

**COMPILATION OF
RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM PREVIOUS REPORTS
RELATING TO WASHINGTON'S
CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

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For Use By

The Joint Task Force on Child Safety for Children in Child Protective Services or Child Welfare Services
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FOSTER PARENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recruitment and Retention

1. Develop a cohesive, consolidated statewide public and private recruitment strategy for foster and adoptive homes. The strategy should outline principles for recruitment statewide and should allow for regional initiatives. *Foster Care* at 3.
2. Increase foster home retention, recruitment and diversity. *Improvement Plan* at 23.
 - a. Establish common definitions for retention and recruitment, expand recruitment of foster and adoptive families and increase the number of culturally relevant homes.
3. The Department should vigorously pursue recruitment and retention of Hispanic foster parents in the Grant County area. *Fatality Review at 5 (Gomez Review)*.
4. Intensify the publicity about the need for foster/adoptive parents. Consider contracting with a non-profit or for-profit agency to recruit foster/adoptive parents. *Riveland* at 20.
5. Enhance community partnerships and outreach. Engage the community in improving foster care and improve the public's perception of foster care. *Improvement Plan* at 24.
 - a. Promote community awareness of positive foster care experiences and implement a high-profile foster home recruitment campaign.
6. Create incentives for more people to become foster parents, for instance, one city is using HUD funding to provide housing incentives for foster parents. *Riveland* at 20.
7. Rules appear to restrictive for foster parents. Engage foster parents and foster children in a redesign of those rules to reduce the barriers they create for potential foster families and children. *Riveland* at 20.

Foster Parent Support

8. Create an agency culture that promotes collaboration between foster families and caseworkers. *Improvement Plan* at 21-22.
 - a. Reduce social worker staff caseloads, involve foster parents in practice and policy development, welcome participation and partnership of foster parents, and establish consistent sharing of policy and practice information.
9. Change DCFS culture to embrace the social worker and foster parent relationship. Management at all organizational levels needs to focus on and embrace respectful, collaborative teaming between foster parents and social workers. Build a better system for communication between the Department and foster parents. Provide a forum to get more direct input from foster parents. *Foster Care* at 3.
10. Increase supports for foster care. *Improvement Plan* at 25-26.
 - a. Increase supports for foster parents under investigation, clarify respite care policy, increase supports to foster parents to stabilize placements for difficult children and youth.
11. Revisit the foster care compensation system. Eliminate the financial penalty for foster parents who have two or more siblings. Create incentives for relative/family placements. *Riveland* at 20.
12. Foster parents should receive proper training before being asked to care for special needs or drug-affected children. *Fatality Review* at 6 (*Gomez Review*).
13. The Department should ensure that foster parent liaisons are visible and a known resource for the foster parents. *Fatality Review* at 6 (*Gomez Review*).

Foster Parent Involvement

14. Allow foster parents access to court hearings. *Riveland* at 20.
15. Foster parents and other individuals who have participated significantly in the growth and nurturance of a child should be notified of court proceedings and be given the opportunity to provide information to the judge. *Fatality Review* at 5 (*Grace*

Review).

16. The Department should ensure that foster parents are invited, with proper notice, to dependency hearings and that they understand their right to provide information to the court. *Fatality Review at 5 (Gomez Review).*
17. The Department should ensure that foster parents are invited to participate when CPTs staff cases on the children living in their homes. Foster parents should receive proper notice of the CPT staffing time and place so that they can adjust their schedules as needed in order to attend. *Fatality Review at 6 (Gomez Review).*

Bibliography

1. "Foster Care Task Force: Final Report," DSHS Children's Administration (*Foster Care*), December 1999.
2. "Building a Future for Washington's Children: Foster Care Improvement Plan," (*Improvement Plan*) DSHS, Casey Family Programs, May 2001.
3. "Child Protective Services in Washington State Administrative Assessment" Riveland Associates (*Riveland*), July 2000.