

**Definitions & Acronyms
Used in the Child Welfare System
San Mateo County, CA - 2006**

- **AB 636** The Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001 (AB 636, Steinberg). Identifies and replicates best practices to improve child welfare service outcomes through county-level review processes. Also referred to as California – Child and Family Service Review (C-CFSR).
- **CalWORKS** refers to **California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids**, a statewide cash assistance program for families.
- **CASA** refers to **Court Appointed Special Advocate** volunteer is a trained community volunteer appointed by a judge to speak for the best interests of an abused and neglected child.
- **CARE** refers to the web based computer system, **Community Approach to Relating and Engaging** with Families, used by Community Partners to enter assessment information, case plan and record of contacts with clients.
- **CAT** refers to **Comprehensive Assessment Tool** used by Children and Family Services Social Workers to assess safety and risk.
- **CFS** refers to Children and Family Services.
- **CPS** refers to San Mateo County Child Protective Services.
- **Community Response (See also Differential Response)**
A proactive response to and assessment of situations involving families under stress who come to the attention of the Child Welfare System but who do not present an immediate risk for child maltreatment. Provides families with access to services to address identified issues without formal entry into the system.
- **Concurrent Planning** refers to the process of coupling aggressive efforts to reunify the family with careful planning for the possibility of adoption or other permanency options should circumstances prevent the child from returning home.
- **CSFR** refers to Child and Family Services Review of California’s child welfare system by the federal government
- **CWS/CMS** refers to the statewide Children & Family Services computer system, **Child Welfare Services/Case Management System** used by the Social Workers

- **DR** refers to Differential Response A graduated system for addressing referrals to the Child Abuse Hotline/Intake involving an initial assessment designed to identify immediate steps necessary to assure child safety and family engagement in such services as may be required to support them in performance of their parenting responsibilities.
- **Emancipated Youth** means young adults who are former foster/probation children who have left foster care because they have reached at least 18 years of age and up to the day prior to their 21st birthday.
- **ER Emergency Response Services**
A State mandated service program. Provides 24 hours a day, seven days a week, immediate in-person response to reports of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child. The social worker investigates and provides emergency services and crisis intervention to safeguard the child. Whenever possible the child is maintained in his or her own home. Where there is a continued danger or where there is no parent or guardian to provide care, the child is placed in protective custody by a police officer. The child is released to Children and Family Services and placed in a family-operated emergency shelter care home.

Once the initial response, investigation, and temporary intake services are completed, families with continuing needs are referred to either voluntary or court ordered Family Maintenance or Family Reunification services. A service plan is developed with the family, one that gives a clear statement of the problems, what services are offered, and the specific corrective actions needed.

- **Evidence-Based Practice** refers to a set of tools and resources for finding and applying the best current research evidence to service delivery, and integrating this information with clinical expertise and client values.
- **Family to Family Initiative provides** an opportunity for communities to better screen children being considered for removal from home, to determine what services might be provided to safely preserve the family and/or what the needs of the children are; be targeted to bring children in congregate or institutional care back to their neighborhoods; involve foster families as team members in family reunification efforts; become a neighborhood resource for children and families and invest in the capacity of communities from which the foster care population comes; and provide permanent families for children in a timely manner.

Family to Family is comprised of four core strategies: Recruiting, Training and Supporting Resource Families; Building Community Partnerships; Team Decision Making; and Self Evaluation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's role has been to assist states and communities with a portion of the costs involved

in both planning and implementing innovations in their systems of services for children and families, and to make available technical assistance and consultation throughout the process.

