

## Recommendations Matrix for Think of Us Engagement

D.S.EngagementFindingsRecommendations\_stage1.pdf (wa.gov)

TOU Recommendations	Recommendation number	YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE RECOMMENDATIONS	In Scope 4.10 Kinship Engagement Unit - Page# in implementation plan	In Scope 4.11 Family Group Meeting - Page# in Implementation Plan	In Scope 4.12 Transitions and Referrals - Page# in Implementation Plan	Out of scope/Next Step
		<b>How DCYF brings youth into the system</b>				
<b>Prevention</b>	1.1	Provide greater access to comprehensive and tailored prevention programming to parents				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Reporting and Investigations</b>	1.2	Give credence to child- and youth reported cases of neglect and abuse, and believe them when they disclose that they are unsafe				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	1.2.1	Initiate prevention services for families who have been reported to CPS				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Removal</b>	1.3	Seek and honor young people's assessment of their own safety when making decisions about removals				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	1.3.1	Work to expeditiously remove young people from environments where they report feeling unsafe				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	1.3.2	In non-life-threatening situations, delay removal until a placement is identified to minimize disruptions and moves				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	1.3.3	Communicate what is going to happen or might happen to the young person before and during removal				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	1.3.4	Strive to place a young person quickly; if possible, have a placement identified before removal				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
		<b>How DCYF places youth</b>				
<b>Youths' placement needs</b>	2.1	Ask young people about their placement needs to better understand and consider their histories and identities when identifying potential placements	Pgs. 41, 44		Pg. 58	
	2.1.1	Ask young people regularly about where they want to live and strive to place them in their preferred placement	Pgs. 41, 44	Pg. 53		

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	2.1.2	If young people can't be placed where they want to live, give them an explanation as to why	Pg. 45			
	2.1.3	Give young people options for placement and allow them to choose	Pg. 45			Youth and families need to know information and placement options, but do not necessarily get to choose. Trainings are offered to support how to engage difficult conversations. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	2.1.4	Strive to place young people with a family member or trusted adult(s) first				Can be discussed in FTDM and shared planning meetings, but Caseworker makes this decision and it is covered in current policy. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	2.1.5	Provide the necessary information and support for preferred placements to become licensed	Pgs. 42, 43			
<b>Placement instability and transfers</b>	2.2	Make every effort possible to reduce the number of transfers and increase placement stability	Pg. 43		Pgs. 58, 63	
	2.2.1	Limit abrupt transfers to life-threatening emergencies only				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	2.2.2	Notify young people as early as possible about an upcoming transfer		Pg. 55		
	2.2.3	Communicate to young people the reason behind a placement change				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate the program manager/division.
	2.2.4	Give young people the opportunity to speak to, meet, or visit prospective placements prior to transfer			Pg. 58, 63	
	2.2.5	Transport young people to placements during the day, not in the middle of the night				This is the preference, but sometimes due to imminent safety concerns not able to happen. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	2.2.6	Ensure young people are able to pack and keep their personal belongings, and end the use of garbage bags to store belongings				This is addressed in policy and practice and this recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division
<b>4.12 Transitions into new placements</b>	2.3	Offer emotional and mental health support, including comfort items and help around grief and loss				There are supports available to youth currently through many avenues and will also be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	2.3.1	Facilitate activities for foster families and young people to get to know each other once a placement has begun				This recommendation will be provided to the appropriate program manager/division.
	2.3.2	Provide young people with support around transportation, clothing, and basic hygiene needs to help them settle in their new placement	Pg. 43			
	2.3.3	Communicate with young people's previous and new schools to ensure smoother transitions				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	2.3.4	Check in regularly with young people to ask if they feel safe and affirmed in their new placement, and take their concerns seriously				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Shelters, facilities, and group homes</b>	2.4	Work to never place young people in a shelter, facility, or group home				This recommendation will also be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	2.4.1	Provide more tangible and intangible support to family-based placements to reduce reliance on shelters, facilities, and group homes	KEU will have access to providing tangible assistance to kin caregivers and will refer them to kinship support services. Pg. 42			This recommendation will also be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
		<b>How DCYF engages youth's families and loved ones</b>				
<b>Disconnection from siblings, loved ones, and community</b>	3.1	Strive to place siblings together	Pg. 42			
	3.1.1	Provide young people with access to technology and concrete opportunities to maintain communication and stay connected				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	3.1.2	Ensure placement providers do not prevent young people from remaining in contact with loved ones	Pg. 42			This recommendation will also be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	3.1.3	Support young people in nurturing relational support systems throughout their time in foster/kinship care	Pg. 42			
	3.1.4	Provide young people with opportunities to connect with peers who are also in foster/kinship care				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>4.10 Kinship Engagement</b>	3.2	Consistently ask young people about kin they could live with	Pg. 42			
	3.2.1	Explain to young people how the information they provide about kin will be used	Pg. 42			
	3.2.2	Give young people a choice around which kin to involve in each decision that concerns them				Caseworkers and KEU can support, but KEU is not responsible for the placement decision. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	3.2.3	Revise requirements to allow more flexibility for kin to be a placement				Revisions to licensing rules have already been created and implemented. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	3.2.4	Recognize that kin caregivers require additional resources and provide them with said support	Pg. 43			

