**A beginner’s guide to Children and Family Services**

**Mandated reporters:** Nurses, physicians, social workers, teachers, police, clergy, photographic print processors…

**Four required reports (if suspected):**

* A child is physically injured by other than accidental means
* A child is subjected to willful cruelty or unjustifiable  punishment
* A child is abused or exploited sexually
* A child is neglected by a parent or caretaker who fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision.

**Basic organization:**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

California Department of Social Services (10 divisions): California is one of 11 states that uses a state-administered, county-implemented model of governance. (Contra Costa administers its own child welfare program.)

Children and Family Services

*Emergency Response:* 24-hour hotline for mandated reporters

925-646-1680 (Central CC County)

510-374-3324 (West CC County)

925-427-8311 (East CC County)

877-881-1116 (general 24h)

*Family Maintenance:* Provides services to families in crisis to prevent or remedy abuse or neglect; SW works with family while child stays in home, about 12 mos of services

*Family Reunification:* Provides services for a limited time to help families make the home environment safe for an out-of-home child to return to, about 18 mos of services

*Permanent Placement:* Safe, stable, permanent homes for children: adoption and legal guardianship, long-term foster care

**Stated outcomes and measures:**

* + Safety
    - Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect
    - Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
  + Permanency
    - Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
    - The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.
  + Wellbeing Outcomes
    - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs
    - Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs
    - Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs

**Initial time course:**

* Emergency Response hotline worker decides if case merits in-person investigation.
* Investigation tracked to either 24 hrs or within 10 days.
* Child welfare workers use a Standardized Safety Assessment Tool to decide how and when to respond.
* If child is can’t stay at home safely, they’re immediately removed. 48h to court hearing.
* Referrals must be either closed or promoted to a case within 30 days.
* Cases must get a case plan within 30-60 days.

**What usually happens:**

Most reports in to the Hotline were closed after an initial screening:

17% were assessed and closed without in-person investigation

44% were investigated and classified as unfounded

17% were investigated and found to be inconclusive

22% were investigated and substantiated.

About 1/3 of children with substantiated cases are eventually placed in out-of-home care.

**Differential Response Program:** High-risk families get an investigation, low- and moderate-risk families get an assessment of needs and strengths and provision of voluntary services. Not available in all counties, but it is in Contra Costa!

Program participants get a case manager

Meet about weekly in the beginning

Can call with any problems

Case manager may provide services such as:

* Bus & BART tickets,
* Referrals for food and parenting classes,
* Crisis support,
* Advocacy,
* Information about services, and
* Referral to services such as domestic violence counseling/help, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, housing, childcare, jobs, clothing, diapers, high chairs, tutoring, bilingual services, transportation

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| Catholic Charities | 3540 Chestnut Avenue, Concord, CA 94519  2210 Gladstone Drive, Pittsburg, CA 94565  2369 Barrett Avenue, Richmond CA 94804 | 925.825.3099  925.825.3099  510.234.5110 | * Catholic Counseling Services * Immigration Services and Naturalization * Critical Family Needs and Homelessness Prevention * CARE For Emancipated Foster Youth * Housing Advocacy and Case Management * Child Welfare Case Management * Monument Corridor Family Strengthening * HIV/AIDS Housing Advocacy * Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) |
| Community Violence Solutions | 2101 Van Ness Street, San Pablo, CA 94806  301 W. 10th Street #3, Antioch, CA 94509 | 510.237.0113  925.706.4290  24-hr crisis line:  1.800.670.7273 | * Rape Crisis Center * Sexual Assault Response Team * Children’s Interview Center * Prevention Services * Safe 4 Us Visitation * Anti-Trafficking Project * Stand In Pride |
| Families First | 2380 Salvio St., Suite 200 Concord, CA 94520 | 925.602.1750 | |  | | --- | | * Community Based Family Visitation Center * Differential Response * Enhanced Classroom * Family Finding * Foster Care and Adoption Services * Intensive Family Preservation * Intensive Treatment Foster Care * Kinship Support Services * Transitional Housing | |
| Family Stress Center | 2086 Commerce Ave., Concord, CA 94520 | 925.827.0212 | * Gives counseling to families |
| Neighborhood House | 820 23rd Street  Richmond, CA 94804 | 510.235.9780 | * [Differential Response](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#Differential_Response) * [First Five "Hand-to-Hand"](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#First_Five_Hand_to_Hand) * [Multicultural Senior and Family Center](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#Multicultural_Senior_and_Family_Center) * [Richmond Community Wellness Collaborative](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#Richmond_Community_Wellness_Collaborative) * [North Richmond Beautification Department](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#North_Richmond_Beautification_Department) * [Residential Substance Abuse Treatment](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#Residential_Substance_Abuse_Treatment) * [Driving Under the Influence Programs](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#Driving_Under_the_Influence_Programs) * [West County HEAL Collaborative](http://www.nhnr.org/programs.html#West_County_HEAL_Project) |
| YMCA | 263 S. 20th Street  Richmond, CA 94804 | 510.412.5647 | * Building Futures mentoring program * Day camp * Child development * Community services * Teen parent program * Mental health services * Youth and government * Youth sports |

For many, many more counseling services options:

http://www.contracostayouth.com/counselingguide.shtml