children's Administration (CA)*: One of the administrations under the umbrella organization Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)
- *Division of Licensed Resources (DLR)*: Entity charged with the licensure and oversight of state licensed foster homes, group homes and other child placement facilities.
- *Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS)*: Child protection and placement administered through 44 field offices in six regions throughout Washington State.
- *Family Preservation Services (FPS)*: Services provided to families whose children face substantial risk of out-of-home placement (per RCW 74.14C).
- *Family Reconciliation Services (FRS)*: Voluntary services available to families with adolescents who are experiencing conflicts, devoted to maintaining the family as a unit and preventing out-of-home placement.
- *Independent Living Services (ILS)*: Services provided, in accordance with Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, to youth exiting the foster care system to help prepare them for independence.
- *Indian Child Welfare Services*: Child welfare services provided to Indian children consistent with the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in areas of child protective services, foster care, dependency guardianship, termination of parental rights, and adoption proceedings.
- *Kids Come First (KCF)*: An action agenda that proposes a comprehensive approach to improving child welfare in Washington State.
- *Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)*: If a child cannot return home and adoption is the permanent plan for that child, parental rights must be terminated in order to proceed. The Adoption and Safe Families Act requires states to terminate parental rights when a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, is an abandoned infant, or the parent has committed certain crimes, unless to do so is not in the best interest of the child.

Appendix

APPENDIX C

Strategic Plan Summary

The following summary of the Children's Administration Strategic Plan outlines the broad goals, strategic outcomes, and objectives the administration is working to achieve. We are identifying our progress in achieving these objectives in a variety of ways, some using outcome data and performance measures, and others by case record reviews and client, stakeholder and employee satisfaction feedback. We are continually working to improve our services and child and family outcomes.

CHILD SAFETY

Goal: Children will be safe from abuse and neglect.

Strategic Outcome: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

- Objectives:*
- Reduce chronic maltreatment
 - Reduce recurrence of maltreatment
 - Increase safety for children placed in out-of-home care
 - Initiate timely investigations

Strategic Outcome: Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.

- Objectives:*
- Protect children and prevent removal whenever possible
 - Improve safety when returning children to their homes

PERMANENCY

Goal: Provide stable, nurturing, and permanent placements as quickly as possible for children who are placed into out-of-home care.

Strategic Outcome: Children will have permanency and stability in their living situations.

- Objectives:*
- Increase permanency for children in out-of-home care
 - Increase stability for children in out-of-home care
 - Decrease length of stay without increasing re-entry
 - Decrease over-representation of minority children in care

Strategic Outcome: The continuity of family relationships and connections will be preserved for children.

- Objectives:*
- Increase relative placements
 - Preserve connections with parents, siblings and other significant people

CHILD & FAMILY WELL-BEING

Goal: Help families and communities improve the well-being of children in their own homes and in out-of-home care.

Strategic Outcome: Families will have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

- Objectives:*
- Increase worker visits with child
 - Increase worker visits with parents
 - Involve family, child, and foster family in case planning
 - Respond to needs of child, family and foster parent

Strategic Outcome: Children in placement will have educational and developmental achievements appropriate to their abilities.

- Objectives:*
- Children in placement are supported in age-appropriate educational and developmental programs.
 - Minimize school moves for children

Strategic Outcome: Children in placement will receive adequate services to meet their needs.

- Objectives:*
- Physical health needs are met
 - Mental health needs are met
 - Social and emotional needs are met
 - Cultural needs of children are met

APPENDIX C

Strategic Plan Summary (Continued)

SUPPORTING CLIENT OUTCOMES

Goal: Continuously improve the organization's capacity to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

Strategic Outcome: The Children's Administration partners with and is responsive to Tribes, consumers, communities and public and private agencies to serve children and families.

- Objectives*
- Ongoing partnership, communication and consultation with Tribes, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, juvenile court, other public and private agencies, and includes their concerns
 - Annual progress reports
 - Coordinate service provision with other federal or federally-assisted programs

Strategic Outcome: Adequate quality resources are available for foster care, behavior rehabilitation services, and adoption.

- Objectives*
- Standards for foster homes and residential facilities are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards
 - Standards are applied to all licensed foster family homes or residential facilities receiving Title IV-E or IV-B funds
 - Criminal background clearance requirements are met as related to licensing or approving foster care, relative care, and adoptive placements, and case planning process addresses safety
 - Recruitment and retention efforts result in adequate numbers, locations, capacity, and ethnic and racial diversity of placement resources
 - Cross-jurisdictional resources are used to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placement for waiting children

Strategic Outcome: Service array ensures appropriateness, quality, accessibility and flexibility.

- Objectives*
- Services are appropriate
 - Services are accessible statewide
 - Services can be individualized to meet unique needs

Strategic Outcome: Information Technology and Case and Management Information System (CAMIS) has capability to support field and management needs.

- Objectives*
- Information system capacity to identify status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for children in foster care
 - Information technology assists workers, supervisors, and managers in daily work

Strategic Outcome: Federal requirements for case review system are maintained.