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<b>Reunification and family preservation</b>	3.3	Ask and defer to young people about reunification being appropriate for them and their circumstances				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	3.3.1	Ask and defer to young people on whether parents should be included when discussing reunification options				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	3.3.2	Share with young people what DCYF requires parents to complete before reunification would be considered				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
		<b>How DCYF listens to and represents youth</b>				
<b>Youth voice and agency</b>	4.1	Ask young people what they need and want, and make efforts to center their voices and honor their requests as much as—if not more than—other stakeholders			Pg. 58, 63	
	4.1.1	Provide required training on antiadultism to judges, caseworkers, and DCYF staff				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.



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	4.1.2	Provide channels for young people to share their concerns, including anonymously, and provide a timely resolution				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.1.3	Believe young people when they come forward with concerns and reports of harm and abuse they are experiencing in foster care				Being addressed through RESJ and through updating training to include trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and LGBTQIA+ affirming practices. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.1.4	Consult with the young person when responding to the harm and abuse they report				Being addressed through RESJ and through updating training to include trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and LGBTQIA+ affirming practices. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.1.5	Hold regular listening sessions with young people				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Interactions with staff and professionals</b>	4.2	Make it a priority for DCYF staff and placement providers to interact with young people in developmentally appropriate and trauma-responsive ways	Pg. 43			
	4.2.1	Hire caseworkers who listen and care, and have shared lived experiences and identities with young people				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	4.2.2	Have more qualified and trained staff with the skills to work with trauma survivors				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.2.3	Ensure staff have reasonable caseloads, sufficient time, supportive supervision, and competitive market pay to improve quality of services and reduce turnover				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.2.4	Evaluate and support the mental health and overall well-being of DCYF caseworkers				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.2.5	Enable access to more than one DCYF staff member, such as a caseworker and mental health specialist, so that young people are not represented or supported by only one person				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>4.11 Family group planning meetings</b>	4.3	Invite young people to family group planning meetings and prioritize their attendance when planning logistics		Pg. 54, 55		
	4.3.1	Explain what each family group planning meeting is about and what decisions are being made		Pg. 55		

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	4.3.2	Provide the preparation and support young people need to attend family group planning meetings				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.3.3	Consider, prioritize, and respond to the perspectives and requests young people express in family group planning meetings		Pg. 55		
	4.3.4	Respect young people's choice about whether or not to participate or speak in family group planning meetings		Pg. 55		
<b>Court hearings</b>	4.4	Allow young people to participate in court or mediation proceedings if they choose, in a format that is comfortable for them				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	4.4.1	Provide young people with opportunities for appropriate and capable legal representation and advocacy during court hearings				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Case files</b>	4.5	Offer young people the opportunity to review, respond to, and correct the information in their case files				4.12 will allow youth to collaborate on their referrals. Case file review is done with a youth attorney or assigned caseworker. This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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		<b>How DCYF treats youth of different identities and experiences</b>				
<b>Disability competency</b>	5.1	Educate and train placement providers and DCYF staff to understand mental health and how it manifests emotionally, behaviorally, and socially among young people				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	5.1.1	Provide mental health education to young people so they can recognize and ask for the help they need				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Cultural competency</b>	5.2	Prioritize placing young people in placements that share their cultural and racial/ethnic identities and religion	Pg. 42		Pg. 64	
	5.2.1	Provide robust racial equity/cultural competency training to DCYF staff	Pg. 42		Pg. 64	Staff implementing these system improvements will have specific training. For broader consideration, the recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	5.2.2	When living in placements that don't share the same cultural, racial/ethnic, and religious identities, provide youth opportunities to stay connected to those identities and care for their specific cultural needs	Pg. 42			
	5.2.3	Support Native youth in (re)connecting with their culture and peers	Pg. 42			
	5.2.4	Place young people in placements that do not compromise their own religious practices or impose religious beliefs different from their own	Pgs. 42, 43		Pg. 58	
	5.2.5	Offer and encourage educational opportunities for placements to become more culturally competent	Pg. 42			

