



Race, Ethnicity, and Culture: *Are they the same thing?*

Race is defined in many different ways, which may lead to confusion sometimes. Actually race is a classification process used to categorize people into groups. In the United States, racial groups have commonly been identified as:

- Caucasian/White
- African-American/Black
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Alaska Native or American Indian

So if a person is identifying as Alaska Native or American Indian, they are describing themselves within a racial group.

Ethnicity is more commonly defined as subdivisions of racial groups. An ethnic group is a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage, consisting of a common language, a common culture (often including a shared religion) and a tradition of common ancestry (corresponding to a specific tribe or social unit).

Culture is defined in many different ways but all of the definitions center around "a way of life" such as beliefs, customs, values, attitudes, experiences, social forms, knowledge, and history among other things.



Knowing Who You Are (KWYA)

KWYA is a process for helping workers understand racial and ethnic identity, while giving them some skills/activities to do with others on their own racial and ethnic identity journey, while they are on their own racial and ethnic journey.

KWYA is a 3-part process that includes watching a video (about 20 minutes long), completing an e-learning tutorial on-line (approximately 6 hours long), and then participating in a 2-day workshop.

KWYA workshops are being offered to tribal workers, state workers, and community partners.

KWYA is a required training for all OCS employees. Professionals come together to work on their own journeys about knowing their own Racial & Ethnic Identity (REI), while learning skills to assist youth, families, and caretakers on their own REI journeys.

For further information, please visit the website:
Knowing Who You Are on the Casey Family Programs

[http://www.casey.org/Resources/Initiatives/
KnowingWhoYouAre/](http://www.casey.org/Resources/Initiatives/KnowingWhoYouAre/)

<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/ocs/ICWA/>



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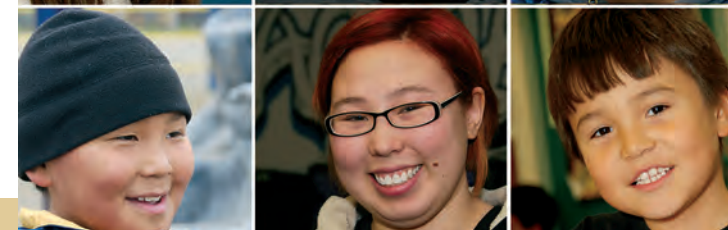
(907) 465-3191

P.O. Box 110630
Juneau, AK 99811-0630
hss.state.ak.us/ocs



INDIAN CHILD WELFARE

Desk Guide to the ICWA Law & Culture



Indian Child Welfare Act

(ICWA, 25 U.S.C., Par. 1902.3)

ICWA stands for the Indian Child Welfare Act, which is a federal law passed in 1978. ICWA was passed in response to the alarmingly high number of Indian children being removed from their homes by both public and private agencies. The intent of Congress under ICWA was to “protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families” (25 U.S.C. § 1902). ICWA sets federal requirements that apply to state child custody proceedings involving a child who is either: 1) a member of a tribe; or 2) eligible for membership in a tribe, and one of the child’s parents is a member of the tribe.

What Does ICWA do?

Declaring there is no resource more vital to the continued existence and integrity of Native American tribes than their children, ICWA:

- Reaffirms the jurisdiction and authority of tribal courts in Native child welfare matters.
- Requires notification of the tribes during involuntary custody proceedings in state courts and establishes the tribes’ right to intervene.
- Mandates that active efforts are to be made to return Native American children to their families whenever possible.
- Requires clear and convincing evidence that continued parental custody would mean physical or emotional harm to the child.
- Requires the testimony of experts who come from the child’s tribe or have substantial experience in Native American child and family services.
- Requires active efforts toward family rehabilitation and reunification be made before termination of parental rights or final placement decisions are made.
- When foster care and adoption placements are necessary, requires placement preferences be given to members of the child’s family, tribe, or other Native families.

Placement of Indian children

§ 1915. Placement of Indian children

(a) Adoptive placements; preferences

In any adoptive placement of an Indian child under State law, a preference shall be given, in the absence of good cause to the contrary, to a placement with:

- (1) a member of the child’s extended family
- (2) other members of the Indian child’s tribe
- (3) other Indian families.

(b) Foster care placements; criteria; preferences

Any child accepted for foster care or pre-adoptive placement shall be placed in the least restrictive setting which most approximates a family and in which his special needs, if any, may be met. The child shall also be placed within reasonable proximity to his or her home, taking into account any special needs of the child. In any foster care or pre-adoptive placement, a preference shall be given, in the absence of good cause to the contrary, to a placement with:

- (1) a member of the Indian child’s extended family
- (2) a foster home licensed, approved, or specified by the Indian child’s tribe
- (3) an Indian foster home licensed or approved by an authorized non-Indian licensing Authority
- (4) an institution for children approved by an Indian tribe or operated by an Indian organization which has a program suitable to meet the Indian child’s needs.

Questions to ask when trying to determine whether a youth falls under the ICWA laws.

1. Is the child an enrolled member of a tribe?
2. Is either parent an enrolled member of a tribe?
3. Is either parent Alaska Native or American Indian?
4. What are the dates of birth and birthplaces of the parents and grandparents?
5. Are the parents or grandparents affiliated with a particular tribe or village, which may make the child eligible for enrollment?
6. What are the maiden names of the mother and grandmothers?
7. If any of the parents or grandparents were adopted, what were their names before adoption?

CERTIFICATE OF INDIAN BLOOD

The Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) is a very important document for Native children. The certificate will allow Native children access to Native health, social and other services, which are usually at no cost. All Native children should obtain the certificate. Certificates of Indian Blood are obtained through the BIA for Alaska Native people.

The Office of Children’s Services, tribal partners, and community partners are always seeking Native families willing to be caretakers. If a native youth is in state care, we, as partners, recognize the value of that youth being able to be cared for in a native home. If you are interested in becoming a licensed native care provider please contact the number on the back of this brochure.

