

# 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

# **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.

# 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 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's going on for the family and if the children are safe.

## Placement

If children aren't safe at home and the family isn't 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's 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, 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.

# Federal Grant Programs

The Children's Bureau provides matching funds to States, Tribes, and communities to help them operate every aspect of their child welfare systems -- from prevention of child abuse and neglect to adoption:

- [Child Welfare Services: Title IV-B, Subpart 1 of the Social Security Act](#) - Preventive intervention, alternative placements, and reunification efforts to keep families together.
- [Promoting Safe and Stable Families: Title IV-B, Subpart 2 of the Social Security Act](#) - Family support, family preservation and support, time-limited family reunification services, and services to support adoptions.
- [Title IV-E Foster Care](#) - Assistance with reimbursement of costs of foster care for eligible children and associated administrative and training costs.
- [Title IV-E Adoption Assistance](#) - Financial and medical assistance for adoption of children with special needs as well as associated administrative and training costs.
- [Title IV-E Guardianship Assistance](#) - Financial and medical assistance for guardianship of eligible children and associated administrative and training costs.
- [John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program](#) - Funds to help older youth in foster care and former foster care youth acquire training and independent living skills to become self-sufficient.
- [Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect \(CBCAP\)](#) - Support for community-based, prevention-focused programs and activities.
- [Children's Justice Act](#) - Funds for improving the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and neglect.
- [Court Improvement Program](#) - Funds for improvement of courts' handling of child abuse and neglect litigation.

# **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, 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.

# Thank You

✚ Jennifer Zarella 206 615-2604.  
[jennifer.zarella@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:jennifer.zarella@acf.hhs.gov)

✚ Nadia Nijim 206-615-3682.  
[nadia.nijim@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:nadia.nijim@acf.hhs.gov)