

# 2005

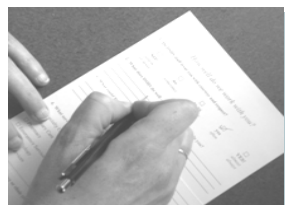
## Children's Administration Provider Survey

Nancy K. Raiha, MSW, Ph.D.    Monica A. Stanley    Rebecca G. Block, MSW



### Who Responded?

1,958 individuals and agencies who provide services to clients of DSHS Children's Administration responded to the 2005 Children's Administration Survey.



### What did it ask?

This postcard-style survey asked each respondent to rate the courtesy and respect of DSHS employees, and to report what DSHS does well and what DSHS can do better.



### How was it sent?

12,571 surveys were enclosed in all Social Service Payment System (SSPS) payments for services to clients of Children's Administration mailed between January 1, 2005 and February 1, 2005. The response rate was above 16%.\*

\*Exact response rate cannot be calculated because we do not know the exact number of providers who received surveys; the SSPS payment system could not specify the number of provider payments made to the same provider. There were a number of cases in which a provider received more than one SSPS payment during the survey time frame, and thus received more than one copy of the survey.



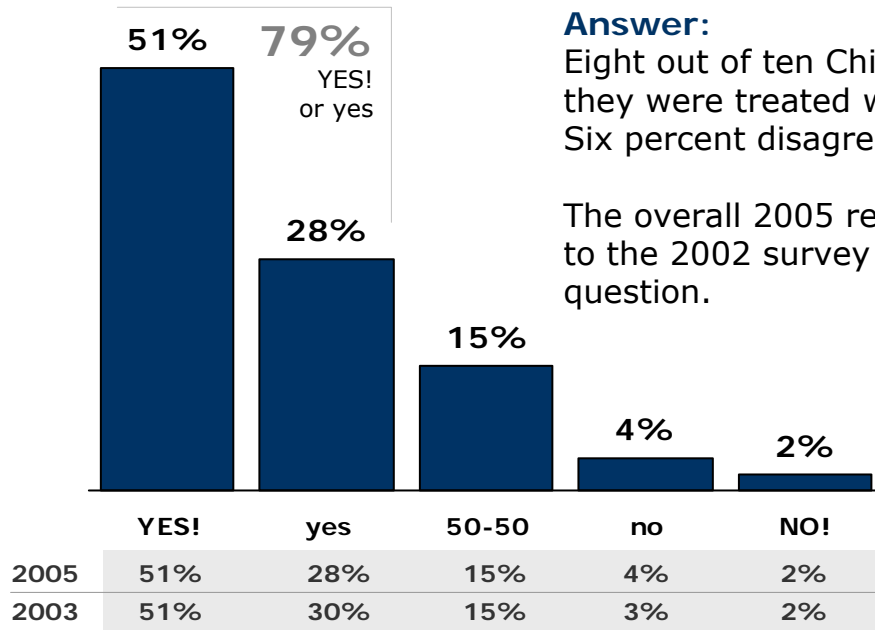
## Courtesy and Respect

### Do DSHS staff treat you with courtesy and respect?

#### Answer:

Eight out of ten Children's providers said that they were treated with courtesy and respect. Six percent disagreed.

The overall 2005 results are almost identical to the 2002 survey responses to this question.



As shown in the table, in most Children's Administration provider groups, about eight out of ten providers answered "YES!" or "yes," indicating that they were treated with courtesy and respect. Those receiving adoption support payments and those providing counseling or psychological evaluations were significantly more likely to say they were treated with courtesy and respect than those providing childcare or respite care.

#### Differences by Type of Provider

Service Provided by Respondent	# Responding	% Yes*
Adoption Support	788 (40%)	83%
Foster Care or Relative Care	503 (26%)	75%
Childcare or Respite Care	304 (16%)	66%
Counseling or Psych Evaluation	72 (4%)	96%
Transportation	71 (4%)	79%
Family Preservation or Home-Based Services	17 (1%)	82%
Other	68 (3%)	65%
More than One Type of Service	104 (5%)	75%
Service Not Specified	31 (2%)	65%

\* Answer to "Do DSHS staff treat you with courtesy and respect?"

