

Alaska Child Welfare Disproportionality Reduction Project

is an active collaboration between state child welfare staff and tribal administrators.

The Implementation Project is designed to reduce disproportionality through **every-day practice and decision-making changes** in order to create mutually desired outcomes, and it is part of a larger Alaska child welfare initiative that is still being developed.

The project is a collaboration of

- Alaska Title IV-B tribal partners
- Office of Children's Services (OCS)
- Court Improvement Project (CIP)

Inter-agency cooperation and establishing cultural competency in Alaska's child welfare services serving Alaska Natives are at the heart of this four-year project.

The project was approved by the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project promotes the use of a **family-centered, state-tribal bi-lateral, collaborative approach** in which the state OCS relies more heavily on tribes to participate in the initial decision making and service delivery. The project builds the capacity of the tribes to conduct services needed by identified families to prevent out-of-home placement whenever possible and to promote community based services when placements are necessary.

These are **mutually desired outcomes**, for state OCS and for Alaska's tribes.

Through working together and establishing dialogue, there have emerged shared values that have guided this project.

- Outcome areas of safety, permanency, and well-being
- Prevention
- Alaskan uniqueness
- Federal Child and Family Service (CFSR) practice principles: family-centered practice, community-based services, strengthened parental capacity, and individualized services

However, the means to accomplish these principles sometimes diverge significantly between the tribes and state, indicating a strong need for dialogue.

The Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center (WPIC) provides intensive technical assistance to assist with the implementation of the **tribal-state bi-lateral alternative response model** and help stakeholders plan for statewide implementation.

WPIC works to build organizational capacity that sustains the practice changes of this project, as well as provide capacity to implement other future reforms. Workgroups made up of the stakeholders provide structure and direction to the project and function as a hub communications link in each area.

This implementation project allows tribal partners to develop and implement changes in child welfare practice for Native American and Alaska Native children, youth, and families that focus on key changes in **initial safety assessments and placement decisions**.

