

# **A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

**County of San Diego  
Health and Human Services Agency  
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# What is Child Welfare Services (CWS)?

CWS is a department of the County of San Diego that works with families and the community to respond to, reduce, and prevent child neglect and abuse.

## Vision

The vision of CWS is for every child to grow up safe and nurtured.

## Mission

Through engagement and meaningful relationships, CWS supports families to enhance safety, permanency, and well-being for their children. Preserving the primary family and relationships is our priority. When this is not possible, CWS strives to ensure children will maintain and establish safe and nurturing relationships.

## Top Priorities

The three priorities that guide our decisions are:

1. Safely stabilize and preserve families; and if that is not possible,
2. Safely care for children and reunify children to their families of origin; and if reunification is not possible,
3. Safely support the development of permanency and lifelong relationships for children and youth.

Relationships with children, youth, and families are the foundation of our work and we strive to build a shared understanding and agreement. We build on a family's existing strengths and use these to decrease danger and enhance safety.

If you need help or have questions, people and agencies are available to help. A list of web and phone resources are listed in the back of this book.

## How did my family become involved with CWS?

A community member calls the Child Abuse Hotline to report a concern about a child's safety. We review the information and determine if the allegation of abuse or neglect meets criteria for an investigation.

If the concern meets criteria, the Hotline will assign the referral to an Emergency Response social worker. If a referral is not assigned, the caller's concern is filed.

California Law says that any time professionals like teachers, doctors or childcare providers "suspect" that a child is being hurt or neglected, they must report it.

*By law, your social worker is not permitted to tell you who made the report.*

## Who will be working with my family?

While your family is involved with CWS, you may work with one or more social workers. Each social worker's job is to partner with you to help strengthen your family and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect to your child. Social workers can help you find services such as substance abuse counselors, parent educators and family therapists. Sometimes workers change unexpectedly. If at any point you are unsure about who your worker is, please call the CWS Information Line at 858-514-6995 or Toll Free at 800-344-6000.

## Who are the first social workers to contact my family?

CWS is divided into geographical regions. A referral will typically be assigned to the region where you live.

### Emergency Response

An Emergency Response social worker is assigned to investigate referrals of child abuse. Referrals are given a response time to initiate the investigation of either:

- 2-24 hour response or
- 1-10 day response

People who may be interviewed during the investigation may include, but not limited to:

- The child(ren)
- Parents
- Relatives
- Neighbors
- School personnel
- Medical professionals
- Mental health professionals
- Law enforcement

Our first goal is to have your child remain safely in your home. If the social worker assesses that the child can remain home safely, the social worker might close the referral with no further action or provide you with community resources. Other possible outcomes include opening a voluntary case or filing a petition. Referral allegations may be concluded as unfounded, inconclusive, or substantiated.

## **What happens when a case is opened?**

CWS works with you to create a plan for your child's safety. We also help families identify and build networks of support they can call on for help. Cases may be opened through the Voluntary Services Program or through Juvenile Court.

### **Voluntary Services**

If the social worker believes the child can safely remain at home without Juvenile Court involvement, a voluntary case may be offered to you, which means:

- You are willing to sign a contract (case plan) to work with a social worker to identify supports and participate in services to ensure the child's safety.
- The child usually remains in the home but can be placed out-of-home if needed.
- The social worker will monitor the child's safety in the home and the well-being of the family.
- Services are available for up to 6 months.

### **Juvenile Court**

The court gets involved when the family is unable to keep the child safe without the court's involvement. Depending on the family's situation, the child may live in or out of the family's home during this period.

## **Why was my child removed from my home?**

A child may be removed from your home and taken into protective custody when a law enforcement officer or a social worker believes the child is not safe in the home. In the investigation that follows, social workers and others will determine if the child needs the ongoing protection of CWS and the Juvenile Dependency Court. This can happen when:

- A parent or other person who has custody of the child fails to provide proper care or supervision, and/or
- A child is not given the basic necessities of life, including adequate food, housing, or clothing, and/or
- A child is in physical danger because of neglect, cruelty, sexual exploitation, physical or sexual abuse by a parent, guardian, or someone else in the home.

## **What happens when a child cannot safely live at home?**

If a social worker, after consulting with a supervisor, feels your child needs to be removed from your care for their safety, the social worker will work with you to identify people you know who can care for your child(ren) in a familiar setting in order to reduce the trauma that they experience. The social worker will:

- Obtain information from you about the child's needs such as medical needs, daily routine, and school information.
- Ask you to attend a Family Team Meeting to make sure that you and your family's voice are heard.
- Ask you for the names and addresses of relatives or close friends and search for as many relatives as possible.

## **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)**

If you are, or think your child might be, of Native American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native heritage, please tell the social worker immediately. A special set of laws; the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), must be followed to ensure that tribes are informed regarding your child being involved with Juvenile Court. Tribes may choose to participate in planning regarding your child, including placement decisions and participation in the Court hearings. In some cases, the tribe may assume control over the child's court case.

## **Where is my child now?**

If your child has been temporarily placed out of your home, a social worker will continually assess if your child can safely return home. Until then, your child may be temporarily placed in:

- The home of the other parent if you are not living together

- The home of an approved relative or other close friend of the family
- A resource family
- Polinsky Children's Center (PCC)

## **Resource Families**

Resource Families are individuals, couples or families who are approved by CWS to care for children who need out of home care. Relatives and family friends must go through the Resource Family Approval process to have children placed with them. Any home certified as a Resource Family has completed a thorough background check, passed a physical home inspection, and has received or will receive training.

## **Intake Examinations**

Children detained at Polinsky Children's Center (PCC) undergo an intake medical examination conducted by a pediatrician. If your child is at PCC, you have the right to be present during your child's exam. Your social worker will provide you a consent to treat form in which you will indicate if you would like to be present for the exam. If you want to be present for the exam, your social worker will provide you with a PCC phone number to call and arrange to be present for the exam.

## **When can I see my Child?**

It is your legal right to visit your child unless a court order states that you

cannot visit. Your social worker will help you work out a visitation plan.

***Regular, positive visits are the best way to maintain your relationship with your child and work towards reunifying with your child.***

## **What happens after my child has been removed?**

Along with the court process below, your social worker may ask you to attend a family centered meeting and will discuss current planning with you.