## Providers Speak Out

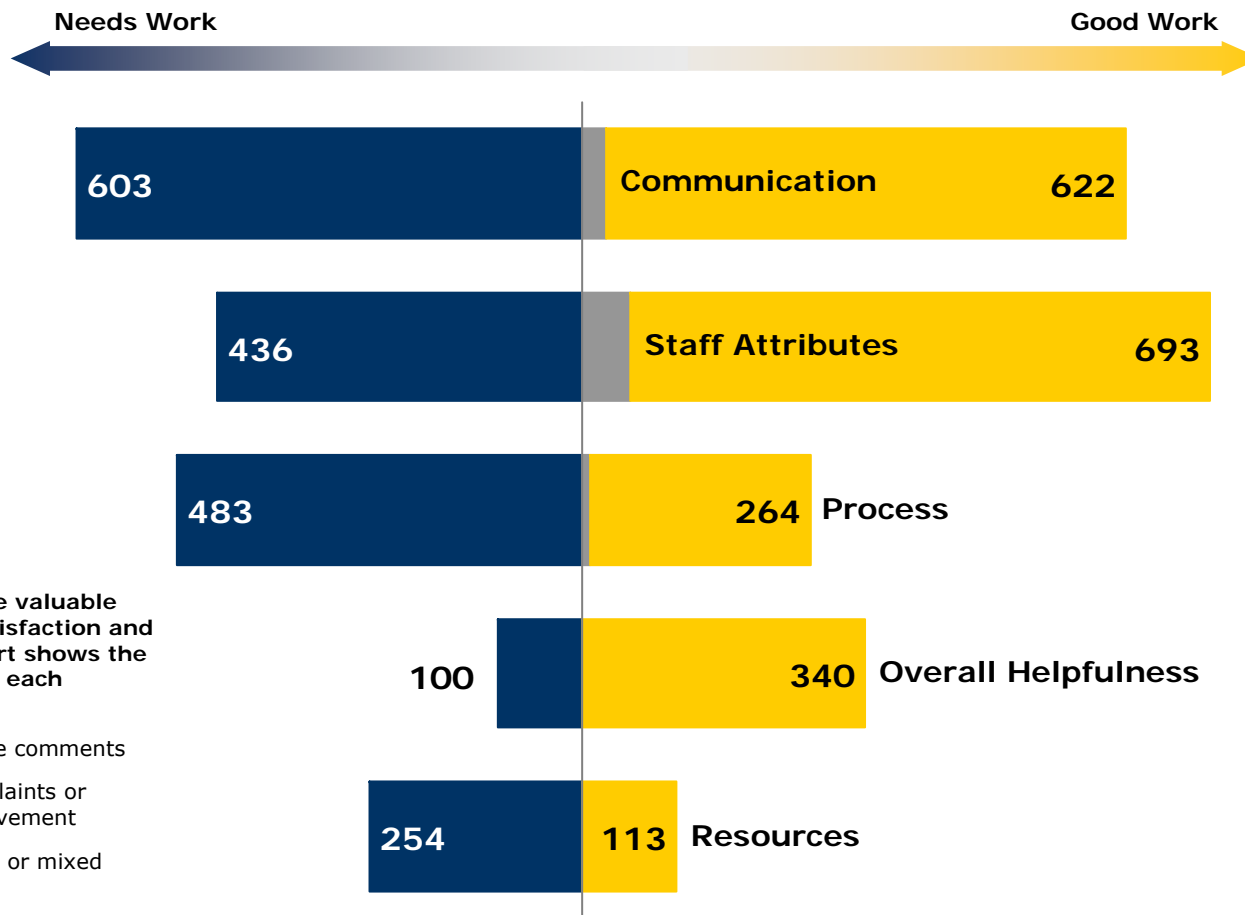
Two open-ended questions were asked:

**What does DSHS do well?**

**What could DSHS do better?**

### Providers' answers addressed 5 major issues

Each issue is addressed in detail in pages 3 through 7

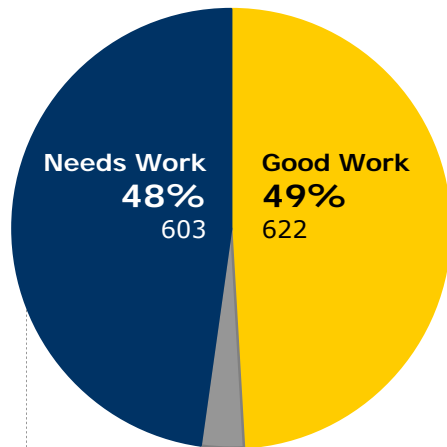


Providers' answers gave valuable insight into areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The chart shows the number of comments in each category:

