Arizona Department of Child Safety

Presented by:
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Intergovernmental Tribal Liaison

DCS Mission & Vision

Our vision is to see the children of Arizona thrive

We believe children thrive in family environments free from abuse and neglect

Our mission is to successfully engage children and families to ensure safety, strengthen families, and achieve permanency.
Agency of Response

- DCS responds to reports made to our hotline 888-SOS-CHILD (888-767-2445)
- Once a report is made it is then sent to one of our field offices throughout the state*
- Our investigators meet with the children and parents/guardian to assess the safety of the child/children
- Depending on the situation there are many different paths that DCS may take including but not limited to recommending services only, in-house dependency, out of home dependency or voluntary dependency.

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- In SFY 20 we had 45,175 reports taken, down from over 47,044 the year before.
- In SFY 20 out of those reports, 30,049 were neglect, 13,265 were physical abuse, 1,559 were Sexual abuse, 269 were for emotional abuse.
- In SFY 20 there were 9,727 entries into foster care. Entry rate per 1000 for all ethnicities is 5.3.
  - African Americans: 17.4  American Indians: 8.1
  - Asian Americans: 1.2  Hispanic: 3.9  Caucasian: 4.4
- Currently there are approximately 985 (.07%) AI children in our care and custody and 13,951 in total.
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- Currently the Department has nearly 1500 Field staff which includes Case Specialists, Supervisors, and Hotline Specialists.

- Client threats: Since January 21 DCS has received 44 threats by clients that we take seriously throughout the state

- Beginning February 2020 and throughout COVID DCS experienced a noticeable drop in the reports compared to 2019 and 2021. In March of this year it began to return to comparable numbers from previous years

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DCS and COVID—Our response

- While many jurisdictions shut down during the pandemic, AZ DCS continued to respond to reports for investigation in person and continued our mission of seeking permanency for all youth in care.

- The courts were a great partner in utilizing technology to help ensure hearings and cases proceeded as planned.

- The Department was also sensitive to the unique challenges faced by our tribes, and worked closely with the Policy Unit to ensure tribal guidance for COVID-19 was understood and adhered to by all staff and providers

- Despite the challenges that COVID-19 presented to the state DCS continued to ensure child safety and well being
Indian Child Welfare Act

ICWA

Why is it Important?

Federal Requirements

Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978

- Established minimum federal jurisdictional, procedural and substantive standards aimed to achieve the dual purposes of protecting the right of an Indian child to live with an Indian family and to stabilize and foster continued tribal existence.
Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978

- Tribal Sovereignty
- Preservation of Indian Families
- Tribal and family connectedness

When Does ICWA Apply?

When there is a child custody proceeding involving an Indian child.

- Foster Care Placements
- Guardianships
- Termination of Parental Rights
- Pre-Adoptive Placement
- Adoptive Placements
- Voluntary Placements
DCS and ICWA

- What are the responsibilities for DCS under ICWA?
  - Identification
  - Notification
  - Active Efforts
  - Placement Preferences
  - Qualified Expert Witness
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DCS Office of Tribal Relations

- Lisa Cadman—ICWA Specialist
- Kasaundra Gooden—QEW
- Regional Tribal Liaisons—5 Regions

Provide:
- Ensure the Department is compliant with ICWA
- Ensure that the Department maintains strong relationships with Tribes and Urban community
- Training for DCS staff, Tribal and Urban Programs and Community Partners
- Policy review/development for the Department
- Case Review and support for DCS Case Managers and the AG
- Participate in Child Safety/Wellness Committees/Events
- Public Relations

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New Projects/Initiatives

- Development of “101” series for DCS and Non-Indian Foster families
  - Hopi
  - Tohono O’Odham
  - Pascua Yaqui
  - Navajo
- Outreach with the DCS Office of Prevention: Safe Sleep, Healthy Families and Parent Resources
- Outreach with DCS Young Adult Program
- Partnership with Fatherhood Matters to develop a Native American Fatherhood Program
- Partnership with Arizona’s Urban Indian Programs to develop stronger access to services
DCS and Tribal/Urban Communities

- Partnership
  - What are the needs/challenges involving child safety?
  - How can we work to improve access to services?
  - How can DCS work better with your Tribal or Urban Community?
  - What can DCS do to strengthen our relationship?
  - Suspect child abuse? Mandatory Reporter—888-SOS CHILD or 888-767-2445
Contact:

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