Administrative Policies and Procedures: 16.2

Subject:	**Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/as Amended by the Inter-Ethnic Adoption Provision of 1996 (AKA: MEPA/IEPA Inter-Ethnic Placement Act)**
Authority:	TCA 37-5-106; Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-382; Inter-Ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, Public Law 104-188, Sec. 1808; Administration of Children, Youth and Family – 1M-CB-97-04
Standards:	Best Practice Standards 2-108B, 2-110B, PA-AS 2, PA-AS 8.02; PA-FC 6;PA-CPS 11.
Application:	To All Department of Children's Services Employees and Contract Agency Providers

Policy Statement:

It is the intent of the Department of Children's Services to bind all agencies, organizations, or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act amended by Inter-Ethnic Adoption Provision of 1996.

Purpose:

The Department of Children's Services strives to promote the best interest of children placed in foster care by preventing discrimination in the placement of a child(ren) on the basis of race, color or national origin. This goal can be met by actively recruiting and identifying resource families that can best meet the needs of children.

Procedures:

A. Prohibited practices	The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Act of 1996 specifies that an agency involved in adoption or foster care placements: 1. May not categorically deny to any person the opportunity to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of the adoptive/foster parent, or the child involved. 2. May not delay or deny the placement of a child for adoption/foster care, or otherwise discriminate in making placement decisions on the basis of race, color, national origin of the adoptive/foster parents, or the child involved.
B. Goals	1. Decrease the length of time children wait to be adopted or placed. 2. Facilitate the identification and recruitment of adoptive and foster families who meet the needs of available children. 3. Eliminate discrimination based on the race, color or national origin of the child

	or family involved.
C. Placement decisions	1. The adoptive/foster care placement of a child shall not be delayed or denied on the basis of the race, color, or national origin of the adoptive parent or the child involved. 2. All relatives who might serve as a child's caregiver (as promptly as possible) must be considered first choice. 3. Any consideration of race must be narrowly tailored and individualized, focusing on the best interests of the child. 4. Consideration of race as a factor in the selection of criteria requires a review by the Directors of Foster Care and Adoption Services or their designees.
D. Requirements	1. The Department of Children's Services must provide diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial composition of the children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. 2. Any appearance of violations must be reported to the local Title VI Coordinator. 3. The Director of Foster Care and Adoption, Provider Services and the Departmental Title VI Coordinator shall conduct a formal review of the case jointly to determine if violations exist and if the problem can be remedied.
E. Non-compliance with MEPA/IEPA	1. Failure to comply with MEPA/IEPA shall be considered as a violation of the terms of the contract and a basis for contract suspension, termination, or rejection. Any entity i.e., provider agencies are not afforded a corrective process and must return all Federal foster care and adoption funds. 2. If a State of Tennessee employee is found guilty of any discriminatory practice based on MEPA/IEPA provisions, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Department of Personnel and DCS policy.
F. Posted notice	Each facility administrator must ensure that a MEPA-IEPA poster is conspicuously posted at the entrance of each DCS facility/office, all DCS entities and contract facilities.

Forms:	***None***

Collateral documents:	*None (Other supporting documents, i.e., manuals, work aids, etc, or significant policies associated with policy)*

Glossary:	
IEAP:	Acronym that refers to the Inter-Ethnic Adoption provision that amended MEPA in 1996. IEAP is commonly referred to and used interchangeably with IEPA. This term refers to placements of children that fall within coverage provided under Section 1808 of P.L. 104-188 [42 USC 1996b], known as the Removal of Barriers to Interethnic Adoption Act, which affirms the prohibition contained in the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994, against delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or foster care on the basis of race, color or national origin of the foster or adoptive parents or of the child involved.
MEPA:	Acronym that refers to the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act. Placement of children with families across ethnic and racial lines.