- **Good Work** – Positive comments
- **Needs Work** – Complaints or suggestions for improvement
- **Gray areas** – Neutral or mixed responses

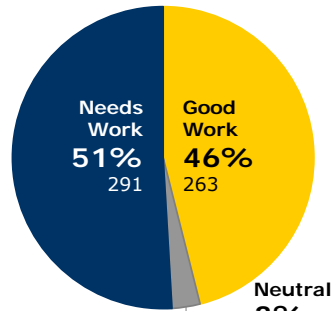
# Communication

## Do we communicate well?



1082 providers commented about communication in general; comments were almost evenly divided between compliments and suggestions for improvement.\*

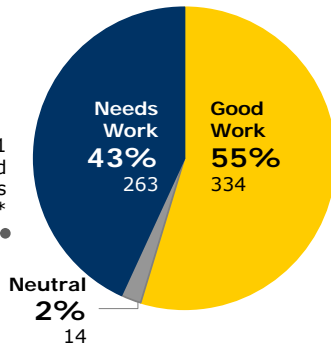
### Phone or e-mail access



Just over half of the 571 comments about phone and e-mail access to DSHS staff were suggestions for improvement.\*

SUB-CATEGORY

### Information

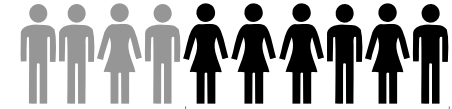


The majority of the 611 comments about accurate and timely information and answers to questions were positive.\*

SUB-CATEGORY

\* Some providers made both positive and negative comments on communication issues. Often they also commented on both subcategories of communication. Thus, one cannot total the subcategories to calculate the total number of providers commenting on communication.

60% of the 1,798 providers who made comments addressed communication



COMMUNICATION MENTIONED

### Areas to Improve:

- Return phone calls
- Minimize telephone "hold" times
- Provide current, accurate information about children in their care (background, available resources, court case and parental status)
- Honesty and keeping promises

### Providers Appreciate Workers Who:

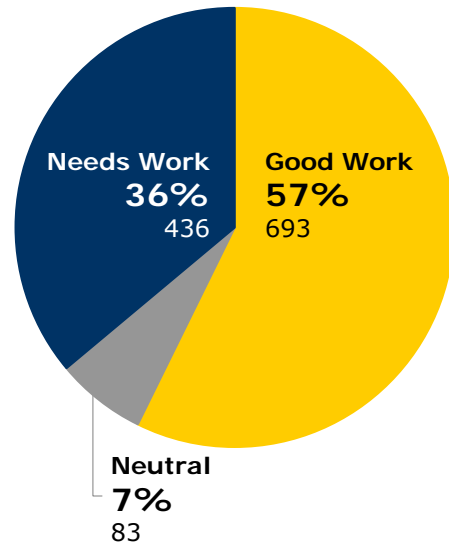
- Return calls quickly
- Keep in contact
- Answer questions
- Listen well

## Providers say...

- "They are always able to get the information I need to me **very quickly** – and are **extremely helpful** when I have questions."
- "The only problem is getting someone to **return a phone call** – it takes many calls before we hear from a person."
- "**COMMUNICATE!** I am often the last one to know of things that directly affect my foster child and my family."
- "**Returns calls promptly.** Often calls to notify us of changes."
- "At least **try to listen** when I ask something."
- "They **take the time to listen** to my concerns and have the **patience to explain** many things I do not understand."
- It would be **nice to hear** from a social worker."

## Staff Attributes

### What about our staff?



1,014 providers commented on staff attributes.

Comments commending staff far outnumbered suggestions for improvement.

125 providers mentioned a specific staff member by name. 104 of these comments were complimentary.

### Staff attributes include...

**COURTESY AND RESPECT** – Whether staff members treat providers with courtesy and respect.

**FOLLOW THROUGH AND SUPPORT** – Level of follow through with requests, provision of guidance and support, and problem solving.

**KNOWLEDGE OF RULES AND HELP** – Knowledge of staff about various programs and resources to help providers and clients in DSHS and the community, and staff willingness to assist.

