

FINDING PERMANENCY FOR YOUTH



RESOURCE HANDBOOK

“Youth have a right to many life-long permanent relationships. All connections that serve to anchor the youth are important throughout their lives and need to be strengthened”

~ SOCIAL WORKER ~





**Fresno County Department of Children and Family Services
California Permanency For Youth Project (CPYP) Initiative**

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To learn more about the **California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP)**, as well as other resources, websites and information on youth permanency, visit the CPYP website at: www.cpyf.org

Fresno County Department of Children and Family Services is participating in the national child welfare redesign and is a **Family to Family** site.

For more information on the principles, outcomes, goals and strategies of the Family to Family Initiative, please visit the website at:

www.aecf.org/initiatives/familytofamily/

WHAT DOES THIS HANDBOOK MEAN TO ME?

- **If you are a youth in foster care**, this handbook can be helpful to you as you explore and consider what permanency means to you and what options are right for you when it comes to permanent connections and a plan for transition into adulthood.
- **If you are a foster parent or relative/mentor caregiver**, this handbook provides you information about your special role in the permanency process and explains how you can help the youth you care about in their journey for permanency.
- **If you are staff at a foster family agency or group home**, this handbook is designed to serve as a tool to help make permanency happen in the lives of the youth you work with.
- **If you work in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems**, this handbook is to support your work with youth and families so that your practices promote life-long connections and make permanency a reality for all youth in out-of-home care.
- **If you are a community partner or work for an agency that serves youth and families in foster care**, this handbook is intended to inform you about the needs and permanency options for youth in out-of-home care, as well as how you can help in the process.
- **If you are a community member**, this handbook serves to raise your awareness of the needs of our youth in out-of-home care, and to inspire you to get involved by either helping youth to find life-long connections, or by being a life-long connection!

WHAT DOES THE TREE SYMBOLIZE?

The **tree** in this handbook is a **special image** for our youth in foster care who are in need of their own **“forever family”**. The tree is a well-known symbol for family, the system that supports our ability to both survive and thrive in human society.

The **empty tree branches** represent how lonely many of our youth are in foster care. The bare branches are a representation of the lost or unknown family relationships, and past connections that have vanished over the many years they have spent in foster care.

As the handbook progresses, the **branches begin to blossom with more and more leaves**... The leaves are an illustration of how long-lost family members, siblings, distant relatives, former and current care-givers, and supportive adults can be brought together to create the “forever family” for youth in foster care.

Full trees are symbolic of how capable child welfare staff and community members are in the practice of permanency. With time, tools, teamwork and resources, we can find that there are loving people willing to be permanent life-long connections for every youth—in fact many have been there waiting for us to find them!

FINDING PERMANENCY FOR YOUTH

“A permanent connection is someone that you can talk to, someone that you can laugh with, and someone that can help you through a problem. It is someone who tells me: “Never be afraid of where you came from”, and “Don’t be afraid to move forward with your life”. People come in and out of our lives, but a permanent connection is forever.”
~ Former Foster Youth

“Youth have a right to many life-long permanent relationships. All connections that serve to anchor the youth are important throughout their lives and need to be strengthened.” ~Social Worker

“Placement is only a temporary strategy...it is a ‘therapeutically safe’ container... but every child needs a permanent strategy.” ~Social Worker

“The four basic needs used by the Red Cross to help people in times of emergency are: food, medical care, shelter and family connections. The foster care system has done well with providing three of these...Neighbors, friends, family, long-lasting relationships are still a basic need we aren’t meeting.” ~Kevin Campbell



~ VALUABLE QUOTES ~



WHAT IS “YOUTH PERMANENCY”?

Permanency is both a process and a result that includes involvement of the youth as a participant or a leader in defining for themselves what permanency means and in finding a permanent connection with at least one committed adult, who provides:

- A safe, stable and secure parenting relationship,
- Love,
- Unconditional commitment, and
- Life long support in the context of reunification, a legal adoption, or guardianship, where possible;

And in which the youth has the opportunity to maintain contacts with important persons, including brothers & sisters. A broad array of individualized permanency options exist; reunification and adoption are an important two, among many that may be appropriate.

*~ As defined by the
California Permanency for Youth Task Force*

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WELCOME!

Permanency for foster and probation youth means **establishing life-long connections with important adults** through reunification, guardianship, adoption and other life-long connections.

Many youth grow up in foster care, a system that was designed to be a **temporary solution**. These youth have had multiple placements, moving from home to home to home to home... Because foster care only provides **short-term commitments to these youth, they lack stability in most areas of their lives, including: a steady education, solid community ties, and a consistent group of people they know as their friends and family**. Currently in the United States, there are hundreds of thousands of lonely youth growing up in the foster care system.

