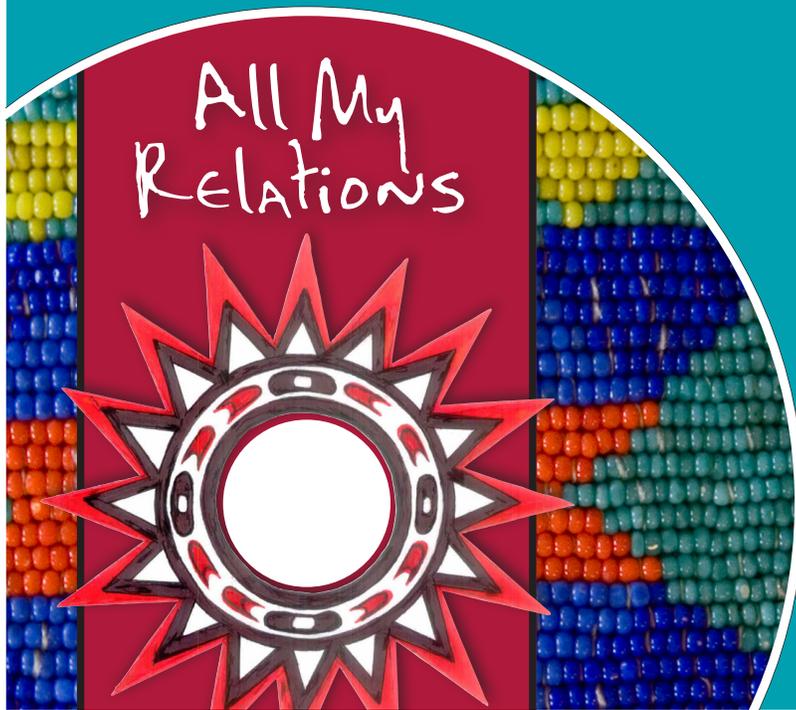


All My Relations

Video Discussion Guide



*We hope this guide and video
will serve as a valuable tool
to promote your awareness and understanding
of the unique strengths and needs of Native children
and to promote and maintain
the vital cultural connections necessary
for our children to thrive.*

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION

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Diane Waddington

Division of Children & Family Services

Trudy Marcellay

Office of Indian Policy

Roxanne Finney

Division of Children & Family Services

Nancy Dufraine

Chehalis Tribe

Lynnette Jordan

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Lisa Powers

Division of Licensed Resources

Jennifer Paddock

Division of Children & Family Services

Don Milligan

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Daryl Toulou

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Betsy Tulee

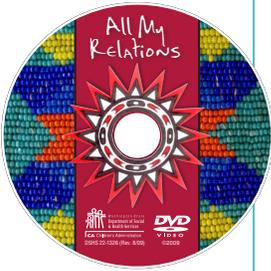
Children's Administration

Shanne Miller

Children's Administration

Lou Ann Carter

Children's Administration



Who you are
and where you
come from
does matter.



Introduction

The “All My Relations” video was created to inform and educate caregivers about the history, heritage and needs of American Indian/Alaskan Native/Canadian First Nations (hereafter Native) children involved in the child welfare system.

Who you are and where you come from does matter; people do see color. Native children are entitled to positively experience their culture. Foster parents need to be able to help Native foster children deal with racism they may experience.

We hope this guide and video will serve as a valuable tool to promote your awareness and understanding of the unique strengths and needs of Native children and to promote and maintain the vital cultural connections necessary for our children to thrive.

History

Starting in the 1860’s, Indian children were forcibly removed from their homes and families, often at very young ages, and sent to religious and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) boarding schools. The intent was to integrate Indians into mainstream society. “Kill the Indian, Save the Man,” was a slogan used to describe this goal. Children were prohibited from speaking their language, following their cultural practices or spiritual beliefs, or having contact with family members who objected to these immersion tactics. Many students returning home were alienated and estranged from their families. Over 10,000 Indian children attended Carlisle Indian Industrial School between 1879 and 1918. From 1895 to 1905 the number of off reservation boarding schools designed to the Carlisle model, increased from 19 to 25, and enrollment doubled to 9,763.

The experience of the boarding schools was often harsh and abusive, especially for the younger children. Most often teachers and administrators did not show affection to the children under their care so many Indian people, over multiple generations, lost their ability to show affection and love.

In 1928, the Meriam Report noted that infectious disease was often widespread due to insufficient funding of the schools. Lack of funding led to poor nutritional meals, overcrowded buildings, unsanitary conditions and students weakened by overwork. The report said that death rates for Indian students were 6 ½ times higher than for other ethnic groups.