More than half of the providers mentioned staff characteristics



#### Areas to Improve:

- Staff who are condescending, rude or abrupt
- Difficulty in accessing staff
- Consistent levels of service from all staff

#### Providers Appreciate Workers Who:

- Are helpful, courteous, compassionate and respectful
- Listen to providers
- Value providers as respected team members
- Put children first
- Go out of their way to support children and providers

### Providers say...

*"I can't remember a negative experience – **always helpful, courteous, answer my questions, etc.**"*

*"Remind social workers that foster parents are **not beneath** them."*

*"Most workers **truly want to make a difference** with families."*

*"**They listen when I grumble** and support me however they can."*

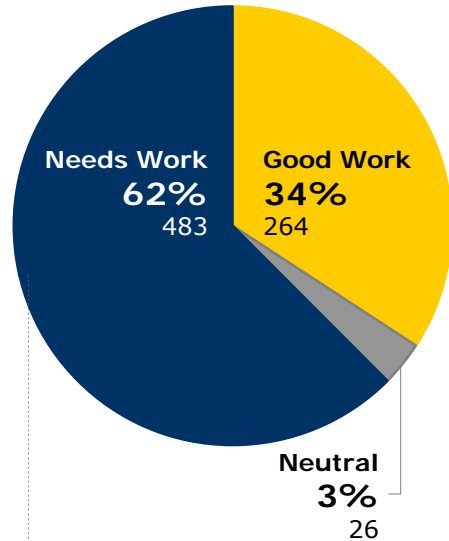
*"**Wants us to jump** when she orders, **but takes her time when we ask** for something."*

*"They are **ALWAYS kind, helpful and flexible**. **EVERYONE** I have dealt with has been simply the best!"*

*"**We love her!**"*

# Process

## Can we improve our processes?

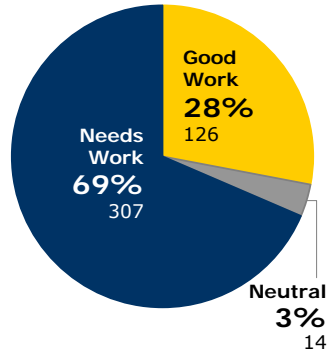


Most of the 669 providers who commented on processes and payment procedures suggested ways to improve efficiency and ease of use.\*

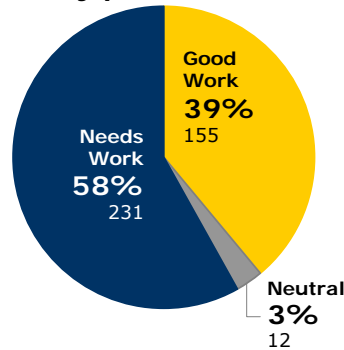
Two-thirds of the 447 comments about non-payment processes and procedures – including paperwork, bureaucracy – were suggestions for improvement.\*

SUB-CATEGORY

### General processes



### Pay processes



Most of the 398 comments about the payment process – including accuracy and timeliness, direct payment, tax withholding, and the automated Invoice Express system – were suggestions for improvement.\*

SUB-CATEGORY

\* Some providers made both positive and negative comments on process issues. Often they also commented on both subcategories of process. Thus, one cannot total the subcategories to calculate the total number of providers commenting on process.

More than one third of the providers addressed processes and procedures



PROCESS WAS MENTIONED

### Areas to Improve:

- Payment errors and slow authorization for payments
- Timeliness in licensing and other processing
- Streamline paperwork and consolidate mailings
- Advance information and clarification of changes
- Consistent rules

### Providers Appreciate:

- Paperwork processed quickly and smoothly
- Timely, accurate payments
- Quick responses to e-mail and fax requests
- The Invoice Express system

## Providers say...

*"There's not enough room here to write all the things . . . it's all red tape and unorganized."*

*"I like how they have reorganized the office."*

*"If I can take care of the children on time, how come I can't get paid on time?"*

*"We appreciate how easy it is to find out if a parent has been approved for services."*

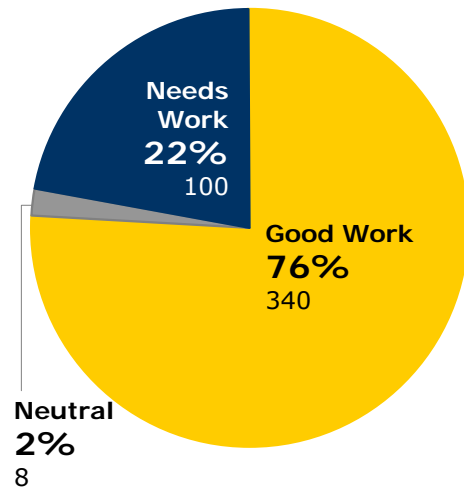
*"Stop making more rules. We are being ruled to death."*