Permanency for youth is a major factor in stable adulthood and critical to their success as adults. Unfortunately, many foster and probation youth find themselves growing up and leaving the system without permanent life-long connections. The result is often **homelessness, helplessness and hopelessness** for our youth. For some young adults, they become part of the disproportionate number of former foster youth who become **incarcerated, lack skills for employment and face early pregnancy and parenthood issues**.

Fresno County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is participating in the California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) which supports counties in building a **comprehensive continuum of services to support foster and probation youth transitioning into adulthood**. One of the specific areas Fresno County has chosen to target is Permanency.

As a way of building on youth permanency efforts, Fresno County is excited to be a part of the California Permanency Youth Project (CPYP), which is dedicated to **ensuring that no youth leaves the foster care system without a permanent, life-long connection**.

20 THINGS A PERMANENT CONNECTION MEANS TO ME

- 1** A person that you will be able to talk to for the rest of your life.
- 2** Having someone or someplace to go to when I need to, at any time, forever.
- 3** Someone or something that is there for you through *all* the good and *all* the bad.
- 4** Someone who is able and willing to help us learn the things that we should know, at that time in our lives.
- 5** A type of connection that will be with you or have permanently.
- 6** Someone who is there to help with things in my life.
- 7** Someone that you can trust.
- 8** A person you can trust that will help you in a time of need.
- 9** Someone who is there to help me with the things in my life.
- 10** Someone who helps you reach your full potential.
- 11** Kicking back with someone that is cool.
- 12** Someone that is there when I am sad, angry, or just need something.
- 13** A person that is always there for you.
- 14** A person that can be there for you when you need a shoulder to lean on, support financially, a home and advice.
- 15** Having a lasting bond to another individual.
- 16** Something that is permanent.
- 17** Being close, trusting someone.
- 18** Someone that will stay with you through thick and thin.
- 19** It is a connection that you make with a person, like a soul mate. Someone that you spend that rest of your life knowing.
- 20** Someone that you stay in touch with.

~ As polled by current and former foster and probation youth

WALKING THE PATH TO PERMANENCY: YOUTH ARE THE LEADERS!



STEP ONE: *Exploring options for permanence must begin with the youth.*

Youths' individual needs, desires, and experiences will determine the path and direction that is right for them. It is critical that youth are actively involved in planning for their own future.

STEPTWO: *Permanent connections are different for every youth.*

Youth are unique and each will have a different idea of what permanency means to them. Permanency may be a legal relationship, such as adoption or guardianship. It may also be safe relationships with committed adults, such as relatives, mentors or other positive figures from their past or present. Permanency could also be connections to culture, religion and ethnic traditions.

STEPTHREE: *Permanency may be a combination of relationships and connections.*

Youth may or may not live in the same home as their permanent connection. Because different people provide different resources or support to youths' lives, youth may have additional relationships outside of their home that may be of great importance to them. When it comes to a solid and stable support network, diversity is ideal.

STEPFOUR: *Community members can assist our youth in finding permanent connections and their own "forever family".*

We can do this by engaging youth in discussions about their unique situation, placements with current and past caregivers, reconsidering family reunification, and participating in the exploration toward reconnecting, and/or establishing relationships with extended family members.

WALKING THE PATH TO PERMANENCY: YOUTH ARE THE LEADERS!



STEP FIVE: *It is never too late. Start today!*

This is an urgent issue. Permanency is not an option; it is a mandate. We can begin by asking each youth we come in contact with:

“WHO DO YOU LOVE OR CARE ABOUT?”

“WHAT DOES PERMANENCY LOOK LIKE TO YOU?”

“WHO IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?”

STEP SIX: *Creating permanency is an ACTIVE process. Finding connections and building support networks for these relationships requires an on-going commitment from people in a youth’s life.*

It is a good strategy to identify who will be in charge of doing the youth’s family tracing work. Looking for lost or unknown family members, as well as important people from a youth’s past, can be done by a formal or informal group of committed people. The goal of family tracing is to find those who love, or could love, the youth. Search tools for finding connections include mining old child welfare cases for names and identifying information, along with Internet searches for current contact information. Additionally, phone calls and in-person interviews can provide a wealth of information about a youth’s family.

**FINAL DESTINATION:
PERMANENCY FOR ALL YOUTH!**



EXPLORING PERMANENCY OPTIONS...

THE CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATION



MYTH: *Permanency planning begins when a youth is set to emancipate out of the child welfare system.*

FACT: *Planning for permanency begins at the front door! When a child first enters the child welfare system, this is the ideal time to find and build the child's own network for permanency. This involves any meaningful relationships, not just "potential placements." The legal intervention necessary to protect children should not sever the emotional bonds they feel with their extended family. Youth are a part of larger family systems and need life-long connections with siblings and supportive relatives.*

Emergency Response plays a critical role in maintaining family connections and permanency for youth when court intervention is necessary. In this initial investigation phase, important decisions are made regarding **placement with relatives or mentors**, as a first option for out of home care.