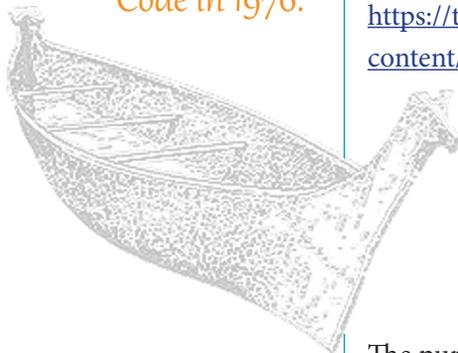
The legacy of abuse at these schools to young, vulnerable children resulted in overwhelming intergenerational trauma and unresolved grief reported to be directly tied to most of the current social problems in Indian communities today. Historical trauma from the boarding school era created many symptoms which continue to have a significant impact on our communities. These may include:

- ▶ Lack of parenting knowledge and skills.
- ▶ Physical, sexual and emotional abuse.
- ▶ Drug and alcohol abuse.
- ▶ Family dysfunction.
- ▶ Loss of cultural knowledge and values (traditional teachings, language, ceremony, child rearing).
- ▶ Urbanization due to re-location.
- ▶ Disintegration of traditional community/family unit.

In 1958, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) collaborated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) under a federal contract to establish the Indian Adoption Project, which promoted the adoption of Indian children by White adoptive families. The policy of assimilation took a more aggressive tone in 1950 through 1970. During this time, thousands of Indian children were removed from their families by missionaries or social workers and placed in foster homes or with non-Indian adoptive parents. Tribal officials, family members, and the Indian community were usually excluded from these placement decisions. During the next nine years, CWLA channeled federal funds to its private member agencies, primarily in New England, and later public child welfare agencies, to place 395 Indian children with White adoptive families. In subsequent years, CWLA offered sincere and deep regret in the role that they played in the Indian Adoption project.

https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/elearning/icwa-elearning-bias-media-context/story-content/external_files/ApologyCWLA.pdf

Washington State implemented the Indian Child Welfare Administrative Code in 1976.



Washington State implemented Indian Child Welfare Administrative Code in 1976. It became policy to staff Indian cases with LICWAC in 1976. These rules direct that Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committees (LICWAC) be established in all regions.

The purpose of LICWAC is to staff cases of Indian children in the following instances:

- ▶ the tribe has not responded to CA membership inquiries
- ▶ the tribe has requested that the case be staffed through LICWAC
- ▶ the tribe is not federally recognized (per policy parental consent must be on file when parents are actively involved in the case)

Federal Indian Child Welfare Act: (Excerpt from the Act)

- ▶ In 1978, Congress passed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)
25 U.S.C. § 1901

Sec. 1901 - Congressional Findings:

(3) *that there* is no resource that is more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Indian tribes than their children and that the United States has a direct interest, as trustee, in protecting Indian children who are members of or are eligible for membership in an Indian tribe.

(4) that an alarmingly high percentage of Indian families are broken up by the removal, often unwarranted, of their children from them by non-tribal public and private agencies and that an alarmingly high percentage of such children are placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes and institutions; and

(5) that the States, exercising their recognized jurisdiction over Indian child custody proceedings through administrative and judicial bodies, have often failed to recognize the essential tribal relations of Indian people and the cultural and social standards prevailing in Indian communities and families.

Sec. 1902 - Congressional declaration of policy

The Congress hereby declares that it is the policy of this Nation to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children from their families and the placement of such children in foster or adoptive homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture, and by providing for assistance to Indian tribes in the operation of child and family service programs.

Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act

The Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA) was passed April 22, 2011 and went into effect July 22, 2011. The WICWA creates a new chapter in Title 13 of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). The Act states; “The legislature further finds that where placement away from the parent or Indian custodian is necessary for the child’s safety, the state is committed to a placement that reflects and honors the unique values of the child’s tribal culture and is best able to assist the Indian child in establishing, developing, and maintaining a political, cultural, social and spiritual relationship with the child’s tribe and tribal community.”

In 1978,
Congress
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Indian Child
Welfare Act
(ICWA).



Fill your home with images, music, books, and toys that your Indian child can identify with.



The legal requirements of the WICWA closely parallel those of the federal ICWA.