## **Family Centered Meetings (FCMs)**

Child Welfare Services believes:

- All families have strengths.
- Families are the experts on themselves.
- Families deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Families can make well-informed decisions about keeping their children safe when supported.
- When families are involved in decision-making, outcomes improve.
- A team is often more capable of creative and high-quality decision making than an individual.

If your family has become involved with CWS, you may be asked to participate in a:

- Child and Family Team meeting to make decisions about the child/youth and

family's needs, placement, and or permanency, or

- Safety Mapping meeting to gather information and discuss concerns related to the safety of your child.

Who should attend FCMs?

- Parents
- Youth
- Family Members
- Caregivers
- People who support the family
- Social Workers/Supervisors
- Community Representatives, including Family Advocates
- Service Providers
- Facilitator
- Others identified by the family or social worker

*(See page 24 for more information)*



## Child Welfare Case Flow

The chart below shows how a case moves through the CWS and court system. For more information on the court process, please refer to the next several pages.





## What is Juvenile Dependency Court?

Juvenile Dependency Court is a division of the Superior Court. Dependency Court handles cases about children who are abused or neglected.

### ***What does the Dependency Court do?***

The Dependency Court provides oversight of all CWS cases that are not voluntary.

If the court orders the child a dependent for safety reasons, the court will order CWS to provide services to the family and will monitor the family's progress.

The court will make sure that the child receives the care they need to be safe and protected.

### ***Dependency Court goals:***

- To ensure a child's safety.
- To ensure child welfare social workers arrange for all the services the family needs to help reunify the child with the family.

- To minimize the number of places a child lives while away from their family.
- To work towards a safe and permanent home for the child if the child is unable to safely return home.
- To ensure that information about the family and child is shared with the professionals who will help support the families' needs. This information may include:
  - Medical histories
  - Mental health histories
  - School records, and
  - Other information
- To ensure that the child's medical, mental health and educational needs are being met.
- To give families a fair and accessible place to solve problems.
- To protect the family's right to a fair and speedy trial.



## What Kinds of Legal Hearings are Held in Juvenile Dependency Court?

The following description of court hearings is the typical flow of a case in court. Due to specific circumstances, your case may require a different order of court hearings. Children four years and older have the right to attend all their hearings.

Here are some common legal terms you might hear:

- **Proceedings:** Court will tell the parents about what is going on in the hearing.
- **Petition:** Document that describes the reason the child is believed to be at-risk for abuse or neglect.
- **Parties:** The parents, child, appointed attorneys, and child welfare agency. Other people may be added.
- **Paternity:** Establishing the legal and biological father for the child.
- **Visitation orders:** Court's instructions on when/where parent(s) can visit their child.
- **Trials/ Contested Hearings:** At the Detention hearing, or any future hearing, the parent may request a trial. The parent has a right to a trial to hear witness testimony regarding the petition allegations.
- **Pre-Settlement Conference:** May be scheduled to see if everyone can agree on what is in the best interest of the child. If there is no agreement, the case will go to trial.

### DETENTION HEARING

#### *What happens at the first hearing?*

The first hearing is called the Detention Hearing.

At this hearing:

- The social worker will have submitted a report to the court and all attorneys.
- Attorneys will be assigned for all parties (each parent and child) or a parent can retain a private attorney.
- Attorneys for all parties will provide information to the court.
- The court will review the petition (the document describing the reasons the child is believed to be at-risk for abuse or neglect).
- The court will address paternity, meaning who is the legal father of each child.
- The court will decide if the child should be removed from, or remain in, the parents' custody.
- The court will decide if Child Welfare Services made a "reasonable effort" to keep the child with the parents.
- If the child is removed, the court will make visitation orders.
- The court will tell the parents what services may be helpful to get their child back.

If you are Native American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, a federal law called the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) may

give your tribe the right to participate in legal decisions about your child's case. If you are a tribal member, your tribe might intervene and decide to have your case heard in their tribal court system. The tribe may take part in the Juvenile Court hearings about your child's case.

### **Substance Abuse Treatment**

If the social worker has reason to believe a parent has a drug and/or alcohol problem that has negatively impacted their child, the social worker will document it in the court report and recommend that the parent be referred for alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment.

Substance Abuse Specialists, who are located at each dependency courthouse, are responsible for providing screening assessments and making appropriate AOD treatment referrals.

The treatment facilities will assist with monitoring drug testing and treatment progress and the SW will provide case management services. In some circumstances, a recommendation will be made for the parent to also attend Dependency Drug Court (DDC).

## **JURISDICTIONAL HEARING**

**Jurisdictional Hearing:** The Jurisdictional hearing is normally set 21 days after the Detention Hearing.

### ***What happens at the Jurisdictional Hearing?***

At the Jurisdictional Hearing the court decides if the allegations in the petition are true. There are three ways this can happen:

1. The parents admit the petition is true (this means the parents agree with what the petition says).
2. The parents disagree with the petition and "submit" to the petition (meaning they let the court decide if it's true or not)
3. The parents dispute or **contest** the petition and a trial is set. Parties' present evidence to the court and the court will rule that the petition is, or is not, true. If the petition is found to be true, the court will proceed to the Dispositional Hearing.

## **DISPOSITION HEARING**

### ***What happens at the Disposition Hearing?***

If the court decides the petition is true, the court will decide what should happen to help reunify the family, including where the child will live and what services will be offered to the family. If all parties agree, the Disposition Hearing can be held immediately after the Jurisdictional Hearing (same day) or it can be set for a later date. The court can:

- Let the child live with a parent and be supervised by the social worker and the court (called

**Family Maintenance** services)  
or

- Continue the child in the home of a relative, family friend, or foster parent and offer the parents **Family Reunification** services.

The court will also:

- Order parent(s) to comply with a **Case Plan**. This plan is developed by the parents and social worker together (see page 23). **Parents are encouraged to begin working on their case plan as soon as possible to resolve concerns and increase safety so their child can return to their care more quickly.**
- Order a **Concurrent plan**. Concurrent planning is the process of working towards reunification and, at the same time, establishing an alternative plan for permanency. (See page 25).

Although the goal in most cases is to provide services, in some serious situations, the court might not order reunification services at all and set a hearing in 120 days to determine a permanent plan.

Reasons the court would not order Family Reunification services include:

- The child or a sibling has been seriously abused or killed.
- The parent had another child removed by the court for similar reasons.
- The parents received Family Reunification services in the past and failed to reunify with their child.
- The parents have

serious ongoing substance use problems and have resisted or failed treatment in the past.