These important relationships should be **thoroughly documented in a child's case**, as they may play an essential role in the child's life and their future. This involves taking down **names, vital information, and contact numbers** of a child's entire extended family including: parents, maternal and paternal grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, adult siblings, half-siblings and step-parents. This may also include important people such as teachers, coaches, mentors, or family friends. It is imperative to keep a comprehensive record of all of the people who love and care for each child so that they may remain involved in the child's life forever.

"We look at SERVICES as solutions to the problems with youth in foster care, but we need to change our focus and look at RELATIONSHIPS as the true solutions"

~ KEVIN CAMPBELL ~

EXPLORING PERMANENCY OPTIONS...

RECONSIDERING REUNIFICATION



MYTH: *Once a child's case has been sent to Long Term Foster Care, reunification with parents, or placement with relatives is no longer an option.*

FACT: *The family problems that resulted in the child's initial removal may have improved or been resolved with the passage of time. The circumstances of relatives who may have been originally ruled out for placement are also likely to have changed over the years. Additionally, safety issues change as a youth gets older and more independent.*

Reunification services are generally court-ordered to parents in the beginning of a child welfare case. They serve to address child safety issues and help parents to make positive changes that allow their children to return to their care. For those parents who were originally unsuccessful in reunifying within legal time frames, and yet have **maintained on-going relationships** with their children, it may be an option to reconsider reunification. These permanent connections with the youths' family of origin should be **regularly reevaluated for all youth in out-of-home placement.**



EXPLORING PERMANENCY OPTIONS...

“I DON’T *HAVE* A FAMILY



MYTH: *Teens that have spent years in foster care and group homes obviously must not have any family to consider for permanency.*

FACT: *Families are larger and more diverse than we often believe. Experts estimate that children have between 100-300 living relatives at one time! Family tracing work can help to locate long-lost cousins, aunts, uncles, siblings, grandparents, and parents... people who care about the youth, but have either lost contact or were never aware this youth is in foster care.*

Legal Guardianship involves a legal commitment and court order that takes the youth out of the status of being a foster child. The court dependency is usually dismissed and the legal guardian continues to get Medi-Cal. **Non-relative guardians** continue to receive financial aid assistance, and **relative guardians** get aid from the Kin-GAP program.

This option for permanency **does not terminate parental** rights and allows parents the future option of regaining child custody. However, some problems with guardianship may result in youth fearing that they may be “given up” if they misbehave, or feeling that they are a second-class family member. It is critical to discuss this option fully with the youth and potential guardian to establish that this is a **unconditional commitment with a life-long relationship.**



“The absence of a committed, loving adult in the life of a child cannot be treated by medication or therapy”

~ KEVIN CAMPBELL ~

EXPLORING PERMANENCY OPTIONS...

“I DON’T NEED A FAMILY



MYTH: *Teens in foster care that say “no” when asked if they want a permanent connection should have their wishes respected.*

FACT: *The pains, trauma and countless relationship losses youth have suffered in the foster care system are barriers that need to be worked through. Youth may have come to believe that they are “unadoptable” and that it is too late to find a family who will want them. The unintended consequences of our system of care include loneliness and hopelessness; many youth reject others before they have the chance to be rejected. Nobody is ever too old to need a committed, supportive and loving family—in fact our very survival depends on this!*

Adoption provides youth the highest legal form of permanence. The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 requires child welfare agencies to continue to explore adoption for children of all ages who have remained in long term foster care. Regardless of their special needs, ethnicity, number of siblings, age, disability or sexual orientation/gender identity, all youth have a right to a legal “forever family.”

With the **Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)**, adoptive families are eligible to continue receiving monthly financial assistance, until the youth reaches age 18. Additionally, **Medi-Cal** for physical and mental health care is also available until the youth reaches age 18.