- **FAST** refers to **Family Assessment Screening Tool** used by Differential Response case managers to assess family service needs
- **FM** refers to Family Maintenance Services
A State mandated service program. Provides time limited protective services to families in crisis to prevent or remedy abuse, neglect or exploitation. This allows social work staff to work with the family unit while keeping the child in the home. Services offered include counseling, emergency shelter care, respite care, emergency in-home caretakers and parenting training. It is often in the best interest of the child to preserve and strengthen the family unit. Participation in this program can be voluntary or court ordered.
- **FR** refers to Family Reunification Services
A State mandated service program. Provides time-limited out-of-home placement to prevent further abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the child. Based on the child's needs, the child may be placed with a relative, foster parent, or group home. The child's placement may be voluntary by the parent or court-ordered. The family is offered counseling, services of a teaching and demonstrating homemaker, parenting classes, transportation, and referrals to other agencies based on the problems identified in the parents' service plan.

The parents are given one year to resolve their problems and regain the custody of their children who are over 3 years old. For children 3 and under and their siblings, the parents only have 6 months. An extension may be granted when there is a reasonable expectation that the children may be returned home by or before the next scheduled court review. The court reviews the case every six months. When the court determines that the parents have made changes that reduce or eliminate the problems, the child may be returned to the parents' care. The case usually is transferred to the Family Maintenance (FM) program for follow-up services for at least six months.

If a parent refuses to cooperate or is unable to make the changes needed, the law mandates that after 6 months, for a child under 3 years of age and their siblings, or 12 months for a child over 3 years of age, that a permanent plan be developed for the child. Throughout the process, the court, Children and Family Services, and the parents' attorneys are informing the parents of their rights and responsibilities. They have the right to contest all actions taken in court and have a right of appeal if they feel their case has not been handled correctly.

- **FRC** refers to Family Resource Center

- **FSST** refers to **Family Self-Sufficiency Team**, a multi-disciplinary team made up of professionals from various county and community-based organizations to address families' specific needs
- **HSA** refers to Human Services Agency
- **Independent Living Program** works with the foster youth, foster parents, social workers, and other members of the youth team to develop a Transitional Independent Living Plan focused on a successful transition of the foster youth to adulthood. ILP is offered to foster youth 15 1/2 to 21 years of age. The goal of ILP is to educate foster youth, before exiting from foster care, on the skills needed to be independent. Skills focused on are:
 - Job attainment and maintenance.
 - Vocational training.
 - Locating and maintaining housing.
 - Banking and budgeting.
 - Awareness of community resources.
 - Socialization.
 - Drivers' training and education.
 - College preparation.
 - Career exploration.
 - Nutrition and Health
- **ICWA refers to Indian Child Welfare Act**, a federal law passed in 1978 that guides states in their process for placement of an Indian child that is in their custody. This act was passed in response to the alarmingly high rate of Indian children being removed from their homes unnecessarily. It requires that states seek placement for the child with that child's family, tribe, and other American Indian homes before looking elsewhere. It generally does not apply to divorce proceedings, intrafamily disputes, juvenile delinquency cases, or cases under tribal court jurisdiction.
- **Juvenile Court** refers to a division of the Superior Court of the State of California, has exclusive jurisdiction over minors. Purpose of Court Jurisdiction Juvenile Court assumes jurisdiction under WIC 300 in order to:
 - provide that minor children receive nurturing in a home environment that is free of parental abuse and neglect. Children are made Dependents of the court only when such environments do not exist, and the court finds it necessary to:
 - supervise the child in his/her own home OR
 - remove the child from the parent's physical custody and control
 - protect the child (not to punish the parents)
 - determine what the best interest of the child is via informal and, whenever possible, non-adversarial proceedings and hearings