## 6 MONTH REVIEW HEARING

### ***What is a 6-Month Review Hearing?***

At this hearing the court wants to know:

1. How the child is doing, and
2. Have the parents learned how to provide safety for their children and made progress on the “objectives” of their case plan.

If the child lives with a parent, the court can:

1. Close the case, or
2. Keep supervising the child with **“Family Maintenance”** services.

If the child does not live at home, the court can:

1. Return the child to a parent if the parent is making enough progress with the case plan. The family will continue to receive services through Family Maintenance services, or
2. Keep the child out of the home and order more **Family Reunification** services.

If the child was under 3 years old when the court removed them from the parents, the court can stop Family Reunification services at this court hearing if the parents do not participate in the case plan and are not showing changes needed so their child can safely return home.

## 12-MONTH REVIEW HEARING

### ***What happens at a 12-Month Permanency Review Hearing?***

If the child has already been placed with the parent, the court can decide to close the case or keep the case open for further Family Maintenance services to ensure the child's safety.

If the child has not yet been placed home, the court can decide to return the child home with ongoing Family Maintenance services to ensure the child's safety.

If it appears that a child may be able to return home in a short period of time with additional services, then the court can order additional Family Reunification services.

If the parents have not made progress or demonstrated that they will be able to safely care for their child, the court will end the reunification services so a **permanent plan can be selected for the child** at a 366.26 Hearing.

## 18-MONTH PERMANENCY REVIEW HEARING

### ***What happens at an 18-Month Permanency Review Hearing?***

This hearing is held whenever the court continues services at a 12-Month Hearing. At this hearing, the court must decide if the child can safely go back to the parents.

If the child is returned to the parents, Family Maintenance services will continue, and the court will set another hearing in 6 months.

If the child is not returned, the court will end Family Reunification services and schedule a 366.26 hearing to decide a permanent plan for the child.

In rare cases, the court may order that reunification services continue for another 6 months. The court must find that it would be in the child's best interest and the parent were either:

- making progress in residential substance abuse treatment
- a minor parent or non-minor dependent
- incarcerated, institutionalized, or deported

#### **AND**

- Making significant progress in creating a safe home for the child.

## 24 MONTH REVIEW HEARING

### ***What happens at a 24-Month Permanency Review Hearing?***

This hearing is held in rare cases in which the court ordered further reunification services at the 18-month hearing.

The court must decide if the child can safely return to the parents. If the child is returned, the family will receive Family Maintenance services and the court will set a hearing in 6 months.

If the child is not returned the court will end Family Reunification services and schedule a hearing to decide on a permanent plan.

### **What happens if I do not reunify with my child?**

#### **Permanency Planning**

If a child cannot return home safely at the end of the reunification period, a permanent plan will be decided on. A 366.26 hearing is ordered to establish the permanent plan for the child.

The options for permanency include:

- Adoption
- Guardianship
- Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative
- Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)

#### **Adoption**

- This is the most permanent of plans.
- CWS-Adoptions social worker identifies a permanent family to legally adopt the child, which may be the family the child is already placed with.
- Parents' rights are terminated.
- If the child is an Indian child and the tribe has intervened, there is the option of a Tribal Customary Adoption, which has the same full force and effect as an adoption but without terminating parental rights.

#### **Guardianship**

- Next most permanent plan option.
- CWS helps to identify a family willing to accept guardianship, which may or may not be a relative or family friend.

#### **Permanent Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative**

- The child remains a dependent of the court and is placed with a relative caregiver. The relative caregiver must be an approved Resource Family.

#### **Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)**

- Least permanent placement plan for the child.
- Only for youth 16 years and older.
- Youth remains placed in foster home or group home while CWS continues to search for a more permanent placement.



## **366.26 – HEARING SELECTION & IMPLEMENTATION**

120 Days from the Order  
Terminating Reunification  
Services

### ***What happens at a Selection and Implementation Hearing (W & IC 366.26)?***

Sometimes called a “26 hearing,” the court selects a permanent plan for the child. The plan can be:

- Adoption, in which case the parents’ rights will be terminated,
- Guardianship, meaning the court will appoint a legal guardian for the child, or
- The court may allow the child to live with a relative, family friend or foster parent. The court remains involved while CWS continues to search for a more permanent living situation for the child.

## **POST PERMANENCY PLANNING HEARING**

Monitor Placement Plan

If the child remains involved with the court after a permanent plan is selected, the court will schedule hearings every 6 months. At these hearings, the court will monitor the progress being made to finalize the permanent plan, the child’s placement, and the services the child is receiving.

### ***What happens after a permanent plan has been selected for a child?***

- The court schedules hearings every 6 months after a permanent plan of adoption, permanent placement with a fit and willing relative or APPLA is established to determine what progress is being made on the permanent plan
- The social worker provides a report to the court regarding the child and family and the court reviews the placement plan.

### **How does a court case end?**

There are different ways for a dependency case to end.

#### **Placed with a Protective Parent**

Sometimes, a child is removed from one parent and the other parent is available and able to care for the child. If the court can safely place the child with that other parent and the court doesn’t need to supervise the child anymore, the case can close.

If custody and visitation orders need to be made, the court can make those orders, which are enforced in **Family Court**. These custody and visitation orders can also be issued at the end of a reunification case, if needed. If these orders need to be modified in the future, you can go to the Family Court where your custody order was filed and have a mediator assigned or have a Family Court Judge hear your request.



## **Reunification**

Once the court is satisfied that the parents have addressed the safety concerns and the child can remain in the home without court and CWS supervision, then the court can order the case closed. As noted above, custody and visitation orders can be issued when the case closes.

## **Permanency Planning**

If children do not reunify, the court and CWS work to support the development of permanency and lifelong relationships for children. This may be through Adoption, Guardianship, or placement with a relative. Some children remain in care and CWS provides services to help them work towards independence as they become adults.

## ***How Can I Get an Attorney?***

Attorneys are generally appointed by the Juvenile Court at your first court appearance. To request an attorney, go to the Juvenile Court business office where your case is being heard. Contact your social worker for information on your case and assistance with your attorney request.

You can, of course, hire your own attorney. If you do not know one, you can contact the California State Bar Association or the San Diego County Bar Association for attorneys who specialize in Juvenile Dependency Law. California law says you can expect your attorney to return your telephone calls, be on time for court, represent your wishes, and protect your legal rights. However, if you feel your attorney is not following the law, you can make a complaint (see next page).