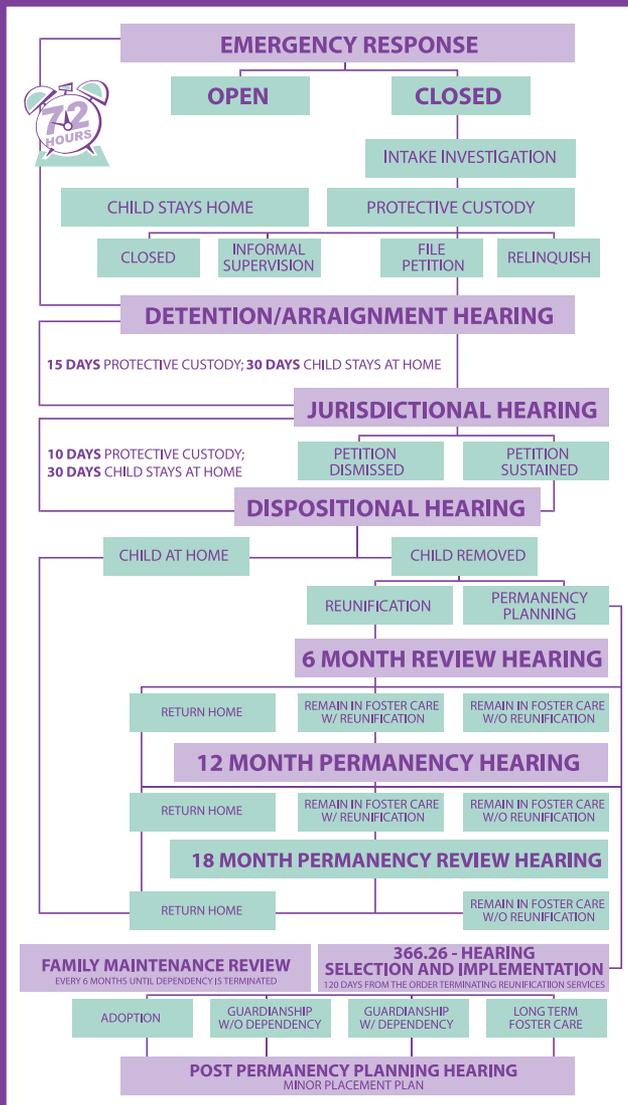
When a social worker makes a recommendation for a permanent plan of adoption for a youth with significant family connections, a referral can be made to the **Consortium for Children**. This organization helps to mediate a **Post-Adoption Agreement** for continued contact. In this way, a youth can maintain the strong emotional ties and birth family relationships that are important to her/him, even after the adoption is finalized.

Many times financial concerns or separation from extended family relationships are seen as barriers to pursuing a plan of adoption. An **extensive discussion of options and creative planning** for each individual youth can help to overcome perceived barriers.

JUVENILE DEPENDENCY CHART

JUVENILE COURT DEPENDENCY HEARINGS

DETENTION HEARING: WIC §319, CRC 1440-1447
Presumption: The minor shall be released to the parents unless legal grounds are established to temporarily detain the minor.
Burden of Proof: Prima Facie evidence (evidence which suffices until contradicted).
Burden of Production: The government.
Time Lines: A minor may be detained in protective custody for 15 days pending a jurisdictional hearing.
JURISDICTIONAL HEARING: WIC §3300, 350, 355; J.C.R. 1449-1450
Presumption: Unexplained non-accidental serious injuries while in the custody of parent are presumed to be the result of abuse or neglect.
Burden of Proof: Preponderance of evidence that petition is true.
Burden of Production: The government.
Time Lines: 15 days after the Detention hearing if child is out of home, 30 days if child remains home.
DISPOSITIONAL HEARING: WIC §3360-362 & CRC 1455-1459
Presumption: None.
Placement: The minor shall be placed in the custody of the parents unless clear and convincing evidence of detriment. If the Court removes a minor from a custodial parent:
 - The minor will be placed with a previously noncustodial parent unless such placement would be detrimental.
 - Preferential consideration for placement will be given to a request by certain relatives.
Reunification: Parents will usually receive reunification services.
Burden of Proof: Clear and convincing evidence of substantial risk of danger to child in order to remove from parent's custody.
Burden of Production: The government.
Time Lines: 10 days after the Jurisdictional hearing if child is out of home, 30 days if child remains home or if government seeks to deny reunification services.
SIX-MONTH REVIEW HEARING: WIC §3364, 366.21, 366.22 & CRC 1460
Presumptions:
 - The minor shall be returned to the parents unless there is a substantial risk to the minor's physical or emotional well-being or when the parents have failed to participate regularly in any Court ordered treatment programs.
 - If minor remained home, terminate dependency unless continued supervision is necessary.
Burden of Proof: Preponderance of evidence. (If government wants to terminate Reunification Services, must be clear and convincing evidence).
Burden of Production: The government.
Time Lines: 6 months from the "entry into foster care" is defined as date of Jurisdictional Hearing or 60 days after initial removal, whichever comes first.
TWELVE-MONTH PERMANENCY HEARING: WIC §3364, 366.21(1)(g), CRC 1461
Presumptions:
 - The minor shall be returned to the parents unless there is a substantial risk to the minor's physical or emotional well-being or when the parents have failed to participate regularly in any Court ordered treatment programs.
 - If minor remained home, terminate dependency unless continued supervision is necessary.
 - When the minor is not returned to the parents, services will be terminated unless there is substantial probability that the minor will be returned to the custody of the parents within six months or unless reasonable services have not been provided.
Burden of Proof: Preponderance of evidence, to determine if detrimental for child to return home. Clear and convincing evidence to determine if reasonable services were provided.
Burden of Production: The government.
Time Lines: 12 months from the "entry into foster care".
Entry into foster care: is defined as date of Jurisdictional Hearing or 60 days after initial removal, whichever comes first.
Eighteen-Month Permanency Review Hearing: WIC §3366, 366.22, CRC 1462
Presumptions:
 - The minor shall be returned to the parents unless there is a substantial risk to the minor's physical or emotional well-being or when the parents have failed to participate regularly in any Court ordered treatment programs.
 - If minor remained home, terminate dependency unless continued supervision is necessary.
Burden of Proof: Preponderance of evidence.
Burden of Production: The government.
Time Lines: in no event later than 18 months after the Detention Hearing.
SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION HEARING: WIC §3366.26, CRC 1463-1465
Presumption: If the minor is adoptable, parental rights will be terminated unless adoption would be detrimental to the child.
Burden of Proof: Clear and convincing evidence that the minor child will be adopted.
Burden of Production: The government.
Time Lines: 120 days from Order Termination Reunification Services.
POST PERMANENCY PLANNING HEARING: WIC §3366.3, CRC 1466
 This hearing determines if progress is being made to find a permanent home for the child and if the case can be dismissed.
Presumption: Continued out of home care is in the best interest of the child.
Burden of Proof: Usually preponderance of evidence.
Burden of Production: One anyone proposing a change.
Time Lines: Every six months until case is dismissed.



