



ICWA

BEST PRACTICE TIPS



ICWA is the gold standard for child welfare practice for all families.

- Prevention and family preservation is always the preferred option for Native American families.
- Partnerships with Tribal Nations are the key to successful child welfare practice and ICWA compliance. Successful partnerships begin with early and frequent engagement and meaningful consultation.
- Children who are not reunified with their family will find their way back to their Tribal Nation. Make sure you are helping the child to maintain their relationship to their Tribal community in order to assist their eventual return.
- Document clearly and objectively all of your efforts, but especially those related to inquiry, notice, active efforts and placement.
- If a child must be enrolled in order to be considered a member of a tribe, the social worker should assist the family and child in completing required paperwork and engaging in the enrollment process.
- Follow the Spirit of ICWA: Ensure access to culturally appropriate services and facilitate ties between the child, extended family and the tribe, when the Tribe is not federally recognized and when the Native American child is descended from a federally-recognized tribe but is not eligible for membership.
- Approach your practice and your work with Native American families with an Active Efforts Mindset: partnership (equitable ownership of the work and outcomes); meaningful consultation; remediation of past trauma; and resilience.
- Focus on the resilience of the child, the family and the Tribe. Let historical and contemporary trauma that they are experiencing inform your work, but let their resilience guide it.