## **What are some questions I can ask my attorney?**

What can I do to get my child back?

How much time do I have to get my child back?

How long will it take to get through the Dependency Court and end my case?

What can I do to make the process go faster?

What is my case plan?

Do I have to have a case plan?

What should I do if I have a problem completing one of the tasks on my case plan?

Do I have visitation rights? Can my child see any other relatives or siblings?

What should I do if I have a problem during one of my scheduled visits?

Can I call my child by telephone?

Can I send my child letters in the mail?

Can I still attend parent-teacher conferences at my child's school and be involved with my child's schooling?

What do I need to bring to court?

What is the best way to reach you?

What happened at today's hearing?  
What is going to happen at the next hearing?

## **Appeals/Writs**

You can appeal a court's decision if you disagree with it. Talk to your attorney about how to file an appeal or writ.

## **What if I have complaints about my attorney?**

If you have a complaint about your attorney, please contact the attorney's supervisor at the phone numbers listed below.

For parent attorneys; Dependency Legal Services (DLS):  
(619) 398-2726 or (619) 398-2727

For children attorney's; Children's Legal Services (CLS):  
(858) 221-0404

If you are unable to resolve your complaint with the attorney and their supervisor, you may file a complaint by contacting the clerk's office at the Juvenile Court that handles your case. Staff there will help you with the complaint process.

## What if I have complaints about my social worker?

Talk with your social worker about your concerns so that you and the worker can make a plan to resolve it as soon as possible. If after speaking with your social worker, you still feel that your concerns have not been addressed, call the social worker's supervisor. If there is still a problem, you should call the manager and then the deputy director.



If, after you have given the staff a chance to resolve it, and you are still not satisfied with the way your complaint was handled, call the Office of the Ombudsman.

**Office of the Ombudsman**  
**(619) 338-2098**

“Ombudsman” means one who investigates complaints and protects citizens’ rights. The Office of the Ombudsman investigates concerns related to CWS policy, procedure, and social worker practice by conducting internal reviews, researching policies and procedures, and facilitating a resolution in an impartial and objective manner. **This process cannot change court orders.**

If the matter involves payment and the Office of the Ombudsman does not resolve the matter to your satisfaction, you can also use the State of California Fair Hearing.

You must make your complaint in writing and send it to:

Health and Human Services  
Agency Appeals Section  
1255 Imperial Ave. 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Floor  
San Diego, CA 92101  
1-800-952-5253

[https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ssp/faqs\\_appeals.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ssp/faqs_appeals.html)

### Keeping a written record.

It is helpful to have specific information when you make a complaint. Keep a written record of all contacts you have with your social worker, including the day and time of phone calls, meetings, letters, etc. This is generally a good idea even if you don’t have a complaint as it helps keep information organized. It is also helpful to write down what happens during visits with your child.

You also always have the option to share your concerns with your attorney.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Q: Can my child be removed from me if I am using drugs or alcohol?***

**A:** Yes. If there is a concern that your child has been harmed or is in danger of being abused or neglected as a result of your drug or alcohol abuse, your child could be removed.

If you are using drugs or alcohol during your pregnancy, your baby may be born prematurely or with medical problems. Under those circumstances, it is unlikely that your baby would be released by the hospital to you. However, your social worker will partner with you and your support network in determining how you can create safety.

### ***Q: Can my child be removed from my care if I am homeless?***

**A:** No. Your child cannot be removed *only* because you are homeless.

However, if you are homeless and your homelessness is contributing to your child being abused or neglected, your child could be removed from your care. The social worker would check to see if you are trying to use resources, such as homeless shelters, food banks, etc. If you are using community resources, it shows the social worker that you are making a good effort to provide for your child. It is important for you to make every effort to make sure your family is safe.

### ***Q: Is spanking considered to be physical abuse?***

**A:** Reasonable and age-appropriate spanking to the buttocks with an open hand that leaves no bruise, or any other kind of injury is not defined as physical abuse.

### ***Q: Who can remove my child from me?***

**A:** Law enforcement officers can remove your child without a social worker being involved if they believe that your child is being abused or neglected.

If a social worker from CWS believes that your child is being abused or neglected and that it is unsafe for your child to remain in your care, the social worker can remove your child and take your child into “temporary protective custody.” (Refer to page 6 for what happens next.)

If you are present when your child is removed, tell the social worker or law enforcement officer about your child’s needs, such as allergies to food or medicine, prescribed medication or necessary medical or other kinds of treatment. If you are not present when your child is removed, give the social worker this information as soon as possible. It is also very important to give the social worker information about relatives or family friends who may be willing and able to take care of your child.

***Q: If I wasn't present at the time my child was removed, when is the social worker required to notify me that my child was taken into protective custody?***

**A:** If you were not present at the time your child was removed, the law enforcement officer or social worker should notify you as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to find you. Once you are contacted, you should work with the social worker so that they can determine as soon as possible whether it is safe for your child to return to you.

***Q: If I receive CalWORKs financial assistance, will my aid stop when my child is removed?***

**A:** Every case is different, and this is a hard question to answer. Contact your eligibility worker, employment worker or social worker as soon as possible.

***Q: What is a Pre-Settlement Conference?***

**A:** A Pre-Settlement Conference is held to resolve legal issues concerning your child to avoid a more formal contested hearing (trial). You, your attorney, your child's attorney, your social worker, your social worker's attorney (County Counsel) and any other attorneys involved will work together to try to resolve any unresolved legal issues and try to reach an agreement.

The outcome of the Pre-Settlement Conference is presented to the court for a final decision. If agreement is

not reached, the case can still go on to a trial to resolve the legal issues.

***Q: Do I have choices about my child's future?***

**A:** Yes. From the moment a social worker is assigned to your family, they will work with you to determine what you would like for your child including if you are unable to parent in the future.

You have the right to develop a plan for your child's future care. You can request to have a person appointed as your child's legal guardian, or you can talk with a CWS Adoptions worker about how to allow your child to be adopted. If you are interested in these alternatives, talk with your social worker.

***Q: Do I have the right to an attorney?***

**A:** Yes, you can hire your own attorney, or the court may appoint an attorney for you if you cannot afford one. An attorney will safeguard your rights and represent you in your efforts to regain custody and control of your child. The attorney works for you and helps you through the court process.