JUVENILE DEPENDENCY PROCESS

Fresno County Superior Court, Juvenile Dependency Division
 Revised December 2001

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY CHART

JUVENILE COURT DELINQUENCY HEARINGS

ARRAIGNMENT/DETENTION HEARING

W&J Section 628, 1442 Rules of Court

Presumption: The minor shall be released unless the court finds legal grounds to temporarily detain the minor.

Burden of Proof: A prima facie showing has been made that the minor is described by section 601 or 602.

Time Lines: A detention hearing shall be set and commenced as soon as possible, but no later than 72 hours, excluding non-court days, after the minor has been taken into custody. If not in custody, arraignment must be held within 15 days of the filing of the petition.

PRIMA FACIE HEARING

W&J Section 637, Rules of Court 1476

Presumption: The child or child's attorney requests that evidence of the prima facie case be presented.

Burden of Proof: Petitioner to establish the prima facie case.

Time Lines: Three court days after the detention hearing. * If contested hearing is requested.

JURISDICTIONAL HEARING

W&J Section 637, Rules of Court 1485

Presumption: The court shall consider whether the minor is a person described by Section 301 or 602.

Burden of Proof: Beyond a reasonable doubt.

Time Lines: 30 calendar days from the date of the arraignment or first appearance, if not detained. If detained, 15 judicial days from the date of the order of the court directing detention.

DISPOSITIONAL HEARING

W&J Section 702, Rules of Court 1489, 1492

Presumption: After finding that the minor is a person described in Section 601 or 602, the court shall hear evidence on the questions of the proper disposition to be made of the minor.

Time Lines: 10 judicial days after jurisdictional hearing, if minor is not detained. 30 calendar days after jurisdictional hearing, if minor is not detained.

15 DAY REVIEW HEARING

W&J Section 737(b)

Presumption: In any case in which a minor is detained for more than 15 days pending the execution of the order of commitment or of any other disposition, the court shall periodically review the case to determine whether the delay is reasonable. The court shall inquire regarding the action taken by the probation department to carry out its order, the reasons for the delay, and the effect of the delay upon the minor.

Time Lines: These reviews shall be held at least every 15 days, commencing from the time the minor was initially detained pending the execution of the order of commitment or of any other disposition.

6-MONTH REVIEW HEARING

W&J Section 727.3, Rules of Court 1496

Presumption: The status of every child declared a ward and placed in placement shall be reviewed at the time of the initial placement order and then as determined by the court but no less frequently than once every six months.

Burden of Proof: The minor may be returned to the parents unless the court finds, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the return of the minor to his or her parent of legal guardian would create a substantial risk of detriment to the safety, protection, or physical or emotional well-being of the minor.

Time Lines: 6 months from the date the minor entered placement.

PERMANENCY PLANNING HEARING

W&J Section 727.2(b)(1)

Presumption: There shall be a permanency planning hearing within 12 months of the date the minor entered placement and periodically thereafter, but no less frequently than every 12 months during the period of placement.

Burden of Proof: If the minor is not returned to a parent or legal guardian at the permanency hearing, the court shall determine whether or not the minor should be referred for adoption proceedings, referred for legal guardianship, or referred to an alternative planned permanent living arrangement, including whether, because of the minor's special needs or circumstances, the minor should be continued in placement on a permanent basis.

