

# Racial Equity Impact: Seeds of Change

To address racial inequities and disparities in child welfare and cultivate an environment of growth and change, the Kansas Department for Children and Families has taken the following steps. As each seed is planted and tended, there is potential to yield great bounty and benefit to our communities.



## **Kansas Racial Equity Collaborative**

*Intentional Discussions and Intentional Professional Development Initiatives.* DCF, CarePortal, and the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare have organized virtual presentations in a statewide effort to understand the history of racial inequities in child welfare and advocate for racial equity.

Learn more at [www.careportal.org/kansas-racial-equity](http://www.careportal.org/kansas-racial-equity).



## **The Kansas Practice Model (KPM)**

*Diversifying the toolkit for DCF staff and changing the culture for how the agency walks alongside families.* Made up of multiple promising evidence-based practices, the KPM integrates tools such as genograms and conversation mapping to help staff identify the natural supports each child and families have as well as discuss what is working well in the home. The KPM contains elements of the following models, which have the potential to impact racial disparities in removal decisions.

- **Team Decision Making (TDM):** A TDM meeting provides a venue for all family members to actively participate in live decisions to determine where a child can safely live and for placement changes. These meetings provide dignity to families by listening to them and their support systems who are able to vocalize their areas of concern and share family strengths.
- **Family Finding / Family Seeing:** This practice prioritizes placing a child with their family and kinship support systems first.



## **Family Resource Centers (FRCs)**

*Community-based, flexible and culturally sensitive hubs for strengthening and supporting families.* Credentialed FRCs must meet the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening Supports. One of the five key areas is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. DCF has contracted with Kansas Children's Service League to assist existing FRCs to become credentialed and expand FRCs in the coming years.



## **Kansas Legal Services Parent Advocate Program Pilot**

*Equalizing access to justice.* This pilot allows DCF to provide legal resources to parents prior to filing a petition to prevent unnecessary family separation and advance racial equity. The Kansas counties of Cowley, Douglas, Kingman, Leavenworth, Reno and Sumner were selected for the pilot program due to the high race disproportionality metrics that exists for the counties.



## **Additional Racial Equity Impact actions made by DCF:**

- DCF hired a full-time DEI officer, created a state and agencywide DEI training, and includes DEI in strategic planning.
- The agency's learning and development training team included the "Implicit Bias" class into the required curriculum for all DCF staff.
- Racial disproportionality data has been shared and reviewed during the Family First Interagency Advisory Community Board meetings to promote awareness and solution exploration into the disparities.