*"Have helped me chase paperwork so we can get child's needs met."*

*"Overhaul payment system – the 'new and improved' system is an absolute mess."*

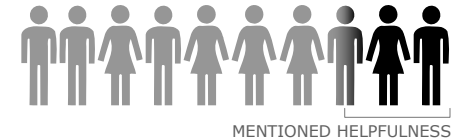
## Overall Helpfulness

### Are we helpful?



442 providers made more general comments about how they liked or disliked DSHS, or about how DSHS did or did not help them. Most praised DSHS work.

About one fourth of respondents made more general comments about DSHS and its programs



#### Areas to Improve:

- Those staff who aren't helpful
- Questionable staff intentions, training and judgment

#### Providers Appreciate:

- Staff who go out of their way to assist
- The support DSHS provides for children and families
- Making adoptions possible

### Providers say...

*"Always **supportive**, were always there if I needed anything. Couldn't have had a **better experience**."*

*"If they were a commercial organization, they would be **out of business** and **hounded** by the Better Business Bureau."*

*"**Wonderful people – I have no complaints**, only praise and gratitude for the hard work and jobs they do."*

*"**NOTHING! I've had enough!** Turning in my license, and I'm done."*

*"**Awesome.**"*

*"They already do **more than we expect** with the resources available to them."*

*"**They could hear** when we have problems with things **and not blow us off.**"*

*"We had **good care** at every level from foster to post-adoption."*

*"With us, it was such a **positive experience.**"*

*"**They act like they are God** and everything they do comes directly out of their pockets and they are the last word."*

*"Understand that we as foster parents are doing 'you' the government a service – and **treat us with some respect** – not just as a babysitter! With **no rights** or adequate payment!"*

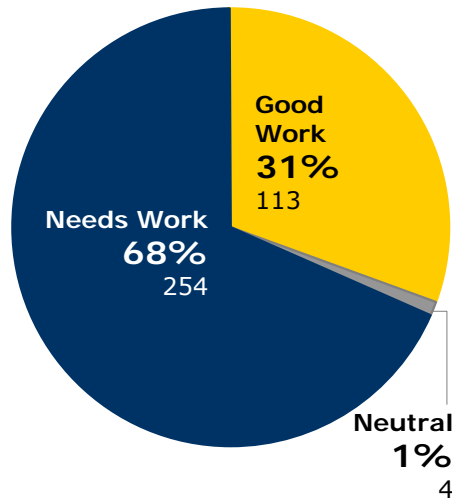
*"Staff are **consistently helpful.**"*

*"Having my wife verbally assaulted and left in tears is **neither courtesy or respect.**"*

*"They help in every way! They are very knowledgeable! They **really care about the children.**"*

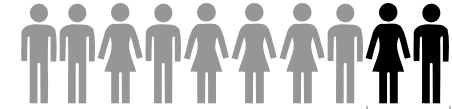
## Resources

### What about resources?



353 providers commented on resources. Most comments were suggestions for improvement – 75 providers said more staff are needed or that DSHS staff have too great a workload

About two in ten providers discussed DSHS resources



MENTIONED RESOURCES

#### Areas to Improve:

- High caseloads for DSHS staff
- DSHS staff turnover
- Pay, benefits, and respite care options
- Inadequate resources for clients and providers
- Availability of dental and mental health providers

#### Providers Appreciate:

- Support and benefits from the agency
- Services for children and families
- High quality training

### Providers say...

*"People work hard, **they are overwhelmed and stretched** so thin, but they try their best to be helpful and get their jobs done."*

*"Help find resources and doctors/counselors that accept medical coupons."*

*"Offer reasonable rates – your rates are 1990s."*

*"When the kids are having problems that require **counseling**, they get it."*

*"More money for children – I get **50 cents an hour**."*

*"Adoption support makes it possible for my kids to have dance lessons, music lessons, instrument rental, sports fees."*

*"Provide medical benefits (including preventative care) for providers that support state pay clients."*

*"I have **5 foster kids** and DSHS is **always ready to help** my kids."*

*"I need **RESPIRE** and its very hard to get."*

*"Pay more for foster care – it is a lot of work!"*

*"PAY **HIGHER RATES** for children that have **behavior problems**."*

*"Am **VERY** concerned that private **counseling services are being cut**. These people **NEED** mental health care and assistance to **PREVENT** more serious problems later."*

