



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**  
1500 Jefferson Street, SE • P.O. Box 40975 • Olympia WA 98504-0975

**POLICY MEMO**

June 27, 2023

TO: Child Welfare Employees

FROM: Natalie Green, Assistant Secretary

RE: Changes to [4304. Reasonable Efforts](#) policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

SUNSET REVIEW DATE: July 1, 2024

**Purpose**

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to Child Welfare (CW) employees on the updated policy and procedure requirements to align with [House Bill 1227: Keeping Families Together Act](#), [KW](#), and [LCS](#) Supreme Court decisions.

This policy is under full review for further revisions, but the following changes will take effect July 1, 2023:

**New Policy Requirements**

Caseworkers must make:

- Reasonable Efforts:
  - When assessing both parents, including the parent or guardian the children or youth were not residing with, before the:
    - Initial removal or placement
    - Shelter Care Hearing
  - Diligent Efforts:
    - When serving parents or guardians with the petition and supporting documents and to provide Shelter Care Hearing information, per the [Dependency Petition Process](#) policy memo.

**New Procedural Requirements**

Caseworkers must:

- Serve Parents and Guardians:
  - Make diligent efforts to notify parents and guardians as soon as possible when their children or youth have been removed from their custody, per the [Dependency Petition Process](#) policy memo.
- Placement Prevention:
  - Make reasonable efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal and follow the [Concrete Goods](#) policy memo.
- Placement Out-of-Home:
  - Prior to Shelter Care Hearing, make continuing efforts to locate and place children and youth with relatives and suitable persons.
- Stability or Permanency:

- Provide reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan.
- Support relatives and suitable persons by following the [Concrete Goods](#) policy memo.
- Continue to locate relative placements throughout the life of the case if the child or youth is not placed with a relative.

**Questions:**

If you have any questions, please contact Paula McJohnson, Engagement Program Manager, at [paula.mcjohnson@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:paula.mcjohnson@dcyf.wa.gov) or 360-790-7151.

Cc: Brenda Villarreal