

Permanency

Objective: Decrease over-representation of minority children in care

Measured by: Minority children in care longer than two years

Minority children, and more specifically those of African American and Native American heritage, make up a disproportionately high number of children in out-of-home care. This inequity is seen not only in Washington state but nationwide. The Children's Administration has made concerted efforts to identify and address the causes of this disproportionality and has enlisted the expertise and candor of community partners in the process.

While states still struggle to determine quantifiable causes for this disproportionality, the administration has moved forward toward addressing the needs of children from every cultural and ethnic background as well as their families and communities.

The Children's Administration established *The Office of African American*

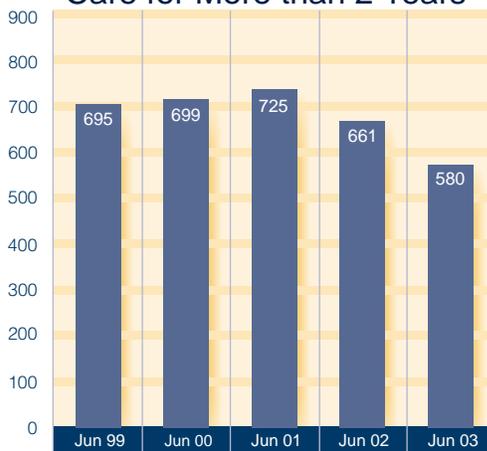
Children's Services in Region 4, to help address system and practice issues and improve service delivery to children of African American descent. Region 4 provides services to more than half of all African American children who have been in state care for more than two years.

In Fiscal Year 2003, the number of African American children who remained in care for two years or more decreased notably.

In addition, the administration has worked to improve collaboration with various Native American tribes in an effort to adequately provide for Native American children in out-of-home care. Following an increase in fiscal year 2002,

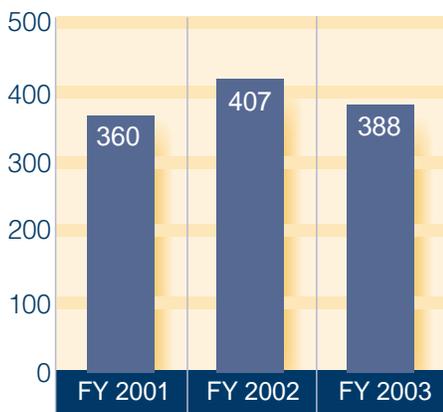
the number of Native American children in care for longer than two years decreased in fiscal year 2003.

African-American Children in Care for More than 2 Years*



*The number of African-American children who have been placed in out-of-home care for two years or longer who are not in their permanent home.

Native American Children in Care for More than 2 Years*



*The number of Native-American children who have been placed in out-of-home care for two years or longer who are not in their permanent home.

Goals of the Office of African American Children's Services

- Prevent recurrence of abuse/neglect
- Address and meet the needs of all family members
- Begin to change the system's bias toward African American families and community through the use of "best practice" approaches
- Decrease the number of African American children entering the DCFS system
- Decrease the length of stay for African American children in DCFS care, thereby expediting permanent placement
- Increase appropriate relative and kinship placements of African American children
- Establish collaborative relationships between DCFS and the African American community by involving key institutions and community leaders in the delivery of services to African American children

News Advisory, March 2004
Performance Report, 2003