

## Ethnic Skin and Hair Care

**21-18****Policy**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall ensure that the basic needs of children and youth in Services Post Majority (SPM) / out-of-home care are addressed appropriately and consistently. Basic needs are inclusive of the special care required for ethnic hair and skin maintenance.

Children and youth in out-of-home care shall have their hair and skin care needs appropriately maintained through the lens of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural perspectives, faith-based beliefs, individual identity, cultural sensitivity, cultural competence, cultural humility as identified by the individual child/youth.

**Definition**

**Cultural Competence** means the process of developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, policies, practices and methods that enable positive staff relationships, and provide culturally relevant services to diverse populations, families and communities in diverse settings and situations.

**Cultural Humility** means a **personal lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique** whereby the individual not only learns about another culture, but starts with an examination of their own beliefs and cultural identities. Cultural humility allows practitioners (i.e. social workers) to be in learning mode instead of a position of power, control and authority; especially in terms of cultural experiences where clients possess superior knowledge.

**CROWN Act**

This law passed in 2021 makes it illegal to discriminate based on a person's hair texture and protective hairstyle in employment, public accommodations, housing, credit practices, union membership and state agency practices. It does so by specifying that the term "race" includes ethnic traits historically associated with race, including hair texture and protective hairstyles.

Complaints can be made to the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) to enforce these rights.

**Legal Reference:** C.G.S. section 46a-51

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**Responsibilities** DCF must work in collaboration with caregivers to address and become aware of the specialized needs of ethnic hair and skin. Caregivers shall make available the necessary products and/or provide access for children/youth to obtain the necessary services to properly maintain ethnic hair and skin.

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**Assigned Social Worker**

The assigned social worker shall work with caregivers, DCF-operated facilities, Young Adult Services and Supports (YASS) and congregate care providers to appropriately address the child's/youth's ethnic hair and skin care needs.

The assigned social worker shall:

- ensure that arrangements are made for the appropriate care of the child's/youth's hair care and skin in collaboration with the biological family (when applicable)
  - respect the child's/youth's exploration and/or expression of their racial and gender identity
  - document the child's/youth's hair and skin care needs, and efforts to meet such needs and
  - obtain proper pre-approval for services rendered in accordance with fiscal practice.
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**FCD Social Worker**

The Foster Care Division (FCD) social worker shall:

- respect the child's/youth's exploration and/or expression of their racial and gender identity
  - provide the caregiver with support and guidance on the child's/youth's behalf hair and skin care needs in collaboration with the child's/youth's family (where applicable)
  - provide information on the pre-approval process for services and supplies and
  - follow up with the caregiver within one week of placement to ensure that the hair and skin care needs have been met.
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**Ethnic Skin and Hair Care****21-18****Caregiver**

The caregiver shall:

- promote a sense of racial and cultural pride in the child/youth by adequately meeting the child's/youth's hair and skin care needs
- respect the child's/youth's exploration and/or expression of their racial identity
- notify DCF of any hair or skin care needs, and efforts to meet such needs of children and youth in their home and
- arrange and/or provide transportation for hair care appointments

**DCF-  
Operated  
Facilities,  
YASS and  
Congregate  
Care  
Providers**

The caregiver shall:

- ensure children/youth in their care have access to ethnic hair and skin care products
- ensure that arrangements are made to obtain appropriate care for the child's/youth's hair and skin
- respect the child's/youth's exploration and/or expression of their racial identity
- not utilize deprivation of basic hair and skin care as a means of punishment and
- educate staff as to the specialized needs of ethnic hair and skin care.

**Addressing  
Areas of  
Non-  
Compliance**

Incidents of non-compliance should be forwarded to the child's/youth's assigned social work team to address any concerns and if needed, further consultation can be sought with Multicultural Affairs, Central Office Licensing, Foster Care Division or Office of Fiscal Services, as appropriate.