Placement Support Services

Placement Support Services	There are a variety of support services, within and outside the Agency available to support placements and Substitute Care Providers (SCP). See information below about the following supports services: - Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Care Education Program - Caregiver Mentor Program - QPI Ambassador - KIDSline Placement and Support Services - County of San Diego HHSA Office of the Ombudsman - California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman - Developmental Screening and Enhancement Program (DSEP) - Referrals for Subsidized Child Care - Kinship Support Services - Emergency Child Care Bridge Program - Respite Care - Project KEEP/Project KEEP SAFE.
Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Care Education Program (FAKCE)	The Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Care Education Program's goal is to provide quality workshops, classes and support opportunities that will assist the SCP to be informed and well prepared to meet the foster children's educational, behavioral and developmental needs.
Caregiver Mentor Program	The County of San Diego funds the Caregiver Mentor Program. This program provides eligible SCPs a mentor who can assist them to navigate a complex and difficult system. To request a mentor, the SCP should call (800) 200-1222.
QPI Ambassador	QPI ambassadors are available to answer general questions, facilitate communication between team members on cases and provide resources. The ambassadors work with QPI programs leaders to coordinate regional QPI activities that strengthen relationships and teamwork between social workers and caregivers through meet and greets, joint training, QPI quarterlies, etc.

KIDSline Placement and Support Services	Substitute Care Providers (SCPs) may call the KIDSline at (877) 792-KIDS (5437) to access the following resources:

- CWS Ombudsman/Mediation Support Specialists
- CWS Placement Coordinator's Office (PCO)
- CWS Retention Specialist
- CWS Special Care Rates Program
- Orientation.

County of San Diego/ HHSA/ CWS/ Office of the Ombudsman

The Office of the Ombudsman investigates concerns related to Child Welfare Services policy, procedures, and social worker practice.

The purpose and function of the Office of the Ombudsman is to:
- Inform callers of CWS policies and procedures.
- Register and monitor complaints regarding CWS.
- Facilitates complaint resolution in an impartial, objective and professional manner.
- Elevate finding and recommendations to management to ensure State and Federal laws are consistent with the mission and goals of CWS.
- Provide resource information about no CWS agencies and/or services.

The Office of the Ombudsman has no authority to:
- Make recommendations to the court or overturn court orders.
- Investigate matters which appeals or lawsuits are pending
- Change or make exceptions to State or Federal laws and regulations
- Investigate or make recommendations in personnel or disciplinary matters.
- Give legal advice.

The Office of the Ombudsman Public Number is (619) 338-2098.

California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman

The California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman (FCO) was created to:

- Meet or communicate with any foster child in his or her placement or elsewhere
- Speak and act on behalf of all children in out-of-home care
- Create an avenue for foster youth to file complaints about their placement, care and services without fear of retribution
- Investigate and resolve complaints made on behalf of children in foster care and make appropriate referrals
- Provide foster children and youth with information on their rights
- Maintain a statewide toll free Foster Care Helpline, (877) 846-1602, which anyone may call from anywhere in California to express their concerns and complaints
- Make recommendations on appropriate changes to safeguard children's rights
- Recommend case assessments
- Report all findings to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Legislature
- Investigate acts of state and local administrative agencies
- Disseminate information on the rights of children and youth in foster care and the services provided by the office

California Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman (cont.)

- Compile and make available to the Legislature all data collected over the course of the year
- Post the compiled data so that it is available to the public on the FCO's existing website at http://www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/.

The FCO has no authority to:
- Challenge court decisions or make recommendations to the court
- Change case plans
- Ensure implementation of any recommendation made following our investigation
- Regarding local administrative personnel issues. Complaints regarding discrimination and other personnel issues are referred to the appropriate office.

The Complaint and Inquiry Process
The FCO has the discretion to investigate a complaint directly or refer the complaint to another agency for investigation. The FCO may do the following:
- Conduct whatever investigation is deemed necessary
- Attempt to resolve the complaint informally
- Submit a written plan to the relevant state or county agency recommending a course of action to resolve the complaint. When the FCO makes a written recommendation, the state or county agency will submit a written response to the FCO within 30 business days.

When handling complaints, the FCO will:
- Document all contacts in the FCO Call-Tracking database
- Prioritize complaints and decide whether to dismiss, resolve informally, refer to another agency for resolution, or initiate a formal investigation
- If the complaint involves an allegation of abuse, submit a Suspected Child Abuse Report (SS8572) to the county Child Protective Services (CPS) and, if applicable, to Community Care Licensing (CCL).
- When referring a complaint to a county Ombudsman for investigation, submit a written referral to the county Ombudsman with the recommendation to investigate the matter and respond back to the FCO within 30 days. The FCO will follow up with the complainant to verify resolution and determine whether additional investigative action will be taken.
- If a formal investigation is initiated, notify the county point-of-contact or county Ombudsman regarding its investigation.

