

Dear CWS Team,

Last month you were sent information on [Resource Family Approval \(RFA\)](#). With all of the changes and initiatives Child Welfare Services is implementing, it is an opportune time to talk to you about how RFA supports each project and how, together, they work towards our vision that *Every Child Grows Up Safe and Nurtured*.

As you've read, RFA is an approval process for caregivers working with our Agency. By 2017 all families, kinship and resource, partnering with San Diego County Child Welfare Services will have the same training, assessment, and placement standards. The process will be streamlined and allow for children to move quickly and smoothly into permanency if a permanent plan is ordered.

Let's look at how this plays a role in each of the initiatives/projects below:

Live Well San Diego

Live Well San Diego continues to be the overarching vision for the County of San Diego, with the three components of (1) Building Better Health (2) Living Safely and (3) Thriving. RFA will support Live Well San Diego by helping each of our county's kinship and resource families thrive by providing them the tools they need to safely parent the children in need in our communities. Caregivers will learn concepts to reduce trauma for children, support the wellbeing of children in their care, and living safely.

Safety Enhanced Together (SET)

SET defines our vision, priorities, and organizational values, focusing our efforts on strengthening families so that children grow up safe and nurtured. The concept of RFA helps us meet two of the top three agency priorities, moving us closer to achieving this vision. While safely stabilizing and preserving the family is always our first priority, when that is not possible, we strive to safely care for children and support the development of permanency and lifelong relationships. RFA helps us meet these priorities by simplifying the approval process and providing consistency in our permanency assessments. This allows for youth to be placed in a home that is approved to care for the child safely and already assessed for permanency.

California Well-Being Demonstration Project (Waiver)

The waiver provides flexible funding to be used for innovative programs and interventions with the goal of continuing to safely reduce the number of children and length of stay in care. RFA caregivers will be approved for permanent plan options as soon as they are approved for placement. This will allow children and youth who need a permanent plan of guardianship or adoption to transition quickly in to permanency and exit care sooner, helping to achieve both of the above Waiver goals.

Continuum Care Reform (CCR)

The goal of CCR is to ensure children are cared for in family-like settings whenever possible. With CCR changing the way we utilize Polinsky Children's Center and group homes, we will need

more relative and foster placements. These placements will need consistent training and ongoing support to be successful in supporting the needs of youth, both of which RFA will provide.

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)

QPI is an effort to rebrand foster care, not simply by changing a logo or an advertisement, but by changing the core elements underlying the brand. The key elements of the QPI process are to: define the expectations of caregivers, clearly articulate those expectations, increase social worker and caregiver collaboration, and to align the system so that those goals can become a reality. RFA supports these key elements by providing streamlined approval services, consistent training, and ongoing support for each caregiver.

As we move forward to the 2017 implementation of RFA, we will continue to communicate the changes and expectations to each of you, so that you can confidently team with caregivers and continue to provide the high level of service that each of you performs daily.

Debra Zanders-Willis, Director
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