***Q: Why do I need an attorney?***

**A:** The Juvenile Dependency Court process is not familiar to most people. Although you may represent yourself, attorneys are professionally trained to protect your legal rights to parent your child, have custody of your child, and present your position and interests effectively in court. If in doubt about your rights, it helps to have an attorney to talk to.

***Q: When do I get my attorney?***

**A:** The court will want to know if you have an attorney the first time you appear in court. The first time your child's case appears in court is the Detention Hearing. If the court appoints an attorney for you, you will be charged for this service. Your income will be taken into consideration when establishing the fee. You can hire your own attorney at any time. You may consider contacting the California State Bar Association or the San Diego County Bar Association for a list of attorneys who may represent you at low cost.

***Q: What if I feel that my attorney is not representing me the way I want?***

**A:** If you have a court-appointed attorney, you should first try to talk to your attorney, then your attorney's supervisor. As a last resort, you should bring your concerns to the attention of the court.

***Q: Do I have the right to visit my child?***

**A:** You have the right to visit your child unless the court prohibits visitation to protect a child's safety. Your social worker will work with you to determine if visits will be supervised or unsupervised based on any concerns for your child's safety.

From your first meeting with the social worker, they will help you develop a plan for frequent and consistent visitation, which will then be recommended to the court at the Detention Hearing. The court will

then review the recommendations and make visitation orders. At later hearings, the court may change visitation orders. For example, the court may permit more frequent, unsupervised, or overnight visits as you make progress in your case plan. If you do not visit regularly or do not follow visitation rules, visits may become more restricted and the likelihood of you reuniting with your child will decrease. Your attorney can advise you of your visiting rights. Talk to your attorney if you disagree with the court orders concerning visitation.

***Q: Will my social worker consider my relatives for the temporary placement of my child?***

**A:** Yes. By law, when a child is removed, the social worker will conduct a relative search and notify all located relatives. The social worker will look for the child's other parent (if that parent is not living in your home) and will then consider other family members. It is important that you give the social worker the names, addresses and phone numbers of **ALL** relatives who may be considered for placement as soon as possible. You should also encourage interested relatives or family friends to contact the social worker to request placement. Relatives may be asked to participate in Family Centered Meetings (FCMs) so decisions can be made as a team. Your social worker's priority is to partner with you, your family, and support network to place your child in a safe and familiar environment.

***Q: What are the requirements for placing my child with relatives or family friends (known as Non-Related Extended Family Members or NREFMs)?***

**A:** Any relative, NREFM or foster family interested in placement will go through the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process. This streamlined approval process provides the same information and training to all caregivers, and helps in providing children and families with safety, permanency and well-being. Once a relative or NREFM is interested in placement, a social worker will be assigned to guide them through the RFA process. The social worker will interview your relatives or NREFMs, visit their homes, and request background checks of all adults living in their homes. In order to place a child with the father's relatives, the court will first need to determine the identity of the legal father of the child.

The State of California requires that all potential caregivers be evaluated by the same standards. The evaluation includes:

- Statewide and national criminal record checks for the adults living in the home. A criminal record does not automatically disqualify a potential caregiver from being approved for a child's placement.
- Statewide and national child abuse record checks (if any adults have lived outside of California within the last 5 years) for adults living in the home.
- An inspection of the home.
- An evaluation of the potential caregiver's ability and willingness

to care for the child both for the short and long term.

- An evaluation of the potential caregiver's ability and willingness to:
  - Understand and follow laws and regulations about providing foster care.
  - Inform the social worker about certain events, such as any harm to the child.
  - Keep thorough records for the child.
  - Respect the child's personal rights.
  - Cooperate with the child's case plan, including visitation.

Approved relatives or family friends can be considered for the child's placement, but **approval does not guarantee** placement of the child.

***Q: If the social worker does not place my child with my relatives, what action can I take?***

**A:** If you disagree with the social worker's placement decision, you may discuss it with the social worker's supervisor and your attorney.

***Q: If my child is placed in foster care, do my relatives have the right to visits?***

**A:** Lifelong relationships and connections for children is a priority for CWS and the court. Visitation between brothers and sisters is especially important. Any relative who wishes to visit your child should contact the social worker.

***Q: If my child is placed in foster care, who is responsible for the foster care payments?***

**A:** Parents are responsible for the cost of their child's foster care. The Department of Child Support Services is responsible for collecting this debt. However, if the Health and Human Services Agency believes that collection interferes with a parent's ability to comply with the Case Plan, then they will not make a referral for collection right away (if ever).

***Q: What is a Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting***

**A:** A **CFT** meeting is a unified teaming and meeting process designed to help make decisions about the child/youth and family's needs, placement, transition, and or permanency.

When is a CFT meeting scheduled? A Child and Family Team meeting can help make shared decisions when:

- A child has been removed from their home and a plan is needed for the youth and family.
- A child is in out of home care and a change in placement is required or requested.
- A child may be returning home.
- A permanent plan for a child needs to be made.
- A child/youth's mental health needs or placement in a group home should be assessed.
- Any family member involved in a child's case requests to meet to talk about the child's placement or the family's service plan.

***Q: What is a Safety Mapping?***

**A:** A safety mapping meeting is a process of gathering and organizing information to reach a joint understanding and agreement about how to keep your child safe.

A safety mapping might be scheduled for ongoing planning for safety, to lift visitation restrictions, or to talk about progress on a case plan.

***Q: What is a Case Plan?***

**A:** A case plan is a written document created with you, your child (depending on your child's age), your safety network, and your social worker that details how you will demonstrate over time that you are able to provide safety for your child.

The case plan describes what you'll be working on ("objectives") to improve or change, as well as the services and other activities that will help you accomplish these improvements and changes. Your plan may include activities such as counseling, parent education or substance abuse treatment, depending on the areas needing attention.

If you have any additional questions or concerns about your case plan, you can discuss them with your social worker. Your social worker will meet with you monthly to assess your progress in meeting your objectives. If you are unable to demonstrate new skills to protect your child, the court could terminate your services and decide on a permanent plan for your child. The court will review your progress and your child's situation at least every 6 months



***Q: How long do I have to complete the goals on my case plan so that my child can return home?***

**A:** If your child is ordered to reside in an out-of-home placement, there are strict time limits on how long Family Reunification Services can be provided. The time starts from the date your child is removed from your care. You should consult with your attorney to determine the exact date.