NOTE: On a case-by-case basis, the FCO may not send a notice. For example, where timely resolution is required and/or the complainant requests anonymity or fears retaliation.

It is the SW's responsibility to ensure that every child in out-of-home care (including children placed out-of-county) receives the Child's Bill of Rights and the brochure with the toll-free phone number to the State Ombudsman. For young children, the SW will give the flyer to the SCP. Foster parents, Resource Families, LGHs, FFAs, and the Public Defender have been notified regarding the Ombudsman Office and the availability of brochures. The brochures, PUB 339 (English) and PUB 339 (Spanish), are available as shelf stock in every CWS office. The Foster Youth Rights brochure, PUB 395 (English) and PUB 395 (Spanish) are also available at the State Ombudsman's website.

Developmental Screening and Enhancement Program (DSEP)	The flyer regarding the [Developmental Screening and Enhancement Program (DSEP)](#) is available in the Resources section to share with SCP. The SW will fax/email a completed DSEP Referral Form or call DSEP at (858) 966-7874 to make a referral.
Referrals for Subsidized Child Care	Families living or working in San Diego County may be eligible for subsidized childcare. Availability of subsidized slots is dependent upon the amount of funding and the number of applications received each year. The SW will have the SCP apply for subsidized childcare through a Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) by calling (800) 521-0560 or applying online at http://www.childcaresandiego.com/.

CWS clients may be referred for expedited processing of their child care application if the SCP has:
• applied for subsidized child care through the Centralized Eligibility List, and
• a current placement and answers yes to the question, "Are you referred by a Child Protection Agency or is your child at risk of abuse or neglect?" on the application.

If funding is available and the SCP meets eligibility criteria, the SW must complete the application, Subsidized Child Care Child Protective Services Referral, form 24-761, online at the [Centralized Eligibility List (CEL)](#) website, https://www.childcaresandiego.com/.

NOTE: See the online Subsidized Child Care Resource Guide for eligibility criteria. |
| **Emergency Child Care Bridge Program** | The purpose of the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program is to assist remove the child care barrier to families seeking placement of foster children. The program provides SCP with time limited emergency child care funding, child care navigation services and trauma-informed training and coaching for eligible child care providers.

See Emergency Child Care Bridge Program in Resources for target population and eligibility criteria.

The SW will complete and submit the Child Care Bridge referral form (04-113) and e-mail to YMCA. |
| **Kinship Support Services** | Kinship Support Services administered by the YMCA of San Diego County, supports Relative/ NREFM caregivers who have children placed in their care to maintain kinship placements.

Kinship services provided consist of:
• Case Management
• Support Groups with child care
• Kinship Navigators
• Family Activities to Enhance Social Connections
• Kinship Emergency Funds

SW will fax Kinship Support Services referral form (04-64) to (619) 543-9491.

NOTE: Services are also available to non-CWS (informal) kinship families. |

| **Respite Care** | Foster/Relative/NREFM SCP may utilize respite for the purpose of: |
| | |

Respite Care

Foster/Relative/NREFM SCP may utilize respite for the purpose of:
- Pre-scheduled or emergency medical appointments
- Attending foster/relative parent support group meetings
- Required trainings and/or for stress alleviation
- Emergencies such as serious illness, incapacity, the death of a family member or personal demands that interrupt the caregiver's ability to provide care.

Eligible caregivers may self-refer for or up to 50 hours of respite per calendar quarter to Maxim. All request for excess respite hours must be made using the Request for Respite Hours form (04-87). See Respite in resources and Family Respite Support Services in the PM for additional information.

NOTE: Respite services are not intended for routine baby-sitting, vacations, employment, or to allow the caregiver to provide respite care for other children. See Normalcy Protocol for additional information on temporary care.

Project KEEP/ Project KEEP SAFE

The Project KEEP Program (Keeping Foster and Kinship Parents Trained and Supported) and Project KEEP SAFE are programs designed to address the unique issues experienced by SCP. Both KEEP programs are based on research that finds challenging child behavior as the primary reason for placement disruptions.

Project KEEP and Project KEEP SAFE consist of a 16-week program that provides group-based education and support to SCP parenting children between the ages of 5-12 and youth between 13-18.

The SW will complete the Project KEEP referral (04-290) and e-mail to mcole@saysandiego.org to make a referral.

NOTE: SCPs may self-refer by calling Project KEEP at (858) 565-4148.

Alignment with SET

This policy supports SET Value 2: Collaborative Partnerships With Kinship and Resource Families by providing the resources that support kinship and resource families.