STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
P.O. Box 45040, Olympia, Washington 98504-5040

June 29, 2009

Mary Meinig, Director Ombudsman
Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman
3720 Fort Dent Way, Suite 240
Tukwila, Washington 98188

Dear Mary:

Thank you for your review and report on the Colville Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) office in response to the request from former Secretary Robin Arnold-Williams. We appreciate your visit to that office, and the time you took to meet with CA staff and our community partners. We take the complaints and concerns about any office seriously, and are actively working with the community to improve service delivery and relationships with the Colville DCFS office and our Division of Licensed Resources in Spokane.

Our child welfare system is dependent on building and maintaining strong partnerships with parents, relatives, foster parents, tribes and community professionals and service providers. Colville residents have expressed a strong commitment to supporting children and families. By listening to their concerns, we are learning how we can serve this community better. We are committed to improving several areas of our practice.

As you know, protecting children can sometimes mean making controversial decisions. In our own internal review of the office, we found some very strong practice, with decisions being reached through shared consensus among many professionals. We appreciate that your review has identified areas of child welfare practice and systemic issues that need more attention. With an area administrator now assigned full time to the Colville office, we believe improvements are underway.

Attached is our implementation plan and response to the recommendations you cited in your report. We are actively working with our staff and community partners to mend and strengthen relationships.

Again, thank you for your response to the concerns expressed by Colville citizens. We will continue to work with your office as we make improvements in the quality of services to this community. Please call me if you have any questions about our response or implementation plan.

Sincerely,

Randy Hart
Interim Assistant Secretary

cc: Susan N. Dreyfus, Secretary
Kari Burrell, Executive Policy Advisor
Marty Butkovich, Regional Administrator