Generally, you will have 12 months of Family Reunification Services if your child was 3 years or older when they were removed from your home. If your child was under 3 years old when they were removed, then you are only entitled to receive 6 months of Family Reunification Services. However, if you are making progress on your case plan, the court can consider allowing more time for you and your child to reunify. After the time allowed for Family Reunification Services ends, either your child must return to you, or the court must order a permanent plan.

***Q: What if I completed some of my case plan activities but not enough to reunify with my child?***

**A:** If you and your social worker can demonstrate to the Court that it is highly likely that you will be able to safely care for your child after an additional 6 months of services, then the court can order 6 more months of services. Generally, the court cannot order more than 18 months of Family Reunification Services.

***Q. What is Concurrent Planning?***

**A:** Although the goal is for a child to return home to a parent as soon as safely possible, the law says alternate plans must be discussed in case a child cannot safely return home within the court timelines.

“Concurrent Planning” means there are two plans or goals for the children at the same time:

- A. The main goal is for the child(ren) to return to their parent’s home.
- B. The second plan, is to place the child with a caregiver who is willing to adopt, be a guardian, or be a long-term relative placement for the child if the child is unable to return to their parent.

You may be asked to participate in a CFT meeting to consider the potential of a current relative or foster parent to provide an adoptive home if the child cannot safely be returned to you. Legal guardianship can be considered if adoption is not possible. Concurrent planning does not affect your ability to reunify with your child or the social worker’s commitment to help you make the changes necessary to successfully reunify with your child. This is only a general guideline. Contact your social worker or attorney if you have any specific questions about your case.

***Q: Do I have any other choices for my child?***

**A:** If at any point you decide you cannot care for your child, you can request that the social worker and the court consider arranging for permanent care by adoption or legal guardianship.

***Q: Do I have the right to speak in my primary language (including American Sign Language [ASL]) and receive services in that language?***

**A:** Yes, all families have the right to language-appropriate contact and written material provided to them in their primary language. If your social worker does not speak your language, you have the right to an interpreter, including Sign Language, for free.

# **The Foster Youth Bill of Rights**

Per WIC 16001.9. (a): All children placed in foster care, either voluntarily or after being adjudged a ward or dependent of the juvenile court pursuant to Section 300, 601, or 602, shall have the rights specified in this section. These rights also apply to nonminor dependents in foster care, except when they conflict with nonminor dependents' retention of all their legal decision making authority as an adult. The rights are as follows:

- (1)** To live in a safe, healthy, and comfortable home where they are treated with respect. If the child is an Indian child, to live in a home that upholds the prevailing social and cultural standards of the child's Indian community, including, but not limited to, family, social, and political ties.
- (2)** To be free from physical, sexual, emotional, or other abuse, corporal punishment, and exploitation.
- (3)** To receive adequate and healthy food, adequate clothing, grooming and hygiene products, and an age-appropriate allowance. Clothing and grooming and hygiene products shall respect the child's culture, ethnicity, and gender identity and expression.
- (4)** To be placed in the least restrictive setting possible, regardless of age, physical health, mental health, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression, juvenile court record, or status as a pregnant or parenting youth, unless a court orders otherwise.
- (5)** To be placed with a relative or nonrelative extended family member if an appropriate and willing individual is available.
- (6)** To not be locked in any portion of their foster care placement, unless placed in a community treatment facility.
- (7)** To have a placement that utilizes trauma-informed and evidence-based deescalation and intervention techniques, to have law enforcement intervention requested only when there is an imminent threat to the life or safety of a child or another person or as a last resort after other diversion and deescalation techniques have been utilized, and to not have law enforcement intervention used as a threat or in retaliation against the child.
- (8)** To not be detained in a juvenile detention facility based on their status as a dependent of the juvenile court or the child welfare services department's inability to provide a foster care placement. If they are detained, to have all the rights afforded under the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and all applicable state and federal laws.
- (9)** To have storage space for private use.
- (10)** To be free from unreasonable searches of personal belongings.
- (11)** To be provided the names and contact information for social workers, probation officers, attorneys, service providers, foster youth advocates and supporters, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), and education rights holder if other than the parent or parents, and when applicable, representatives designated by the child's Indian tribe to participate in the juvenile court proceeding, and to communicate with these individuals privately.
- (12)** To visit and contact siblings, family members, and relatives privately, unless

prohibited by court order, and to ask the court for visitation with the child's siblings.

**(13)** To make, send, and receive confidential telephone calls and other electronic communications, and to send and receive unopened mail, unless prohibited by court order.

**(14)** To have social contacts with people outside of the foster care system, including, but not limited to, teachers, coaches, religious or spiritual community members, mentors, and friends. If the child is an Indian child, to have the right to have contact with tribal members and members of their Indian community consistent with the prevailing social and cultural conditions and way of life of the Indian child's tribe.

**(15)** To attend religious services, activities, and ceremonies of the child's choice, including, but not limited to, engaging in traditional Native American religious practices.

**(16)** To participate in extracurricular, cultural, racial, ethnic, personal enrichment, and social activities, including, but not limited to, access to computer technology and the internet, consistent with the child's age, maturity, developmental level, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

**(17)** To have fair and equal access to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits, and to not be subjected to discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.

**(18)** To have caregivers, child welfare and probation personnel, and legal counsel who have received instruction on cultural competency and sensitivity relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and best practices for providing adequate care to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children in out-of-home care.

**(19)** To be placed in out-of-home care according to their gender identity, regardless of the gender or sex listed in their court, child welfare, medical, or vital records, to be referred to by the child's preferred name and gender pronoun, and to maintain privacy regarding sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, unless the child permits the information to be disclosed, or disclosure is required to protect their health and safety, or disclosure is compelled by law or a court order.

**(20)** To have child welfare and probation personnel and legal counsel who have received instruction on the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.) and on cultural competency and sensitivity relating to, and best practices for, providing adequate care to Indian children in out-of-home care.

**(21)** To have recognition of the child's political affiliation with an Indian tribe or Alaskan village, including a determination of the child's membership or citizenship in an Indian tribe or Alaskan village; to receive assistance in becoming a member of an Indian tribe or Alaskan village in which the child is eligible for membership or citizenship; to receive all benefits and privileges that flow from membership or citizenship in an Indian tribe or Alaskan village; and to be free from discrimination based on the child's political affiliation with an Indian tribe or Alaskan village.