*"Need **more help with dental**."*

*"They make sure **funds are there** when we need them."*

*"They **try hard** – just **overloaded** with caseloads. So much **turnover**, they miss doing things."*



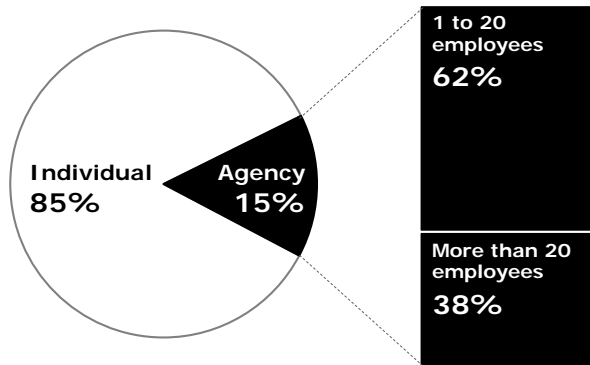
## Who completed the survey?

### The typical respondent:

- **Receives payments for adoption support or foster care**
- **Is an individual, not part of an agency**
- **Is located in Western Washington**

**PROVIDER TYPE.** The largest group of providers (40%) received payments for adoption support. One quarter of the providers (26%) provided foster care, and 16% provided childcare or respite care. The table on page 2 provides a complete list of provider services.

The majority of respondents were individual providers (85%). Agencies comprised 15% of the returned surveys (284); of those, 62% were small organizations with less than 20 employees and 38% were agencies with 20 or more employees:

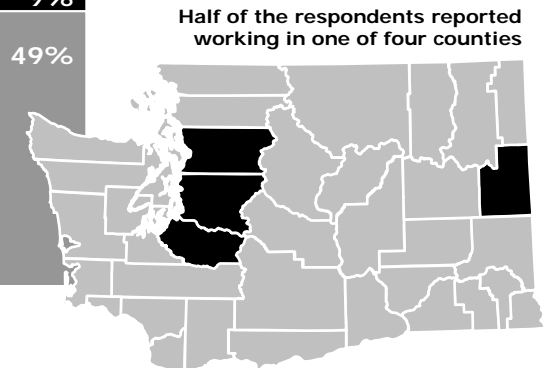
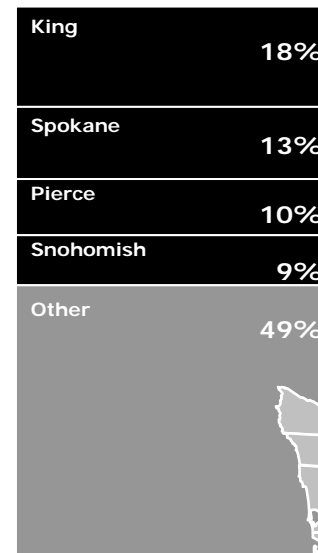


**LOCATION.** Nearly half of completed surveys were returned by providers who delivered services in just four Washington counties: **King** (329 respondents), **Spokane** (234), **Pierce** (185), and **Snohomish** (161).

The remainder – 1,049 respondents – served Children’s Administration clients in smaller counties, more than one county, or out of state, or did not give their county.

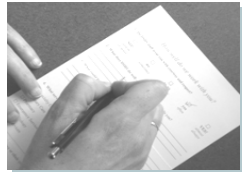
The majority of the responding providers (63%) reported that they work in Western Washington. Most of the remainder (28% of the total) work in Eastern Washington. The proportion of respondents working in Eastern Washington was higher than in the 2003 survey.

Eight percent of the providers work out of state, and five agencies work in both Eastern and Western Washington.



# 2005 Children's Administration Provider Survey

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For questions or comments on this report, please contact:

**Nancy Raiha, PhD**  
Department of Social and Health Services  
Research and Data Analysis Division  
P.O. Box 45204  
Olympia, WA 98504-5204  
(360) 902-7667  
[raiha@dsos.wa.gov](mailto:raiha@dsos.wa.gov)



This report, other provider survey reports, plus complete lists of provider comments are available from the *RDA website*: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/rda](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/rda)

**Washington State**  
**Department of Social and Health Services**  
Research and Data Analysis Division  
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