- Objectives*
- Assures each child has a written case plan developed jointly with parents
 - Assures timely court and administrative review
 - Assures foster and pre-adopt parents and relative caregivers have the opportunity to be heard in review hearing with respect to the child

Strategic Outcome: Quality assurance system promotes satisfactory outcomes for children and families.

- Objectives*
- Families and children in care receive quality services that protect safety and health
 - Quality assurance system is comprehensive and consistent

Strategic Outcome: Agency has adequate and efficient structure, staffing and fiscal resources.

- Objectives*
- Structure, staffing levels and resources support quality service delivery
 - Agency provides adequate support for a quality working environment

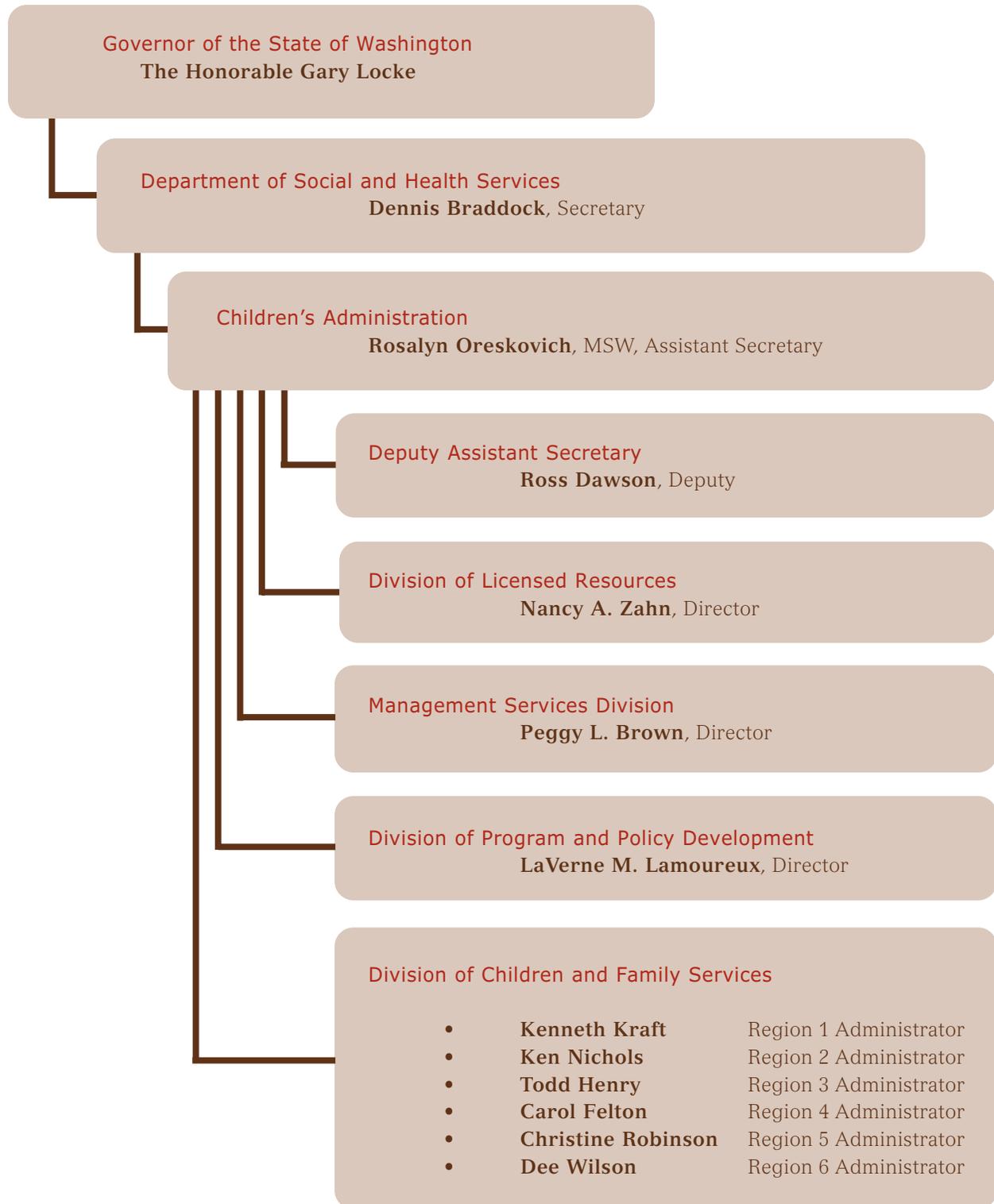
Strategic Outcome: Staff and provider training and development adequately support the goals of the agency.

- Objectives*
- Employee development and training supports agency goals and objectives
 - Service partners and placement providers are trained to carry out their duties
 - Diversity of workforce closely reflects diversity of clients

Appendix

APPENDIX D

Organizational Structure



APPENDIX E

Regional Map

Children's Administration Region and Field Offices

