INDIAN CHILD WELFARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2. Introduction

Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is dedicated to protecting the best interests of Indian children, their families, and tribes. To accomplish this, child welfare and Licensing Division (LD) employees, volunteers, interns, and work study students must attempt to identify whether there is reason to know children are or may be Indian children and to verify whether children are recognized as Indian children with the tribe as soon as possible, beginning at intake and throughout the life of a case. When there is reason to know a child is an Indian child, they must comply with:

- The Federal and Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).
- DCYF Indian Child Welfare policies and procedures.
- Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) between DCYF and federally recognized tribes, unless it's determined the child is not an Indian child and ICWA does not apply.

Indian Child Welfare policies were drafted by a Tribal-State workgroup and are based on ICW laws, policies, and MOAs. They guide employees, volunteers, interns, and work study students in protecting the rights of Indian children and families and tribes involved with the Washington State child welfare system. Importantly, these policies address:

- The history of ICWA.
- Tribal culture and tradition.
- Trauma in all forms, including generational trauma.

When there is not agreement about a case between DCYF and the child's tribes or the Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee, DCYF employees must resolve the disagreement at the lowest possible supervisory level. If the disagreement cannot be resolved though alternative dispute resolution procedures including but not limited to procedures agreed to in tribal-state MOAs, DCYF employees must follow the Chapter 25 Impasse Procedures policy.

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