- **Kinship care** is when a non-parent relative provides parental care and supervision to a child.
- **MDT** refers to **Multi-Disciplinary Team**, a group of professionals and paraprofessionals representing an array of disciplines (e.g., resource families, service providers, law enforcement, juvenile courts and other community organizations) who interact and coordinate efforts with parents and families, pooling their skills to offer comprehensive, coordinated services.
- **Mandated Reporter** refers to a group of individuals identified in law that are required to report suspected abuse and neglect to a child protection agency. This group includes: Animal control officers, Child protective services personnel, Clergy, District attorney investigators and inspectors, Evaluators Film processors, Foster parents, Head Start teachers, Humane society employees, Marriage/family/child counselors, Paramedics, Physicians, Psychiatrists, Public health service employees, Recreational program staff, School district, police and security officers, Teachers, Youth center employees, Childcare providers, Child visitation monitors, Dentists, Emergency room personnel, Family support officers, Firefighters, Group home personnel, Health practitioners, Licensing workers, Nurses, Parole officers, Probation officers, Psychologists, Pupil personnel public and private schools, Residential care facilities, Social workers, Teacher aides/ assistants/ administrators, Volunteers are not mandated reporters
- **PIP** refers to the Program Improvement Plan; this resulted from the CSFR and details the actions that the state and counties would take to improve child welfare services
- **PP** refers to Permanent Placement Services
A State mandated service program. Permanent Placement services are designed to provide an alternate permanent family structure for children who cannot safely return or remain at home. The law mandates that Children and Family Services consider adoption, guardianship, or long-term foster care as possible plans for the child. Relatives' homes are carefully considered and are the option of choice when appropriate.
- **PQCR** refers to Peer Quality Case Review
The goal of the PQCR is to analyze specific practice areas and to identify key patterns of agency strengths and concerns for the host county. The PQCR process uses peers from other counties to promote the exchange of best practice ideas within the host county and to peer reviewers. The peer reviewers provide objectivity to the process and serve as an immediate onsite training resource to the host county.

- **SIP** refers to System Improvement plan: A key component of the C-CFSR, this operational agreement between the County and the state outlines a county's strategy and action to improve outcomes for children and families;
- **SW** refers to Children and Family Services Social Worker.
- **TDM refers** to Team Decision-Making: A meeting of key stakeholders in the child's case specifically used to determine placement decisions The meetings are always facilitated by a trained facilitator.

The California Child Welfare Services Manual, [Division 31-002](#) defines abuse, neglect, and exploitation as summarized below.

<u>Child Abuse</u>	The non-accidental commission of injuries against a person...specifically the non-accidental commission of injuries against the child by or allowed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or other person(s)
<u>Emotional Abuse</u>	Nonphysical mistreatment, the result of which may be characterized by disturbed behavior on the part of the child such as severe withdrawal, regression, bizarre behavior, hyperactivity, or dangerous acting-out behavior; such disturbed behavior is not deemed, in and of itself, to be evidence of emotional abuse.
<u>Physical Abuse</u>	Non-accidental bodily injury that has been or is being inflicted on a child, including but not limited to the forms of abuse defined by PC 11165.3-4 as “willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child” and “corporal punishment or injury”
<u>Severe Physical Abuse</u>	Any single act of abuse which causes physical trauma of sufficient severity that, if left untreated, would cause permanent physical disability, or death; any single act of sexual abuse which causes significant bleeding, deep bruising, or significant external or internal swelling; or repeated acts of physical abuse, each of which causes bleeding, deep bruising, significant external or internal swelling, bone fracture, or unconsciousness
<u>General Neglect</u>	Negligent failure of a person having care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred (PC 11165.2)
<u>Severe Neglect</u>	Negligent failure of a parent to protect child from severe malnutrition or medically diagnosed non-organic failure to thrive. Willfully causing or permitting the child to be placed in a situation where his/her person or health is endangered, including the intentional failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care (PC 11165.2)
<u>Willful Cruelty/ Unjustifiable Punishment</u>	Willfully inflicting or permitting unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering or causing or permitting child to be placed in situation where his/her person or health is endangered (PC 11165.3)
<u>Unlawful Corporal Punishment</u>	Willfully inflicting, on a child, cruel or inhuman corporal punishment or injury resulting in a traumatic condition (PC 11165.4)
<u>Maternal Substance Abuse</u>	A positive toxicology screen at time of delivery of an infant is not, in itself, sufficient basis for reporting child abuse or neglect. However, any indication of maternal substance abuse shall lead to assessment of the needs of the mother and child (PC 11165.13).