

Indian child welfare found lacking

An HEW-funded survey of Indian child welfare programs has suggested that the delivery of services can be improved and strengthened through the employment of more Indian child welfare service workers and increased involvement of Indians in program planning.

According to the survey, "Indian Child Welfare: A State-of-the-Field Study, conducted by the University of Denver's Center for Research and Development under a contract from HEW's Children's Bureau, most state and county agencies employ few Indian social workers and make no special provision for cultural differences in Indian families.

As a result, said the study,

"ignorance of tribal cultures, especially of the importance of the extended family, clan systems and tribal child-rearing practices have often resulted in child welfare services that weaken rather than strengthen Indian families."

The study noted that although there has been some diminution of the practice, there is continued widespread placement of Indian children in non-Indian homes.

Single copies of the survey summary, "Indian Child Welfare: A State-of-the-Field Study, Summary of Findings and Discussion of Policy Implications," DHEW Publication No. (OHD) 76-30096 are available by writing to: Children's Bureau, Office of Child Development, P.O. Box 1182, Washington, D.C. 20013.