

Strategies to Increase Fairness & Equity in CWS

The strategies below were devised as part of the CWS Redesign. They are also included in the Decision Points Grid.

Child Abuse prevention public education outreach campaigns:

Letting parents *know the laws*, available resources and how to access them, and *learn the skills* of raising children can prevent a significant number of abuse & neglect incidents.

Expansion of current definition of kinship to the extended family, beyond close relatives, to a wider range of relations, including non-blood relations, godparents, *compadres*, etc.

Expand and improve services provided to parents, including single parents, teen parents, disabled parents to address their needs, rather than limited to what is presently available or funded. Example: Teaching Homemakers, available in the 1970s, & other proven models.

Utilization of the Indian Child Welfare Act model for other ethnic, cultural communities that would reduce the number of children placed “out of their culture,” resulting in loss of self awareness and alienation from their own ethnicity.

Neighborhood foster care: Place children within their neighborhood so that they can attend their own school, retain their friends, and visit with family members when appropriate.

Ensure that financial and other resources follow the child throughout the system, rather than resources becoming unavailable if the child is placed in another location with reduced resources.

Provide access to culturally competent services so that services may *effectively* serve families in their language and with an understanding of their cultural norms and socioeconomic conditions which may have an impact upon their behavior & attitudes.

Create networks of services where they are needed so that every child & family can receive services which may enable them to remain together or be reunified as soon as possible.

Retrain all staff/players in the system for reunification, when appropriate, as the primary goal, rather than for child removal, placement, or deconstruction of the family.

Inter-cultural Communication Training for all players in the system:

Communication-focused training that allows Child Welfare System staff to develop greater understanding of the relationship between culture and human interaction processes in multi-cultural contexts; develop greater ability to *process* cross-cultural information; and enhance their competency in intercultural communication in the context of parent-child communication and the CWS as an organizational culture.

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Use culturally responsive assessment tools to really understand the dynamics of different families, their capacity to understand the issues of concern, their ability to learn new skills, and to change problematic behaviors.

Use culturally competent experts to provide assessment, expert testimony in court, and treatment for children, parents, and the family.

Develop linkage to faith communities in order to facilitate child abuse prevention, report abuse, provide support to families, and validate public child welfare services to their community.

Develop a culture which recognizes the value of home, community, and school for children, recognizing their individual human rights.

Review of current regulations/policies and laws affecting children and families which create or provide the context in which families succeed or struggle.

Juvenile Justice System Redesign: Encourage Juvenile Justice System redesign. Just as the Child Welfare System Redesign will improve services to children and their families experiencing child abuse or neglect, so will such a redesign in the juvenile justice system serve to improve services for youth and their families where delinquent behavior is occurring.

More Strategies to Increase Fairness & Equity in CWS

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