



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
Courier # 56-20-25

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Dempsey Benton, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director
(919) 733-3055

September 15, 2008

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: Children's Services Supervisors and Managers

SUBJECT: Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA) as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provision (IEP) of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996

The federal government continues to express concern about each state's compliance with the provisions of the Multiethnic Placement Act/Interethnic Adoption Provisions (MEPA/IEP). In previous Dear County Director Letters dated October 26, 1998, December 8, 2003 and June 25, 2007, we have informed you of these concerns and our need to adhere to compliance requirements. We have also asked that you notify the Division anytime there is a potential MEPA/IEP related grievance or challenge to a county's placement decision. This will allow us to be aware of the number and nature of such cases, even if they do not become formal appeals.

As a reminder, the requirements of MEPA/IEP are as follows:

- **Placement will not be delayed or denied on the basis of the race, color or national origin of the adoptive or foster parent, or the child involved; and**
- **Diligent efforts will be made to recruit potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed.**

The Division monitors agency compliance of MEPA/IEP by requiring each county to develop an annual plan. Each county should submit a copy of their plan for monitoring purposes. Please submit your plan for fiscal year 2008-2009 by **October 31, 2008**. As in previous years, the plan must include the following:

- **Certification that the agency fully understands the requirements of the Multiethnic Placement Act as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions.**
- **Specific steps the agency is taking to ensure compliance with MEPA/IEP. Particular emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic diversity of children in your legal custody or placement responsibility.**

All agencies have been provided a copy of the MEPA/IEP publication, "A Guide to the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by the Interethnic Adoption Provisions of 1996". If your agency did not receive this publication it can be found at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/mepa94/index.htm. We encourage you to work closely with your Children's Program Representative in assessing the strengths of your efforts to recruit foster/adoptive families that reflect the ethnic diversity of your foster care population. The addressing of MEPA/IEP as a recruitment issue will help you avoid having to address it as a legal compliance and civil rights issue.

All MEPA/IEP plans and notification of potential grievances or challenges should be addressed to Amelia Lance, Adoption Coordinator, at (919) 733-9464, or email Amelia.Lance@ncmail.net. The plans can be faxed to Attention: Amelia Lance, at (919) 715-0766.

Sincerely,



Charisse S. Johnson, Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services

cc: Sherry Bradsher
Jo Ann Lamm
Sarah Barham
Children's Program Representatives
Work First Representatives
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Team Leaders
Local Business Liaisons

FSCWS-51-08