Time Lines: Permanency planning hearings shall be scheduled periodically, but no less frequently than once every 12 months thereafter.

TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS HEARING

W&J Section 727.36 (a), W&J 366.26

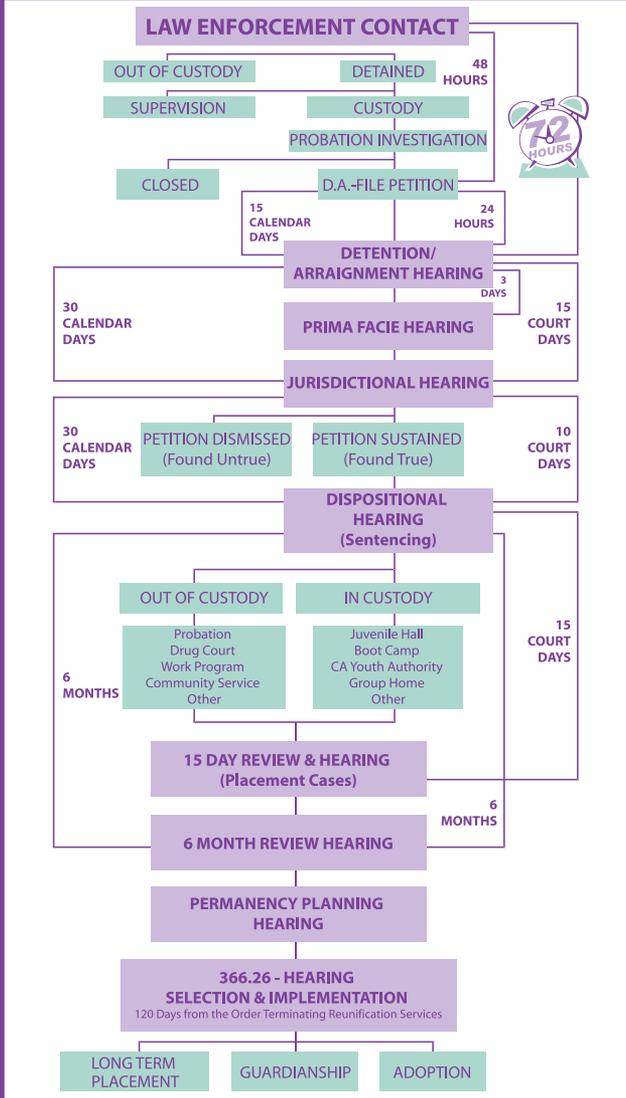
Presumption: This section applies to all minors placed in out-of-home care pursuant to Section 727.2 and for whom the juvenile court orders a hearing to consider permanently terminating parental rights to free the minor for adoption. The procedures for permanently terminating parental rights for minors described by this section shall proceed exclusively pursuant to Section 366.26.

Burden of Proof: Clear and convincing evidence that the minor child will be adopted.

Time Lines: 120 days from Order Terminating Reunification Services.

Fresno County Superior Court, Juvenile Dependency Division

600 Flowchart 4/23/01



JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PROCESS

TOP 10 REASONS TO ADOPT A TEEN:

- 1** *No diapers to change, no bottles, formula or burp rags required.*
- 2** *We sleep through the night.*
- 3** *We will be ready to move out sooner... but will still visit.*
- 4** *You don't just get a child, you get a friend.*
- 5** *We will keep you up to date with the latest fashion.*
- 6** *No more carpools; we can drive you places.*
- 7** *We can help around the house.*
- 8** *We can learn from you.*
- 9** *We can teach you how to program your computer, cell phone, and DVD player.*
- 10** *We will be a part of your life forever.*



Top 10 Reasons to Adopt a Teen
was originally developed by the
Oklahoma Youth Advisory Board 2000

MAKING DECISIONS AS A TEAM:

WHAT IS AN EMANCIPATION CONFERENCE (E-CONFERENCE)?

This is a meeting held for a youth (age 16-18 years) to make plans for a safe, happy, and successful **transition into independence from the foster care system**. A group of people who are supportive and provide resources, as well as the youth, talk about his/her strengths, needs, long and short term goals, transportation, housing, education, employment, medical/health care, and permanent life-long connections with caring adults.

WHAT ARE TEAM DECISION MAKING (TDM) MEETINGS?

TDMs bring together the family members, youth, people who are involved with and care about the family, as well as child welfare staff and community partners. TDMs **are held at many critical points of a family's involvement with child welfare**: when children are either at risk of entering, or first placed in emergency foster care; when an out-of-home placement is unstable or the youth is at risk of moving placements; and when decisions need to be made about family reunification and permanency.

