



ADDRESSING CONCERNS WITH CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The County of San Diego Child Welfare Services (CWS) takes your concerns seriously and handles them with the utmost diligence. Depending on the nature of your concern, we have three options to handle the issue most effectively.

What is an Ombudsman?

“Ombudsman” means one who investigates complaints and protects citizens’ rights.

The Ombudsman is a selected individual who oversees complaint investigations.

They listen and document your concerns, and gather relevant information to conduct an independent review of your concerns while remaining neutral and impartial. Every attempt is made to respond within one business day from an initial contact.

Who Do I Talk to About Concerns?

- ⌘ **CWS Office of the Ombudsman**
- ⌘ **Resource Parent Ombudsman**
- ⌘ **HHSA Agency Compliance Office**



CWS OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

☞ The Office of the Ombudsman investigates concerns and conducts internal reviews related to Child Welfare Services policy, procedure and social work practice.

☞ The Ombudsman elevates findings and recommendations to management to ensure policies and practice meet state and federal laws, and are consistent with the mission and goals of Child Welfare Services.

☞ Contact the Ombudsman for issues such as lack of consistency with visitation, insufficient communication with social workers, placement concerns, and any other practice and customer service related concerns.

Please contact (619) 338-2098
CWS.OOO.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

HHSA AGENCY COMPLIANCE OFFICE

☞ The Agency Compliance Office within HHSA provides another layer of transparency when addressing concerns specifically about CWS and its practice.

☞ Concerns will be investigated by the Agency Compliance Office if the concerned party has already worked with the assigned social worker, supervisor, and manager but the issue has not been resolved.

☞ A complete and thorough independent review will be conducted, including interviewing the individual who elevates the concern, the staff involved, and reviewing any relevant documentation.

Please contact (619) 338-2328
Compliance.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov

RESOURCE PARENT OMBUDSMAN

☞ The Resource Parent Ombudsman is specifically dedicated to responding to caregivers' (resource parents and relatives) inquiries regarding visitation, policy and procedures, transitions of children leaving the resource parent home, or issues with social worker communication.

☞ Applicants who are going through the Resource Family Approval process to become caregivers to children in foster care may also contact the office if they are facing any challenges or concerns.

Please contact (858) 650-5744
CWSRPOMBUDS.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov



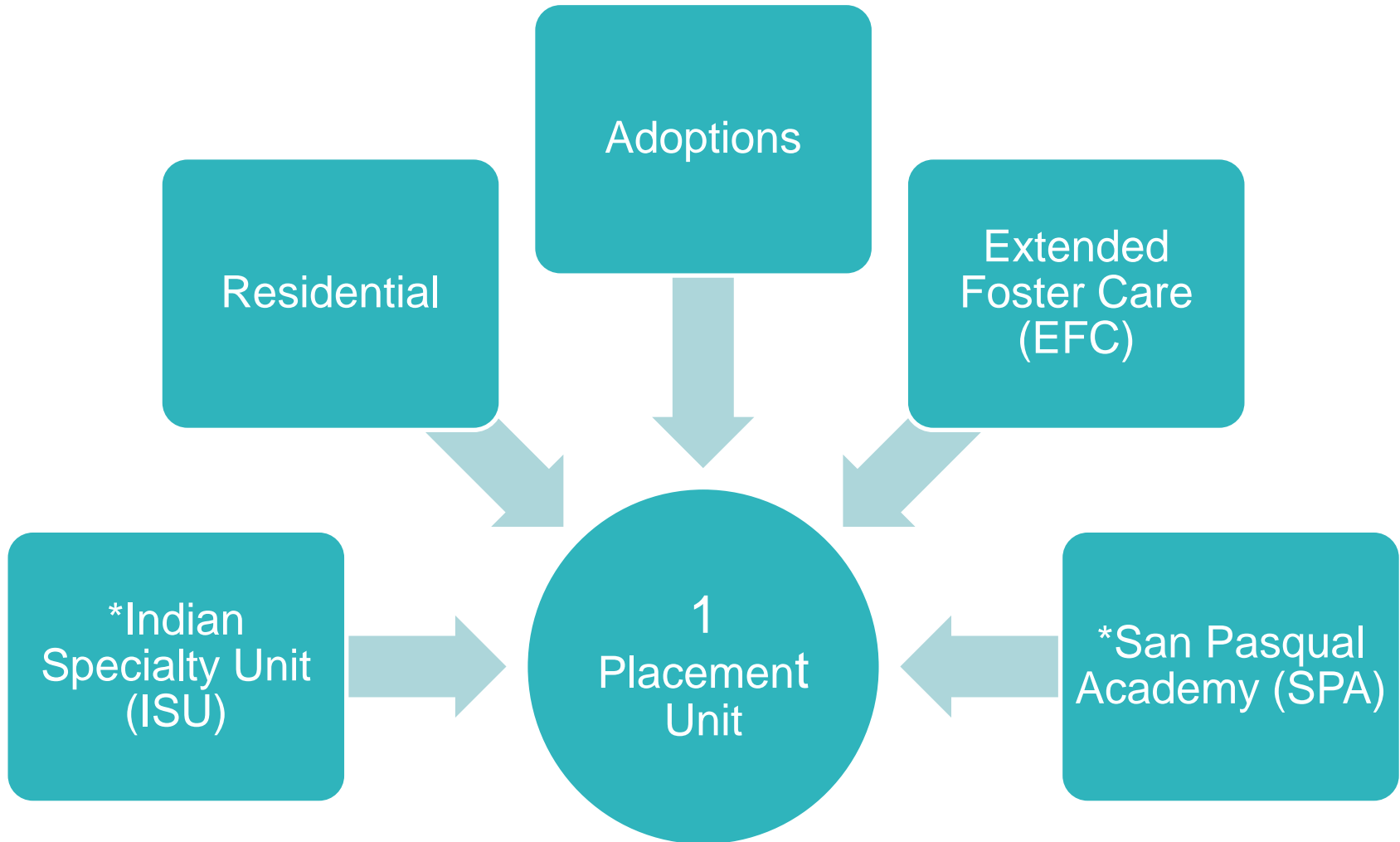


LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO



SPECIALTY PROGRAMS PLACEMENT UPDATES

STRUCTURE OF SPECIALTY PROGRAMS PLACEMENT UNIT



BENEFITS OF SPECIALTY PROGRAMS PLACEMENT UNIT



- ❑ Staff experienced with issues specific to Adoptions, Native American Community, and placements in Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)
- ❑ Expand placement resources for programs through collaboration with a multitude of agencies, community partners, and resource families
- ❑ Eliminate duplication of work in having 1 central team to identify placements versus numerous case workers within each unit identifying placements
- ❑ Dedicated team to screen STRTPs throughout the State to identify placement options that meet a youth's individual needs

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS



- Increase diversions from Polinsky Children's Center (PCC)
- Focused on family placement settings, such as with family members, extended family members, or resource families
- Increase Permanency Round tables (PRT) which may create more opportunities for placement options and promote permanent connections
- Internal data tracking for all specialized programs
- Dedicated staff for Family Finding



QUALITY PARENTING OUTREACH

A Tool to Help Shape Practice





- A texting platform that sends surveys to resource parents monthly to obtain feedback about the services and support they are receiving
- Consists of 5 questions
- San Diego is one of seven counties in the nation selected to participate in a year long pilot
- Results of surveys are reviewed with the resource parent community, CWS staff, and community partners
- Input from surveys has been utilized in Placement Integration Workgroup staffing sub-committee
- Summary report of all surveys is in development



- ✓ Highest response rate at 51% (n. 580 respondents) from 10-25-21 survey that included all resource parents
- ✓ 66% of respondents indicated placements made within a 12 month period were unplanned/emergency
- ✓ More than half of respondents reported the social worker made an effort to get to know them and their family
- ✓ 95% of respondents felt comfortable picking up the child when a placement was identified
- ✓ Responses for each question were similar across all seven sites polled



- Children placed on an emergency basis have the necessary clothing/belongings 45% of the time versus planned placements at 69%
- Only 21% of respondents reported they were satisfied with the Agency's efforts to keep them informed

Next Steps:

- Development of a field check list for emergency response workers to consider when making an emergency placement, including belongings- Currently in pilot
- Summary of QPOs will inform the development of consistent practices within all placement units
- In December 2021, Road Show trainings conducted in each region to update social workers on best practices related to placement
- More Road Shows starting May 2022 and will be offered quarterly

WHAT'S NEXT



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO

FAMILY FINDING

EXPANDED PLACEMENT TEAMS

GROW QUALITY PARENT INITIATIVE EFFORTS IN EACH OFFICE





Sarah Glass (South / Central / North Central / Medically Fragile) – Sarah.Glass@sdcounty.ca.gov

Tim Harris (East / North Inland / North Coastal) – Tim.Harris@sdcounty.ca.gov

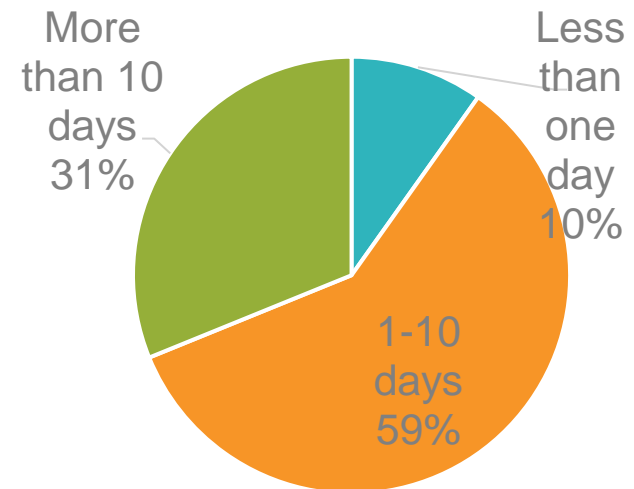
Diana Macis (Adoptions / Residential / EFC / San Pasqual Academy/ Indian Specialty Unit) –
Diana.Macis@sdcounty.ca.gov