**(22)**

(A) To access and receive medical, dental, vision, mental health, and substance use disorder services, and reproductive and sexual health care, with reasonable promptness that meets the needs of the child, to have diagnoses and services explained in an understandable manner, and to participate in decisions regarding health care treatment and services. This right includes covered gender affirming health care and gender affirming mental health care, and is subject to existing laws governing consent to health care for minors and nonminors and does not limit, add, or otherwise affect applicable laws governing consent to health care.

(B) To view and receive a copy of their medical records to the extent they have the right to consent to the treatment provided in the medical record and at no cost to the child until they are 26 years of age.

**(23)** Except in an emergency, to be free of the administration of medication or chemical substances, and to be free of all psychotropic medications unless prescribed by a physician, and in the case of children, authorized by a judge, without consequences or retaliation. The child has the right to consult with and be represented by counsel in opposing a request for the administration of psychotropic medication and to provide input to the court about the request to authorize medication. The child also has the right to report to the court the positive and adverse effects of the medication and to request that the court reconsider, revoke, or modify the authorization at any time.

**(24)**

(A) To have access to age-appropriate, medically accurate information about reproductive health care, the prevention of unplanned pregnancy, and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.

(B) At any age, to consent to or decline services regarding contraception, pregnancy care, and perinatal care, including, but not limited to, abortion services and health care services for sexual assault without the knowledge or consent of any adult.

(C) At 12 years of age or older, to consent to or decline health care services to prevent, test for, or treat sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and mental health services, without the consent or knowledge of any adult.

**(25)** At 12 years of age or older, to choose, whenever feasible and in accordance with applicable law, their own health care provider for medical, dental, vision, mental health, substance use disorder services, and sexual and reproductive health care, if payment for the service is authorized under applicable federal Medicaid law or other approved insurance, and to communicate with that health care provider regarding any treatment concerns or needs and to request a second opinion before being required to undergo invasive medical, dental, or psychiatric treatment.

**(26)** To confidentiality of medical and mental health records, including, but not limited to, HIV status, substance use disorder history and treatment, and sexual and reproductive health care, consistent with existing law.

**(27)** To attend school, to remain in the child's school of origin, to immediate enrollment upon a change of school, to partial credits for any coursework completed, and to priority enrollment in preschool, afterschool programs, a California State University, and each community college district, and to receive all other necessary educational supports and benefits, as described in the Education Code.

**(28)** To have access to existing information regarding the educational options available, including, but not limited to, the coursework necessary for career, technical, and postsecondary educational programs, and information regarding financial aid for postsecondary education, and specialized programs for current and former foster children available at the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges.

**(29)** To attend Independent Living Program classes and activities, if the child meets the age requirements, and to not be prevented by caregivers from attending as a consequence or punishment.

**(30)** To maintain a bank account and manage personal income, consistent with the child's age and developmental level, unless prohibited by the case plan.

**(31)** To work and develop job skills at an age-appropriate level, consistent with state law.

**(32)** For children 14 to 17 years of age, inclusive, to receive a consumer credit report provided to the child by the social worker or probation officer on an annual basis from each of the three major credit reporting agencies, and to receive assistance with interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies.

**(33)** To be represented by an attorney in juvenile court; to have an attorney appointed to advise the court of the child's wishes, to advocate for the child's protection, safety, and well-being, and to investigate and report to the court on legal interests beyond the scope of the juvenile proceeding; to speak to the attorney confidentially; and to request a hearing if the child feels their appointed counsel is not acting in their best interest or adequately representing their legal interests.

**(34)** To receive a notice of court hearings, to attend court hearings, to speak to the judge, to view and receive a copy of the court file, subject to existing federal and state confidentiality laws, and to object to or request the presence of interested persons during court hearings. If the child is an Indian child, to have a representative designated by the child's Indian tribe be in attendance during hearings.

**(35)** To the confidentiality of all juvenile court records consistent with existing law.

**(36)** To view and receive a copy of their child welfare records, juvenile court records, and educational records at no cost to the child until the child is 26 years of age, subject to existing federal and state confidentiality laws.

**(37)** To be involved in the development of their own case plan, including placement decisions, and plan for permanency. This involvement includes, but is not limited to, the development of case plan elements related to placement and gender affirming health care, with consideration of the child's gender identity. If the child is an Indian child, the case plan shall include protecting the essential tribal relations and best interests of the Indian child by assisting the child in establishing, developing, and maintaining political, cultural, and social relationships with the child's Indian tribe and Indian community.

**(38)** To review the child's own case plan and plan for permanent placement if the child is 10 years of age or older, and to receive information about their out-of-home placement and case plan, including being told of changes to the plan.

**(39)** To request and participate in a child and family team meeting, as follows:

(A) Within 60 days of entering foster care, and every 6 months thereafter.

(B) If placed in a short-term residential therapeutic program, or receiving

intensive home-based services or intensive case coordination, or receiving therapeutic foster care services, to have a child and family team meeting at least every 90 days.

(C) To request additional child and family team meetings to address concerns, including, but not limited to, placement disruption, change in service needs, addressing barriers to sibling or family visits, and addressing difficulties in coordinating services.

(D) To have both informal and formal support people participate, consistent with state law.

**(40)** To be informed of these rights in an age and developmentally appropriate manner by the social worker or probation officer and to be provided a copy of the rights in this section at the time of placement, any placement change, and at least once every six months or at the time of a regularly scheduled contact with the social worker or probation officer.

**(41)** To be provided with contact information for the Community Care Licensing Division of the State Department of Social Services, the tribal authority approving a tribally approved home, and the State Foster Care Ombudsperson, at the time of each placement, and to contact any or all of these offices immediately upon request regarding violations of rights, to speak to representatives of these offices confidentially, and to be free from threats or punishment for making complaints.

(b) The rights described in this section are broad expressions of the rights of children in foster care and are not exhaustive of all rights set forth in the United States Constitution and the California Constitution, federal and California statutes, and case law.

(c) This section does not require, and shall not be interpreted to require, a foster care provider to take any action that would impair the health and safety of children in out of home placement.

(d) The State Department of Social Services and each county welfare department are encouraged to work with the Student Aid Commission, the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges to receive information pursuant to paragraph (28) of subdivision (a).