WHY ARE TDMS IMPORTANT FOR PERMANENCY?

TDMs are unique because they recognize that all families have strengths and are experts about themselves and their needs. The TDM format allows the “team” to brainstorm strengths, concerns, and action plans. It also ensures that the **best possible decisions are made regarding a child's safety, placement, and overall best interest**. Topics such as educational stability, relationships, special needs and permanent life-long connections are discussed. TDMs provide an opportunity for families and youth's voices to be heard, and for them to be involved in the decisions that greatly impact their lives.

WHO SHOULD BE INVITED TO E-CONFERENCES AND TDMS?

In addition to the youth, relatives, parents, support people, mentors, non-related extended family members (NREFM), and child welfare staff, many others can be **very valuable participants**. Some examples are: service providers, community representatives, mental health, current (or potential) substitute caregivers, foster family agency or group home staff, school personnel, faith-based community, child and parent advocates, domestic violence experts, public health nurses, and independent living/permanency specialists.

FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

1 ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT/ DETERMINATION OF RATE

- Eligibility for funding is based on factors related to the child, including: special needs, age 3 or over, sibling group, adverse parental background, and/or racial or ethnic minority.
- There is no means test for families.
- The AAP benefit is a negotiated amount based on the needs of the child and the circumstances of the adoptive family. The responsible public agency negotiates the amount of the benefit and determines the amount based on AAP regulations.
- The AAP payment may not be more than the child would have received in family foster care.
- Adoptive parents determine how the AAP funds are spent.

- Some relative guardians are eligible.⁵
- The payment rate is based on the child's age and the rate is set by state regulation.
- There is no allowance for special needs of the child.
- Child must be placed in the relative home for 12 consecutive months.
- The legal guardian has the obligation to spend Kin-GAP funds for the benefit of the child but is not financially liable to support the child with the guardian's own funds.

- All non-relative guardians are eligible.
- The payment is based on the child's age, and the rate is set by regulation.
- There may be an allowance for special needs.
- The legal guardian has the obligation to spend funds for the benefit of the child but is not financially liable to support the child with the guardian's own funds.

- When a child is in a county licensed foster home, or with a relative and is "federally eligible," foster care funds are based on the child's age.
- A special care increment may be individually applied.
- If the child is in a relative placement and does not meet federal eligibility guidelines, the relative must apply for CALWORKS.
- The Foster Family Agency (FFA) group home, or residential treatment rate applies when the child is in a certified FFA home, group hom, or residential treatment program and those rates do not include a special care increment.

2 PAYMENT AMOUNT- BASIC RATE

The basic payment amount is based on the child's age and based on approved foster family home care rates set by the state.

Through Kin-GAP payments, Legal Guardian is eligible to receive funding ranging from \$426-597 per month, per child, depending on the child's age.

The basic payment amount is based on the child's age, based on approved foster family home care rates set by the state.

Payment amount: it based on the type of placement as described above (refer to Foster Family Homes Schedule of Basic Rates). If the child is in foster care is not found to be federally eligible, and is placed with a relative caregiver, then the relative must apply for CalWorks funds to support the child as a "non-needy caretaker."

Legal citations available upon request.



FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

3 SPECIAL NEEDS ALLOWANCE	The AAP payment amount is limited to the age of related, state approved foster family home care increment for which the child would have been eligible had he or she remained in foster care. The special needs allowance is based on the individual needs of the child and what the adoptive parent does to meet those needs.	No special needs allowance is allowed.	Special needs allowance is based on the individual needs of the child and what the Legal Guardian does to meet those special needs.	In county licensed homes or relative placements with foster care funding, the special needs allowance is based on the individual needs of the child and what the caregiver does to meet those special needs. A special rate allowance is not available for FFA, Group Home placements, or Residential treatment placements as these programs have a different rate setting structure; consideration of the special needs of the child are built into the rates. Special rates are not available for relative placements funded through CalWorks.
4 CONSIDERATION OF FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES	Circumstances of the family are considered in determining the AAP amount, however no means test may be applied.	Family circumstances are not considered in determining the payment amount.	Family circumstances are not considered in determining the payment amount.	Family circumstances are not considered in determining the payment amount.
5 CLOTHING ALLOWANCE	No clothing allowance provided.	No clothing allowance provided.	No clothing allowance provided.	Annual clothing allowance is provided for county licensed foster homes and relatives receiving funds through foster care.
6 FINANCIAL RECERTIFICATION	AAP must be recertified at least every 2 years.	The relative or kind guardian must complete a monthly status report (CA-7); Kin-GAP is recertified annually.	The guardian must go through an annual reinvestigation.	The Child Welfare Worker recertifies child's eligibility annually.
7 TAX DEPENDENCY	The adopted child is generally a tax dependent of the adoptive parents. Families should consult with their tax consultant for direction.	The child may be an allowable tax dependent of the Relative Guardian. Families should consult with their tax consultant for direction.	The child may be an allowable tax dependent of the Legal Guardian. Families should consult with their tax consultant for direction.	The child may be an allowable tax dependent of the foster parents. Families should consult with their tax consultant for direction. <i>Legal citations available upon request.</i>