The differences are in the following areas:

- ▶ Defines “active efforts” and “the best interests of the Indian child”.
- ▶ Requires a good faith effort to determine whether a child is an Indian child and the Act applies.
- ▶ Clarifies when a tribe’s determination on a child’s membership is conclusive and how to proceed if a tribe fails to respond to notice.
- ▶ Defines who can be considered a “qualified expert witness” for ICWA purposes and the purpose of their testimony.
- ▶ Clarifies placement preferences.

Bias & Prejudice

Pretending that racism doesn’t exist only allows racism to flourish. Saying color doesn’t matter to you only devalues the child who knows for a fact that color **does** matter. Pretending that you have no personal biases or prejudices only allows those biases to express themselves in ways you may not be aware of. Most of us have been raised in a culture of White privilege and have been conditioned to have preconceived notions about people who are different than we are. The key to successfully supporting children who are of a different race or ethnicity is to acknowledge all of the issues around race and ethnicity that nobody wants to talk about.

Here are some ways to support the Native heritage of your child(ren):

- ▶ Celebrate Indian beauty in hairstyles, dress, skin tone, features. Let your children know those things make them beautiful.
- ▶ Expand your social circle to include people of many races, faiths, lifestyles, and abilities. Create opportunities for your child to be in the majority.
- ▶ Help your children find Indian heroes.
- ▶ Fill your home with images, music, books, and toys that your Indian child can identify with.
- ▶ Open a healthy dialogue about racial and ethnic identity issues and its impact on the youth in your home.
- ▶ Develop an understanding on how caregivers can support the healthy development of this identity for the youth in their care and develop a Child Specific Plan to meet the special cultural needs of each child in your care.
- ▶ Learn to promote conversations on these types of topics that may have previously ignored in your family or were considered uncomfortable – how does a child of color feel in a non-Indian family especially when they become an adolescent.
- ▶ Develop skills for and approaches for helping youth address racism, discrimination and how to handle their feeling ‘different’ than others in the family.

Indian foster children, like all children in care, have distinct influences, including their family of origin, their substitute caregivers, and other social/environmental influences.



- ▶ Research has shown that children who are more culturally involved are less likely to become depressed and less likely to become involved in drug and alcohol abuse and other harmful behaviors.

Responding to Racism

Talking about racism and prejudice can be difficult for anyone. If you are non-Indian and parenting Indian children, you may feel anxious about addressing the issue. Avoiding the topic doesn't make the problem go away. In fact avoiding the issue only makes children feel worse about themselves. There are some things you can do to help the children in your care to respond to racism in the most positive way possible.

- ▶ Talk as a family about racism and your own family values. Show your children that not all families are of similar racial or ethnic backgrounds and some may react with fear or anger to your interracial family.
- ▶ Explain that racism is not the fault of the person on the receiving end of prejudice. Racism is the result of ignorance in the child who calls them names or the adult who shuns them.
- ▶ Start the conversation about race early.
- ▶ Use age appropriate language when talking to your children. You may also want to avoid asking them directly if they've experienced racism. They may feel defensive or ashamed. Bring things up in general terms, use personal examples of when you've seen racism; this opens the door for dialogue without making the conversation quite so personal.
- ▶ Advocate for equal treatment of your child. Let your child know that you will not tolerate racism in your household.

Identification & Connections

Children are constantly trying to formulate their identity based on social and cultural experiences, images and external information. Indian foster children have two distinct influences, that of their family of origin and that of their substitute caregivers.

Being the only Indian child in a household or community can be isolating for a child who is already experiencing the trauma of being removed from their family and Indian community.

Foster parents who believe that "a child is a child and all they need is love," are only partially correct. Love certainly goes a long way toward healing a hurting heart but caregivers must do more.

Responsible foster parents must make certain that the children in their care have opportunities to interact with their Indian community.



Responsible foster parents must make certain that the children in their care have opportunities to interact with their Indian community.

Foster parents are expected to make every effort to ensure that children have positive connections to their culture to help nurture a positive sense of identification as an Indian person.

Definitions

Multi-racial • A person who has one parent of Indian descent and one parent of another racial or ethnic background.

Prejudice • An adverse judgment or opinion formed before hand or without knowledge or examination of the facts.

Racial Profiling • The practice, usually by law enforcement, of assuming certain groups are engaging in illicit activity based solely on skin color.

Racism • The belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others.

Transracial Foster Home • A home in which the caregivers are of a different race or ethnicity than the children placed in their care.

White Privilege • A series of rights, liberties, privileges, and courtesies extended to people who are or are believed to be Caucasian. These are extended based solely on the appearance of “white” skin and are not based on merit or behavior. White privilege is invisible and unspoken, those who receive it do so without knowledge of the disparity between their treatment and the treatment of others who do not appear Caucasian.