(Repealed and added by Stats. 2019, Ch. 416, Sec. 3. (AB 175) Effective January 1, 2020.)

# Resources

## STATE

California Department of Social Services  
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/>

California Department of Health Services  
 Medi Cal Program  
<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/>

California Foster Care Ombudsperson  
<https://fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/>  
 1-877-846-1602

California Department of Social Services  
 Civil Rights Unit  
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/civil-rights>

California Foster Youth Resources  
<https://fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/foster-youth-rights/>

1-866-741-6241

## LOCAL

San Diego County Home Page  
<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/>

Health and Human Services Agency  
<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/>

211 San Diego  
<https://211sandiego.org/>

San Diego County Office of Education  
<https://www.sdcoe.net/>

Access Customer Services Call Center; Family Resource Centers  
<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ssp/access.html>

Behavioral Health Services  
<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs.html>

Public Health Services  
<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/phs.html>

Women's, Infant, and Children's Program  
<https://sandiegowic.org/>  
 1-888-500-6411

## LEGAL

California Legislative Information  
<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

Superior Court of California, County of San Diego  
<https://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/>

Dependency Legal Services-Parent's Attorney's  
 (619) 398-2726 or (619) 398-2727

Children's Legal Services-Children/Youth's Attorney's  
 (858) 221-0404



# Resources

## CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Child Welfare Services (CWS) Home Page  
[https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sd/c/hhsa/programs/cs/child\\_welfare\\_services.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sd/c/hhsa/programs/cs/child_welfare_services.html)

CWS Child Abuse Hotline  
(858) 560-2191  
(800) 344-6000

CWS Adoptions  
<https://sdcares4kids.com/>  
1-877-792-KIDS (5437) or  
1-877- I ADOPT U

CWS Information Line  
(858) 514-6995

CWS Office of the Ombudsman  
(619) 338-2098

CWS Records  
(858) 616-5950

Polinsky Children's Center  
9400 Ruffin Road  
San Diego, CA 92123  
[https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sd/c/hhsa/programs/cs/child\\_welfare\\_services/polinsky\\_childrens\\_center.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sd/c/hhsa/programs/cs/child_welfare_services/polinsky_childrens_center.html)  
(858) 514-4600

Parent's Guide to Child Welfare Services and  
Juvenile Court Video  
<https://youtu.be/QWoAVS1ClM0>  
[https://youtu.be/jw8\\_K-FYRQ](https://youtu.be/jw8_K-FYRQ) (Spanish)

## SAN DIEGO JUVENILE PROBATION

San Diego Juvenile Probation Home Page  
[https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/probation/juvenile\\_information\\_community\\_supervision.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/probation/juvenile_information_community_supervision.html)  
(858) 694-4319

Probation Department Foster Home  
Coordinator  
(858) 694-4600

## Contact Log

### Your Social Worker

Name:

Phone:

Address:

### Other Social Worker

Name:

Phone:

Address:

### Your Attorney

Name:

Phone:

### Your Child's Attorney

Name:

Phone:

### Your Child's Caregiver

Name:

Phone:

### Probation Officer

Name:

Phone:

Address:

### Other

Name:

Phone:

Address:

## Dates to Appear in Juvenile Court

YOUR COURTHOUSE LOCATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>San Diego Juvenile Court</b> 2851 Meadow Lark Drive San Diego, CA 92123 (858) 634-1600  <b>Department:</b>  <b>Judge:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>North/Vista County Court</b> 325 S. Melrose Ave. Vista, CA 92081 (760) 201-8600 x1420  <b>Department:</b>  <b>Judge:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>East County Court</b> 250 E. Main St. San Diego, CA 92020 (619) 456-4118  <b>Department:</b>  <b>Judge:</b>
DATE	TIME	

# CWS Acronyms

*Commonly used acronyms (abbreviations) are listed below:*

AAP	Adoption Assistance Program
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
DD	Deputy Director
AFDC-FC	Aid to Families w/ Dependent Children—Foster Care
APPLA	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
ASFA	Adoption & Safe Families Act
CACI	Child Abuse Central Index
CASA	Court Appointed Special Advocate
CCL	Community Care Licensing
CDSS	California Department of Social Services
CI	Court Intervention
CLETS	California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System
CLS	Children’s Legal Services
CFT	Child and Family Team
CFTM	Child and Family Team Meeting
COP	Change of Placement
CORI	Criminal Offender Record Information
CWS	Child Welfare Services
CWS/CMS	Child Welfare Services/Case Management System
DDC	Dependency Drug Court
DLS	Dependency Legal Services
DOJ	Department of Justice
DV	Domestic Violence
ER	Emergency Response
ESCU	Emergency Shelter Care Unit
ESU	Emergency Screening Unit
EFC	Extended Foster Care
FCM	Family Centered Meeting
FFA	Foster Family Agency
FM	Family Maintenance
FP	Foster Parent
FR	Family Reunification
FTT	Failure to Thrive
HEP	Health & Education Passport
HHSA	Health & Human Services Agency
HSS	Human Services Specialist
ICPC	Interstate Compact for Placement of Children
ICWA	Indian Child Welfare Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
IFPP	Intensive Family Preservation Program
ILS	Independent Living Skills

IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IRS	Immediate Response Services
IS	Initial Services
ISU	Indian Specialty Unit
Kin GAP	Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment
LE	Law Enforcement
LFH	Licensed Foster Home
LGH	Licensed Group Home
NMD	NonMinor Dependent
NPG	No Parent or Guardian
NREFM	Non-Relative Extended Family Member
PC	Penal Code
PCC	Polinsky Children's Center
PCO	Placement Coordinator's Office
PHN	Public Health Nurse
PPAU	Permanency-Planning Assessment Unit
PSS	Protective Services Supervisor
PSW	Protective Services Worker
RPS	Regional Placement Specialist
RTC	Residential Treatment Center
SARB	School Attendance Review Board
SAS	Substance Abuse Specialist
SCP	Substitute Care Provider
SDM	Structured Decision Making
SET	Safety Enhanced Together
SOP	Safety-Organized Practice
STRTP	Short Term Residential Treatment Program
SW	Social Worker
VS	Voluntary Services
WIC	Welfare & Institutions Code





COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO



**HHSA**

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY



**LIVE WELL**  
SAN DIEGO



**SAFETY ENHANCED TOGETHER**

County of San Diego Child Welfare Services

04-269 (rev. 09/22)