NEXT PLACEMENT FOR YOUTH LEAVING PCC

Next placement	#
Resource Family	264
Parent	180
Resource Home	78
STRTP	61
Relative/NREFM	56
Foster Family Agency	39

TIME SPENT AT PCC BEFORE PLACEMENT AT A STRTP (N=61)





FOSTERING ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN EDUCATION (FASE)



VISION



LIVE WELL
SAN DIEGO



Every child
grows up
safe and
nurtured



SET CORE VALUES



- Relationships with children, youth, and families are the foundation



- Collaborative partnerships with kinship and resource families



- Helping children and youth achieve their full potential and develop lifelong relationships



- Shared responsibility with community partners



- A strong working relationship with the legal system



- A workplace culture characterized by reflection, appreciation and ongoing learning

FOSTERING ACADEMIC SUCCESS EDUCATION



- A three-year pilot program, based on Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program
- Partnership between County of San Diego Child Welfare Services, San Diego County Office of Education and Sweetwater Union High School District
- Address the educational needs of youth receiving child welfare services, enrolled at Castle Park Middle and High School
- Dedicated FASE Educational Social Worker to help with academic success by providing wraparound educational support to our youth, their families and our local school district
- Educational assessment and case planning tools, as well as Core team meetings, to link youth to academic and extracurricular resources



Community Partnership

Collaborate to address the educational needs of adolescents receiving child welfare services in local school districts

Academic Success

High school graduation, college enrollment and student retention rate
Academic grades
Credit recovery

Educational Case Management

- Review youth's school record to collaborate with the school district, family and youth
- Monitor youth's academic progress, attendance and suspensions

In August of 2020, the **Fostering Academic Success in Education (FASE)** program began.

This first cohort of foster youth students received a range of supports and services through the Educational Social Worker (**EDSW**). Some of the supports included but not limited to:

- Comprehensive educational case management
- Tailored tutoring referrals
- Assisting youth and caregivers with technology during distance learning
- Supporting and advocating for youth's educational needs during IEPs
 - (65% of students had an active IEP)
- Hosting Core meetings to create educational roadmaps with personalized objectives for each student's unique needs and goals

CWS FASE EDUCATIONAL SOCIAL WORKER ROLE



- Provide comprehensive educational case management
- Seek input regarding the youth's education goals/needs/strengths
- Connect youth to academic support services
- Develop Education Case Plan, that includes actions needed to address educational concerns and goals, and individualized an educational roadmap
- Facilitate monthly Core meetings with all parties and supportive adults to review initial assessment and monitor of progress



CWS FASE EDUCATIONAL SOCIAL WORKER ROLE (CONT.)



Work with families to promote their involvement

Identify school-based and/or community activities and resources

Intervene to help solve school/district-level issues, when appropriate

Coordinate with local colleges for educational planning, mentoring, and tutoring opportunities



Make referrals to services as necessary, and follow up to make sure youth are participating

Assist with addressing underlying needs of the family that may be impacting the youth's educational success



EDSW-Youth/Family Engagement

- Explained the purpose of the pilot to participating youth and families
- Conducted in-person contacts with youth
- Sought input regarding the youth's education goals/needs/strengths
- Gathered and analyzed available educational records and documents
- Attended Child and Family Team meetings where youth's educational needs
- Attended IEP meetings
- Assessed and assisted in troubleshooting technological needs as schools reopens

EDSW-Collaboration with partners

- SDOE/Educational Liaison to identify eligible youth at Castle Park Middle School and Castle Park High School
- Monthly meetings with SUHSD and SDOE to discuss pilot onboarding logistics prior to schools reopening
- Educational rights holders



1ST COHORT

- 85% of the students improved their GPA
- 35% of the students increased their GPA to 4.0
- All seniors graduated
- 95% of the seniors graduated with 4.0
- 95% college enrollment
- 95% of youth had no placement changes during the academic year, helping to stabilize placement and education success



2ND COHORT

- 74% of the students improved their GPA
- A ninth grade student increased his GPA from 0.7 to a 2.8
- Two students qualified for an IEP due to educational social worker advocating for them to be assessed by school psychologist
- One senior increased her GPA from 3.18 to a 4.0
- 84% of youth had no placement changes during the academic year, helping to stabilize placement and education success



■ WHAT'S NEXT

- MOA's with Escondido Union and Escondido Unified School District
- Hired additional educational social worker for Escondido District
- Hired an additional educational social worker to expand to the following schools in Sweetwater Union
 - Granger Jr High
 - National City Middle
 - Sweetwater High

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Sarah Glass (South / Central / North Central) –
Sarah.Glass@sdcounty.ca.gov

Tim Harris (East / North Inland / North Coastal) –
Tim.Harris@sdcounty.ca.gov