

It is [well-documented](#) that children and youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ have high rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, self-harm, and eating disorders. They are 4 times more likely to attempt suicide, have suicidal thoughts, or self-harm than youth who are cis-gender or straight. Whether a family accepts or rejects a child's sexual orientation, gender identity or expression (SOGIE) has a profound impact on their wellbeing, and children and youth who identify as LGBTQIA+ are over-represented among the foster care population. In Washington, we are committed to ensuring that these vulnerable children and youth do not experience additional trauma when placed out-of-home into foster care.

The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington entered a permanent injunction in [Blais v. Hunter](#), in which it ordered that we have authority to require that foster parents follow a child's case plan, which is determined by the dependency court, DCYF, and the child's legal parents or guardians. Specifically, the injunction states that applicants "must agree to follow the child's case plan and to allow the physical, medical, psychological, emotional, cultural and social needs of foster children who identify as LGBTQ+ or who may so identify in the future to be met in their care." This does not mean that foster parents must agree with or support all of DCYF's policies. We cannot and do not disqualify people from becoming foster parents on the basis of sincerely held religious beliefs. However, the permanent injunction does permit DCYF to take an applicant's views on LGBTQ+ issues into account when reviewing foster family home license applications or family home study applications.