



## Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA)

On October 20, 1994, the Multiethnic Placement Act, or MEPA (Pub.L. 103-82) was passed as part of the Improving America's Schools Act, in attempt to prevent discrimination in the placement of children in out of home care.

The MEPA requires that:

- all federally funded state agencies responsible for child placement and recruitment not delay or deny any child placement based on the race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster/adoptive parent;
- all federally funded state agencies responsible for child placement and recruitment not deny any individual the opportunity to become a foster/adoptive parent based on the race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster/adoptive parent;
- all federally funded state agencies responsible for child placement and recruitment recruit foster/adoptive families that represent the racial and ethnic diversity of the children being placed in out of home care.

When making a placement, however, federally funded state agencies are allowed to consider the color, race, or national origin of a child and whether the prospective foster/adoptive parent is capable of caring for a child with that background.

In 1996, the "Removal of Barriers to Interethnic Adoption Act" amendment was introduced to reinforce the requirements stated in the MEPA. The MEPA does not apply to the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 and, thus, children with Native American ancestry are excluded from its conditions.

Failure to comply with the MEPA is a violation of title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

**Source:**

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/federal/search/?CWIGFunctionsaction=federallegislation:main.getFedLedgDetail&id=46>

