

Census 2020 and Children in Care (*Foster Children*)

Frequently Asked Questions

A publication of the National Indian Child Welfare Association

The Census Bureau has asked the National Indian Child Welfare Association to assist them in ensuring all children are counted in the 2020 Census, understanding that people belong to diverse families and unique living situations. With a focus on ensuring children 0-5 years old and American Indian and Alaska Native children in out-of-home care are counted in 2020, the following information will improve the 2020 Census by helping to count everyone once, only once and in the right place.

Which Children in your home do you list on your Census Form?

- Your biological and adopted children: age 0+ as of April 1, 2020; and
- Children placed or residing in your home on April 1, 2020. This includes emergency temporary placement, relative placement, foster care, and guardianship as well as youth experiencing homelessness.

Children that are in your home for respite care (temporary foster parent support for no longer than two weeks) or staying for a few days (such as a sleepover or short visit as a normal life experience) should be counted in the home they reside most of the time.

What is a Group Quarter?

A Group Quarter is a place where people who are not related, live or stay in a group living arrangement, that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents. Children in care in a Group Quarter could be in a group home, correctional or detention facility, residential treatment center, shelter care, homeless shelter, etc. For a more detailed list please refer to <https://2020census.gov/en/conducting-the-count/gq>.

What does Census mean by Principal Tribe?

Question #9 on the 2020 Census asks a person's race. This is determined by the individual, and no proof will be required. If a child is determined to be protected under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in state court or is in the jurisdiction of tribal court, the caregiver should list the child's tribe(s). Typically, a Principal Tribe is the one in which they are enrolled, or eligible for enrollment, or a descendant. The child's enrollment or eligibility for enrollment in a tribe denotes their political relationship with the tribe as a citizen and not just their identified race.

The National Congress of American Indians issued a Census Toolkit; they begin by stating:

"In the 2020 Census, individuals and households will have the opportunity to self-identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. They also will be able to now write in up to six tribal affiliations on the form. Filling out these questions on the census form will help ensure that the 2020 Census is accurate and reflects the true diversity in Indian Country."

If you do not know the Principal Tribe and/or tribal affiliation of a child placed in your home, the child's caseworker will be able to provide that tribal information. We depend on caseworkers and caregivers to ensure each tribal child in care is counted in 2020.

For more information on the 2020 Census and counting children visit 2020census.gov.



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture

To help communicate with caregivers, we provided a sample template letter below:

Date

Dear Caregiver,

Census Day is April 1, 2020. We are asking you to include all children in your home on your census form. This includes (child's name). Question #9 on the 2020 Census form is in regard to race. (child's name)'s Principal Tribe is (tribal name), and their other tribal affiliation is (other tribes).

You will receive your census invitation after March 12, 2020. There are three ways to complete your census, and it takes about 10 minutes: online, by phone, or mail in the paper census. The 2020 Census is easy, safe, and important.

If you have questions about the Census, please go to 2020census.gov or call 800-923-8282.

If you have questions about your child's status, please contact your caseworker or their supervisor:

(Caseworker name)

(Caseworker phone and email)

(Supervisor name)

(Supervisor phone and email)

Thank you very much for everything you do. We appreciate you taking the time to fill out the census accurately.

Sincerely,

(Organization)

