EXECUTIVE ORDER 96-02

INSTITUTIONALIZING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the children's services system in Washington state must be committed to implementing and maintaining effective accountability mechanisms; and

WHEREAS, child welfare experts in Washington state concur on the specific changes needed for improved accountability; and

WHEREAS, accountability in the children's services system can be enhanced by informing the public on key performance measures; and

WHEREAS, an annual report card on the performance of the children's services system also can improve outcomes for children and their families; and

WHEREAS, the state's accountability for the health and safety of children under it's protection and in it's care can be enhanced by careful review and ongoing monitoring; and

WHEREAS, decision-making for children under the state's protection or in it's care should not be done in isolation and should be reviewed on a regular basis; and

WHEREAS, accountability in the children's services system can be enhanced through systematic use of teams for key decision-making; and

WHEREAS, current law does not require shared decision-making in the provision of services to children,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mike Lowry, Governor of the State of Washington, by virtue of the power vested in me, do hereby order the following:

1. Beginning on July 1, 1997, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) shall prepare an annual quality assurance report card which shall include but is not limited to: performance outcomes regarding health and safety of children in the children's services system; children's length of stay in out-of-home placement, adherence to permanency planning timelines, and; the response time on CPS investigations.

2. DSHS shall designate and maintain at least one group home monitor in each DSHS region whose responsibility shall be to monitor the health, safety and planning for children in group care.

3. DSHS shall implement and maintain a systematic shared-decision making process for key decisions affecting children's health, safety and welfare. This process shall clarify employees' roles and decision making responsibilities throughout the chain of command so that individual
roles and responsibilities are focused and clear. The Department shall monitor the implementation of shared decision-making.

4. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Washington to be affixed at Olympia this 11th day of January A.D., Nineteen hundred and ninety-six.

Mike Lowry
Governor of Washington

BY THE GOVERNOR:

Secretary of State

EXECUTIVE ORDER  96-03

Strengthening Out-of-Home Care Licensing

WHEREAS, the health and safety of children placed by the state in out-of-home care is of paramount importance, and

WHEREAS, licensing is the primary means employed by the state to protect the health and safety of children in out-of-home care and should always be accompanied by vigilant monitoring and strong enforcement measures, and

WHEREAS, national child welfare organizations recognize that separation of the state's licensing and placement activities provides better protection for the health and safety of children in out-of-home care, and

WHEREAS, separation of the licensing and placement functions that are now located in the Department of Social and Health Service's Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will eliminate the conflicting pressures of insuring children's health and safety and locating scarce placements for abused or neglected children.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mike Lowry, Governor of the State of Washington, direct the Department of Social and Health Services to form a separate division of licensing within the Children's Administration. This division shall have a separate director who shall report directly to the Assistant Secretary for the Children's Administration.

1. The new DCFS licensing division shall be responsible for licensing, recruitment and enforcement responsibilities including but not limited to licensing denials, suspension, and
revocation. The functions of licensing of potential and existing placements and the placement of children in out-of-home care are to be clearly separate.

2. The types of licenses to be handled by the new division shall include the following categories of care: foster home; group home; crisis residential center; respite care; overnight youth shelter; child placing agency; adoption agency, and; other categories of care that may be established by rule.

3. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Washington to be affixed at Olympia this 11th day of January A.D., Nineteen hundred and ninety-six.

Mike Lowry
Governor of Washington

BY THE GOVERNOR:

Secretary of State