**Pre-Service Module: Placement**

**Section 4: Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA)**

**Section Learning Objectives**

By the end of Section 4: Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA), child welfare professionals will be able to:

* Recognize why MEPA was created
* Identify prohibited practices
* Identify permitted practices
* Understand that sanctions can be applied to states that don’t comply with MEPA

**Section Themes and Key Points**

Below is a summary of the themes and key points covered in this section. This summary is intended to remind learners of the key learning points addressed and assist supervisors / coaches in understanding what was covered in order for them to guide and support the application of learning for new child welfare professionals related to this section.

1. This section explains the background and reasons the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) was established. Prior to MEPA, practice favored placing children in ethnically matched families. Recruitment efforts did not keep up with growing demand and thousands of minority children remained in foster care for years longer than comparable white children. As a result, there was a growing concern about the need children have for permanence being ultimately more important than racially similar families. MEPA does not supersede ICWA and ICWA should always be applied when working with Native American children.
2. This section outlines the basic mandates of MEPA:

* Prohibits delay/denial of child placement based upon child’s race, color, or national origin.
* Prohibits denial of prospective parent from foster or adoptive parenting due to race, color, or national origin.
* Requires that states recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the diversity of the state.

1. This section identifies prohibited practices under MEPA:

* Using race, color, or national origin to differentiate between otherwise acceptable foster or adoptive placements.
* Honoring the request of a birth parent to place a child with a family of a specific race, color, or national origin.
* Requiring any additional or special assessment of a prospective family who expresses an interest in becoming a foster or adoptive caregiver for a child of a particular race, color, or national origin.
* Relying upon general assumptions about the needs of children of a particular race, color, or national origin.
* Requiring extra training for parents who wish to adopt or foster transracially.
* “Steering” prospective parents away from parenting a child of another race, color, or national origin.

1. This section identifies permitted practices under MEPA:

* Asking prospective foster and adoptive parents’ what race, color, or national origin of child they will accept.
* Providing information and resources about adopting a child of another race, color or national origin to prospective adoptive and foster parents who request such information and make it known to all families that such information and resources are available.
* Considering the request of a birth parent to place the child with an identified relative or non-relative.
* Discussing the special cultural and physical needs of children of different races, colors, or national origins as part of the training which is required of all parents who seek to become adoptive or foster parents.

**On-the-Job Application Activities**

Listed in this section is an optional transfer of training activity to support the learner in applying the knowledge acquired during the Placement: MEPA Pre-Service Module to their CPS roles and responsibilities.

This activity is optional and is provided only to aid the child welfare professional and supervisor/coach in supporting transfer of learning from pre-service to the agency. The child welfare professional, with input from their supervisor/coach, may choose to complete some, or none of this activity or substitute in other activities.

**Option 1: MEPA in Your Agency Activity**

* Arrange to meet with the foster care coordinator(s) in your agency. Ask the following:
* How are the mandates of MEPA (prohibited and permitted practices) met in your agency?
* What recruiting strategies are utilized?
* How are children matched with providers?
* Discuss your findings with your supervisor or coach.