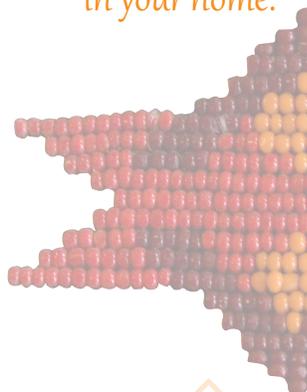
Historical Trauma • The cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma. (Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, PhD)

Indian Child • The legal definition of Indian child per the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) 25 U.S.C. § 1901 means any unmarried person who is under age eighteen and is either:

- (a) a member of an Indian tribe or
- (b) is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and is the biological child of a member of an Indian tribe;

Tribal Membership is the determination made by a tribe that a person is a member or eligible for membership. Membership is not dependent upon being enrolled in a tribe. The tribe is the only authority that can verify a person’s membership or eligibility for membership.

Open a healthy dialogue about racial and ethnic identity issues and its impact on the youth in your home.



Enrollment is the process by which tribes formally registers their members. Not all American Indians and Alaska Natives are formally enrolled in their tribe.

Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee (LICWAC) means a body of department-approved and appointed volunteers who staff and consult with the department on cases of Indian children.

Support Resources

- ▶ **Foster parent support groups:**
<http://fosteringtogether.org/>
- ▶ **Pow wow's:**
 - <http://www.powwows.com/>
 - <http://powwow-power.com/> (has information re powwow etiquette)
 - <http://gatheringofnations.com/>
 - <http://www.500nations.com/>
- ▶ **Native American Big Brother/Big Sister:** <http://www.bbbsps.org>
- ▶ **Huchoosedah Indian Education - Seattle Public Schools:**
<http://www.seattleschools.org>
- ▶ <http://www.nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf>
- ▶ **American Indian Community Center:** <http://www.aiccinc.org/contact/>
- ▶ **Child Welfare Information Gateway:** <http://www.childwelfare.gov>
- ▶ **Child Welfare League of America:** <http://www.cwla.org/our-work/practice-excellence-center/race-culture-identity/>
- ▶ **Clear Sky Native Youth Council** - A Native American/Alaskan Native youth group
<http://thenativecircle.org/2011/01/seattle-clear-sky-native-youth-council/>
- ▶ **Governor's Office of Indian Affairs:** <http://www.goia.wa.gov>
- ▶ **Local Indian Child Welfare Advisory Committee:** <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/indian-child-welfare-policies-and-procedures/10-local-indian-child-welfare-advisory-committees>
- ▶ **Indian Country Today:** <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/>
- ▶ **National Indian Child Welfare Association:** <http://www.nicwa.org>
- ▶ **National Urban Indian Family Coalition:** <http://nuifc.org/>
- ▶ **Native Project:** <http://www.nativeproject.org/>
- ▶ **Red Eagle Soaring:** <http://redeaglesoaring.org/>
- ▶ **Seattle Indian Health Board:** <http://www.sihb.org/>
- ▶ <http://tribaljournays.wordpress.com/>
- ▶ **United Indians of All Tribes Foundation:** <http://www.unitedindians.com/>
- ▶ **MAVIN Foundation** (an organization dedicated to stopping racial discrimination): <http://mavinfoundation.org/index.html>
- ▶ <http://www.nativepeoples.com/Native-Peoples/>

Advocate for
equal treatment
of your child.
Let your child
know that
you will not
tolerate racism
in your
household.

- ▶ <http://www.nativenews.net/>
- ▶ <http://indian-ed.org/>
- ▶ <http://www.k12.wa.us/IndianEd/Curriculum.aspx>
- ▶ <https://easie.grads360.org/services/PDCService.svc/GetPDCDocumentFile?fileId=22675>
- ▶ <http://www.snowwow.com/nainfosmudging.htm>
- ▶ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=13.38&full=true>
- ▶ **White Bison Inc.:** <http://whitebison.org/>
- ▶ http://nativecanadian.ca/Native_Reflections/split_feather_syndrome.htm
- ▶ <http://www.readbag.com/leg-state-or-us-cis-100-question>

Legislative resources:

- ▶ **Federal and state ICWA:** <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/indian-child-welfare-policies-and-procedures>

Enrollment resources:

- ▶ <http://www.native-american-online.org/tribal-enrollment.htm>
- ▶ <http://www.tribalpages.com/>
- ▶ <http://narf.org/nill/resources/roots.html>



Transforming lives