



County of San Diego

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CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS
POLICY AND PROGRAM SUPPORT
POLINSKY CHILDREN'S CENTER
ADOLESCENT SERVICES

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR RELATIVES

I am the relative of a child who is being removed from their home. What should I do?

If you want to be involved in helping the child or family, please contact the child's social worker or their supervisor.

What can I do to help?

Connections with relatives and family friends are important for all children, especially for children whose families are in crisis. You can give the family support and encouragement as the parents try to resolve the problems that led to the child being removed from home. You can also help by calling and visiting the child, inviting them to your home for holidays and other occasions, remembering their birthdays, etc. You can assist the child's social worker in locating other relatives and family friends who might be able to help the child and family, including those who live out of state. You may also want to consider having the child live with you until they can safely return home.

What about the child's brothers and sisters?

In most cases, the goal is to keep brothers and sisters together, but this is not always possible. Even if brothers and sisters have to live in separate homes, you may be able to help them keep in touch through visits and family events.

If I want the child to live with me, what do I need to do?

You may request to be approved as a relative caregiver. By law preferential consideration is given to adult grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters.

Certain requirements must be met:

- Criminal record clearances are obtained for all adults living in the home
- All adults are screened for prior child abuse histories
- The home must meet health and safety standards
- There must be a demonstrated ability to care for and supervise the child
- The relative must agree to ensure the child's personal rights are protected

There is someone in my household who has a criminal background. Does that mean the child can't live with me?

No, you can still be considered. Some crimes may be exempted allowing for placement in your home. Each case is reviewed completely. The social worker will give you detailed options based on the findings of the case.

What kind of financial and social support will I receive if I choose to be a caregiver?

The child's social worker will do the following things:

- Assist you in obtaining financial support;
- Work with you to access health and dental care for the child;
- Give you information on what to do and who to call if problems occur;
- Have contact with you and the child at least once a month;
- If eligible, provide a yearly clothing allowance for the child;
- Provide assistance with emergencies;
- Help arrange parent-child visits, counseling and other services the child may need

If my home is approved will the child get to live with me?

Not necessarily. You and other relatives may be assessed and approved. This allows the social worker to have a group of interested relatives to choose from. The child will be carefully placed based on many factors. The approved home should meet the child's best interests without further disrupting their life and activities.

Things that must be considered are the child's proximity to the following:

- Their current school;
- Their friends, brothers and sisters, their parents, other relatives; and
- The programs and activities the child currently participates in.

If parent reunification is part of the child's case plan, the caregiver's willingness to work with the social worker and the birth parents with the goal of reuniting the child with the birth family is another important factor when deciding about who will care for the child.

What about visits between the child and the birth parents? How does that work?

The social worker and the court will determine how often the child and parent can visit. Relatives and other caring adults can help in many ways to ensure that visits are safe and productive. They can provide a safe space for visits, transport parents and children to and from visits and be a supportive familiar presence for the parent and child.

What happens if the child cannot return home?

The social worker will look for a permanent home for the child. You may be asked about becoming the child's guardian or adopting the child.

Ongoing financial and medical assistance may be available through the Adoption Assistance Program or the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment program. Information about these programs is available online at

<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/pub344.pdf> or from the child's social worker.

I live out of state. How can I get involved?

In some circumstances, a child may be placed with a relative out of state. The social worker can discuss this option with you. You can also be supportive by maintaining contacts and visits.

If I want to give information to the court about the child, how do I do that?

Ask the social worker for a Caregiver Information Form (JV-290). You can complete this form and submit it to the court.