

Child Welfare System

Region X

Children's Bureau

Administration for Children & Families

Department of Health & Human Services



Overview

- I. What is Child Welfare?
- II. Child Welfare & the Federal government
- III. How TANF & Child Welfare can work together
- IV. How to get more information

I. Child Welfare

- Child welfare is a group of services designed to promote the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families to care for their children successfully.
- Most families first become involved with child welfare due to a report of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Child Welfare Systems

- Receive and investigate reports of possible child abuse and neglect.
- Provide services to families that need assistance in the protection and care of their children to prevent the need for removal, or to strengthen the family to allow the child to return safely to the home.
- Arrange for children to live with kin or with foster families when they are not safe at home.
- Arrange for reunification, adoption, or other permanent family connections for children leaving foster care.

A Glance at a State or Tribal Child Welfare System

Report to the Agency

When somebody is worried about the child(ren) they call the police or child welfare authorities. Child welfare authorizes them to ask questions and look over all the information and may decide to go see the family.

Investigation/Assessment & First Plans

Child welfare authorities meet with family members to try to understand what is going on for the family and if the children are safe.

Placement

If children are not safe at home and the family is not able to make a plan for their safety, the children are temporarily placed out of the home. Placement may be through a voluntary placement or a court order.

In-Home Services

A safety plan can be designed to keep the child(ren) safe, a family may receive a variety of services to maintain the children in the home such as home visits, in-home counseling, or concrete services.

More Assessment & Planning

- What does the family need?
- What strengths does each family member have that can help him or her help the children?
- How can each person in the family help the children?
- What services and other help can be put in place for family members?

Develop a Written Plan

- What will each family member do or be responsible for?
- What will caseworkers do and be responsible for?
- Who are the service providers and what will they do and be responsible for?
- What are the timelines for everyone?
- What is the permanency goal? (*ex. Child will go home to one of his parents or relatives*)
- What are the goals for the parents? (*ex. Parents will be sober*)
- What are steps to the goals? (*ex. Parents will attend AA*)
- How will it be clear that there is progress and success?

Court Hearings

Hearings may occur at this point.

Work on the Plan

- Family works on the plan: participates in services and tries to make changes that will be good for them and the children .
- Service providers and others help the family as is written in the plan.
- Caseworker supports the family, talks with them about how they are doing, makes sure services are available, reassesses safety and how family is doing, and writes progress reports.
- Foster family or relative takes care of the child .
- Family visits with child .
- Changes made to plan if needed .

Court Hearings

Every 6 months after child removed from home determine if progress is being made and if the permanency plan should stay the same or change.

Permanency Court Hearings

The court must decide whether the child should be returned to a parent or live elsewhere. If the child continues in out-of-home placement, the court will look at adoption or guardianship with a relative. If the court decides the children should be adopted, this is likely to lead to a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) or Tribal Customary Adoption.

Closure & Follow Up

When the child is reunified with family, adopted, placed in a guardianship arrangement, or emancipated, the family, caseworker and others may decide to provide after-care services and other help if needed.

II. Child Welfare & Federal Government

- While the primary responsibility for the provision of child welfare services rests with States and Tribes, the Federal Government plays a major role in supporting States and Tribes in the delivery of services through funding and monitoring several programs and legislative initiatives.

What is Title IV-B ?

Title IV-B Subpart 1 (Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Child Welfare Services Program) is for the development and expansion of a coordinated child and family services program.

- protecting and promoting the welfare of all children;
- preventing the neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children;
- supporting at-risk families through services which allow children, where appropriate, to remain safely with their families or return to their families in a timely manner;
- promoting the safety, permanence, and well-being of children in foster care and adoptive families; and
- providing training, to ensure a well-qualified child welfare workforce.

What is Title IV-B ?

Title IV-B Subpart 2 (Promoting Safe and Stable Families) provides funding to develop, expand, and operate a program of:

- *family preservation;*
- *family support services;*
- *time-limited family reunification services; and*
- *adoption promotion and support services.*

The emphasis is on the use of a family-centered, comprehensive, flexible, responsive and holistic approach to child welfare.

What is Title IV-E ?

- **Title IV-E** provides partial reimbursement for allowable activities for eligible children for:
 - foster care maintenance payments;
 - allowable costs associated with administration;
 - allowable costs associated with training;
 - Adoption assistance; and
 - Kinship/guardianship payments to age 21 (optional).
- An open-ended entitlement program to which local matching funds are applied.
- NOT a grant.

John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence and ETV Programs

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) assists current and former foster care youth to achieve self-sufficiency and a successful transition to adulthood.

Activities and programs include-help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support and assured connections to caring adults for older youth in foster care.

The Educational and Training Vouchers Program (ETV) provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care.

This program makes available vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth for postsecondary education and training for eligible youth.

Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CBCAP)

Provides funding to States to develop, operate, expand, and enhance community-based, prevention-focused programs and activities designed to strengthen and support families to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Core features:

- Federal, State, and private funds are blended and made available to community agencies for child abuse and neglect prevention activities and family support programs.
- Interagency collaborations with public and private agencies in the States to form a child abuse prevention network to promote greater coordination of resources.
- Funds are used to support programs such as voluntary home visiting programs, parenting programs, family resource centers, respite and crisis care, parent mutual support, and other family support programs.

Tribes and Children's Justice Act

Since 1989, the [Federal Assistance Division](#) within the [Office for Victims of Crime](#) (OVC) has provided funding to American Indian Tribes through the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Partnerships for Indian Communities grant program.

These funds are used to help Tribes develop, establish, and operate programs to improve the investigation, prosecution, and handling of child abuse cases, particularly cases of child sexual abuse, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim.

III. Child Welfare & TANF

States & Tribes may fund a variety of child welfare activities using TANF funds, including services for:

- family reunification;
- parenting education;
- in-home family services; and
- crisis intervention.

What are the Connections Between Child Welfare and TANF?

- Overlapping needs of families: substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and poverty.
- Kinship care families served by both systems.
- Structural overlap of the two systems.
- Connection between family instability and child abuse and neglect.

Cooperative Agreements for Coordination of Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Child Welfare Services to Tribal Families at Risk of Child Abuse or Neglect

Purpose: “to fund demonstration projects designed to test the effectiveness of Tribal governments or Tribal consortia in coordinating the provision to tribal families at risk of child abuse and neglect of child welfare services and services under tribal programs funded under this part.”

- Improve case management for families eligible for assistance from a Tribal TANF program;
- Provide supportive services and assistance to Tribal children in out-of-home placements and the Tribal families caring for such children, including families who adopt such children; and
- Provide prevention services and assistance to Tribal families at risk of child abuse and neglect.

IV. More Information

- Children's Bureau State & Tribal Programs –
 - http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/programs_fund/index.htm#state
- Children's Justice Act & Tribes –
 - <http://www.tribal-institute.org/lists/cja.htm>