

Disability Rights at DCYF

Know your rights and how to ask for help.



This guide provides an overview of your rights as a person with a disability participating in the programs and services offered by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). It includes information on disability types, your right to access, communication aids, and resources. It also explains how to make a complaint if you believe you were treated unfairly because of your disability.

DCYF is committed to protecting the rights of people with disabilities under state and federal laws.

DCYF does not treat people with disabilities unfairly (discriminate). **In our work with families, DCYF will:**

- Treat people with disabilities as individuals based on their skills and needs.
- Talk with or write to people with disabilities in a way they understand.
- Change or modify services to meet the needs of people with disabilities (also referred to as providing reasonable modifications/accommodations).

Does This Apply to Me?

Under the law, many things count as a “disability” that you may not expect. Some disabilities you can see, and some you cannot. **Some examples of disabilities include:**

- Learning disabilities, such as dyslexia or dysgraphia.
- Intellectual and developmental disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Sensory disabilities, such as hearing loss or low vision.

- Mental health disabilities, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depression, or substance use disorders.
- Mobility disabilities, such as those requiring the use of a walker, cane, or wheelchair.
- Some medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury (TBI), or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

What Are Reasonable Modifications and Communication Aids?

A **reasonable modification** is a change in DCYF policy or practice that will help a person with a disability use the agency’s services.

A **communication aid or service** is a way of communicating (talking or writing) with people with disabilities (such as hearing, speech, or vision impairments).

There are many other changes (modifications), communication aids, and services you can request based on your disability. **Some include:**

- A sign language interpreter or CART services (real-time captioning).
- Reminders of DCYF meetings or appointments.
- Visual aids, like a calendar of upcoming visits, DCYF meetings, or your child’s appointments.
- Parenting skills training course, or other required services, focused on your individual strengths and support needs.
- Changing how often, for how long, or where you have visits with your child so you can practice and show the parenting skills you have learned.
- Having any case-related plans written in shorter and easier language.



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If you are not sure what type of modifications, aids, and services you need from DCYF, you can talk to your attorney or advocate. You can also ask someone outside of DCYF, such as a health care provider or others, to assess what you might need.

If you ask DCYF to make changes or ask for a communication aid or service such as sign language interpreter(s), real-time captioning, etc., **DCYF will:**



Review your request and contact you within ten (10) business days to discuss your request.



Determine if the agency can provide what you asked for or offer you a similar alternative.



Ask you questions to better understand what you need and what changes or modifications will work best for you.

There are many other disabilities that are not listed in this document. If you think a modification or communication aid could help you, please talk to any of the people below:

Contacts:

- Your assigned case worker or their supervisor
- Any DCYF staff person who assists you
- ADA Accessibility Program
 - **PHONE:** 360-480-7230, Relay users dial 7-1-1
 - **VIDEO PHONE:** 360-200-8524
 - **EMAIL:** dcyf.adaaccessibility@dcyf.wa.gov
 - **WEBSITE:** www.dcyf.wa.gov/ada
 - **MAIL:** P.O. Box 4008, Olympia, WA 98504-0983

Child Welfare

How Do I Request Modification or a Communication Aid in Child Welfare?

If you are involved in a Child Welfare case with DCYF and think you need a reasonable change (modification) or communication aid because of your disability, you can talk to any of the listed contacts. Plus, the regional disability liaisons listed here, as well as a Child Welfare Area Administrator (the manager of the office).

The regional disability liaison serving your region:

Child Welfare Region 1 Disability Liaison

dcyf.cwreg1disabilityliaison@dcyf.wa.gov

Counties Served: Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Whitman

Child Welfare Region 2 Disability Liaison

dcyf.cwreg2disabilityliaison@dcyf.wa.gov

Counties Served: Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Kittitas, Klickitat, Yakima, Walla Walla

Child Welfare Region 3 Disability Liaison

dcyf.cwreg3disabilityliaison@dcyf.wa.gov

Counties Served: Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom

Child Welfare Region 4 Disability Liaison

dcyf.cwreg4disabilityliaison@dcyf.wa.gov

County Served: King

Child Welfare Region 5 Disability Liaison

dcyf.cwreg5disabilityliaison@dcyf.wa.gov

Counties Served: Kitsap, Pierce

Child Welfare Region 6 Disability Liaison

dcyf.cwreg6disabilityliaison@dcyf.wa.gov

Counties Served: Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum

How Can I Make a Complaint Related to Disability Discrimination or Failure to Make Reasonable Modifications?

You may file a complaint if you think DCYF did not make requested reasonable changes so you could use the agency's services, or if you think DCYF has treated you unfairly because of your disability. Please complete DCYF's Civil Rights Complaint form, available in many languages at https://dcyf.wa.gov/forms?field_number_value=05-065&title=. If you need help, the DCYF ADA Accessibility Program can help you fill out the Civil Rights Complaint form.

To learn more about how DCYF processes your complaint, please visit DCYF Civil Rights Complaint Process at www.dcyf.wa.gov/accessibility-equity/file-complaint.

DCYF will not retaliate against or punish you if you request a change or modification or file a complaint. Retaliation violates state and federal civil rights laws. If you believe that someone at DCYF has retaliated against you because you asked for help due to your disability or because you filed a complaint, see the list of contacts below.

You do not have to file a complaint with DCYF. You have the right to file complaints directly with one of the agencies below:

Washington Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds (OFCO)

WEBSITE: <https://ofco.wa.gov>

COMPLAINT FORM: <https://ofco.dynamics365portals.us/complaint-form>

PHONE: 1-800-571-7321 (relay users dial 7-1-1)

U.S. Health and Human Services Department (HHS), Office of Civil Rights

WEBSITE: www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/index.html

ONLINE COMPLAINT PORTAL: <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>

COMPLAINT FORM (mail or email): www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr-cr-complaint-form-package.pdf

Office for Civil Rights Centralized Case Management Operations

200 Independence Ave., SW
Suite 515F, HHH Building
Washington, D.C. 20201

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Civil Rights Division

WEBSITE: <https://civilrights.justice.gov>

DOJ CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION COMPLAINT (online): <https://civilrights.justice.gov/report>

ADA COMPLAINT FORM (mail): www.ada.gov/file-a-complaint

950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
4CON, 9th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20530