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<b>2SLGBTQIA+ competency</b>	5.3	Protect 2SLGBTQIA+ youth against queerphobia and transphobia from placement providers and DCYF staff	Pg. 43			For broader consideration, the recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	5.3.1	Place 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in safe and affirming homes and communities				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	5.3.2	Mandate required initial and ongoing 2SLGBTQIA+ training for placement providers and DCYF staff				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	5.3.3	Provide young people with expansive sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) education and opportunities to safely explore and find themselves				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Affirmation of Identities</b>	5.4	Ensure young people feel safe to be themselves			Pg. 58	This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	5.4.1	Offer secure and non-retaliatory avenues for young people to report discrimination or mistreatment				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	5.4.2	Seek to continuously understand young people's shifting identities throughout their time in foster/kinship care			Pg. 58	This recommendation will also be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
		<b>How DCYF meet Youths' needs</b>				
<b>Services received</b>	6.1	Train DCYF staff on how to identify available resources and connect young people to them				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.1.1	Proactively and consistently share with young people what services and resources they have at their disposal		Pg. 55		
	6.1.2	Provide a more expansive suite of support and services to young people that meet their specific needs				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	6.1.3	Work to meet the needs of young people in rural or remote areas with fewer available resources				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Basic needs</b>	6.2	Ensure that stipends received by foster families are being spent to cover the basic needs of young people				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.2.1	Ask young people if their basic needs are being met in their placement		Pg. 55		This recommendation will also be shared with appropriate program manager/division.
	6.2.2	Require placement providers to give young people a regular spending allowance from the foster care stipend				This recommendation will be shared with appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Health needs</b>	6.3	Provide individualized, consistent, and non-coercive mental health services and support to young people				This recommendation will be shared with appropriate program manager/division.



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	6.3.1	Preemptively inform young people of the preventative and routine physical health care services they are entitled to receive and the health insurance benefits they have				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.3.2	Ensure affordability, transportation, and other concerns are not barriers to young people accessing health services				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.3.3	Consider young people's preferences on what healthcare providers they want to care for them				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.3.4	Follow up with young people to ensure they are keeping up with their medical and mental health needs				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	6.3.5	Provide young people with ongoing education about and supplies for sexual health, sexual harm, self-harm, and drug-related harm reduction				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.3.6	Train placement providers on the range of young people's health needs and the health issues they face				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Education needs</b>	6.4	Strive to maintain the same school for young people				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.4.1	Provide tutoring, credit tracking, and educational support to young people as they navigate the impact of school disruptions				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	6.4.2	Provide young people with referrals and letters of recommendation that help secure opportunities for education post high school				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.4.3	Provide young people with college and financial aid application support, irrespective of whether or not they opt into extended foster care				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Employment and financial needs</b>	6.5	Guide young people in the process of building and leading healthy financial lives				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.5.1	Hold financial education sessions, including around saving, investing, and budgeting				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	6.5.2	Provide young people with support in navigating filing taxes, particularly those earning income as independent contractors				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Housing needs</b>	6.6	Inform and guide youth towards affordable housing opportunities before they become eligible so they are able to enroll as early as possible		Pg. 55		
	6.6.1	Provide mandatory homelessness diversion training to DCYF staff				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
<b>Aging out support</b>	6.7	Collect data on the needs of aging out youth and provide support accordingly				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	6.7.1	Give young people timely referrals and information about the range of resources they can access, including emailed and hard copies of referrals specific to their location				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.7.2	Push against the harmful rhetoric that young people should feel bad or ashamed for receiving help and using resources from the system				Being addressed through RESJ and through updating training to include trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and LGBTQIA+ affirming practices. This recommendation will also be shared with a appropriate program manager/division.
	6.7.3	Increase the age limit for extended foster care				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.
	6.7.4	Allow young people who age out of care to opt into extended foster care				This recommendation will be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.

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	6.7.5	Inform young people and caseworkers of the state legislation allowing young people to exit and re-enter care as many times as necessary until age 21, and create accountability mechanisms to ensure it is implemented		Pg. 55		This recommendation will also be shared with the appropriate program manager/division.