FACTOR

ADOPTION

RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Kin-GAP)

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

<p>8 CHILD'S MISCONDUCT/ DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY</p>	<p>An adoptive parent is liable to the same extent as a birth parent. An attorney should be consulted regarding specific situations.</p>	<p>A Legal Guardian is liable to the same extent as a birth parent. An attorney should be consulted regarding specific situations.</p>	<p>A Legal Guardian is liable to the same extent as a birth parent. An attorney should be consulted regarding specific situations.</p>	<p>The foster parent is not legally liable for the behavior of the child.</p>
<p>9 MEDICAL INSURANCE</p>	<p>Children eligible for AAP are eligible for MediCal. The family may also enroll child under their private health insurance; if enrolled, private insurance is used first. MediCal is still provided, and may offer some benefits that the private insurance does not cover.</p>	<p>Child is eligible for MediCal or their private health insurance; if enrolled, MediCal may cover what private insurance does not.</p>	<p>Child is eligible for MediCal or the family may enroll the child under their private health insurance; if enrolled, MediCal may cover what private insurance does not.</p>	<p>Child is eligible for MediCal.</p>
<p>10 SOCIAL SECURITY (SSA-DEPENDENT OR SURVIVOR BENEFITS)</p>	<p>When an adopted parent(s) retires, becomes unable to work due to disability, or dies, the adoptive child may be eligible for dependent or survivor benefits. The adoptive family directly receives the funds for the care of the child.</p>	<p>When the birth parent(s) retires, becomes unable to work due to disability, or dies, the child may be eligible for dependent benefits or survivor benefits. If the SSA amount exceeds the Kin-GAP rate, and court dependency is dismissed, the Kin-GAP funds may be ended and the full SSA amount can be paid to the Legal Guardian.</p>	<p>When the birth parent(s) retires, becomes unable to work due to disability, or dies, the child may be eligible for dependent benefits or survivor benefits. The Legal may choose to receive social security benefits or foster care benefits.</p>	<p>SSA determines who the payee is for SSA funds for dependent children, when the birth parent is disabled or dies. The funds are applied to the foster care expense for the cost of the child's placement. A trust fund account is established for an extra fund, and the Child Welfare Worker is responsible to use these funds to meet the child's needs. Trust accounts cannot go beyond \$2000.</p>

Legal citations available upon request.



FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

<p>11 SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS (SSI-BASED ON THE CHILD'S ELIGIBILITY)</p>	<p>An adoptive child may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits due to a disability. The adoptive family directly receives these funds, for the care of the child. (Note: AAP funding and SSI Benefits are both federal programs, and the family may only receive the maximum rate child is eligible for, funds cannot overlap.)</p>	<p>When the child is disabled, the same factors apply as described above.</p>	<p>When the child is disabled, the same factors apply as described above. The payee of funds is the Agency, and the funds are applied to the cost of the child's placement.</p>
<p>12 RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT</p>	<p>AAP covers the cost of the state approved rate for group home placement or residential treatment program for which child is eligible, up to months per episode.</p>	<p>To access funds for group home placement or residential treatment, guardianship may need to be rescinded and/or dependency reinstated.</p>	<p>Funding is provided for placement in group home or residential treatment, based on child's eligibility, and the state approved rate.⁴⁰</p>
<p>13 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE/ DEATH OF CAREGIVER</p>	<p>AAP funding can only be paid to an adoptive parent. AAP funding will end upon death of adoptive parent(s). AAP can be re-initiated if the child is adopted again.</p>	<p>Guardianship funding terminates in the event of death of the guardian(s); however, Kin-GAP Guardianship benefits may continue if there is a successor Guardian.</p>	<p>The Social Services Agency continues to be responsible for the financial care and placement needs of the child upon the death of the foster parent(s) or caregivers.</p>
<p>14 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE/ CHILD'S RESIDENCE/ MOVES OUT OF COUNTY</p>	<p>The adoptive parents solely determine residence. AAP funding is paid to family regardless of where adoptive families choose to live-in another county, another state, or another country.</p>	<p>Guardians have the right to move out of county, but must notify Court in writing.</p>	<p>Legal residence is determined by residence of birth parents (However, the child is eligible to attend school in the jurisdiction where he or she is placed). Courtesy supervision is arranged when a child moves w/ caregiver out of county. Court and the Agency determine where child lives.</p> <p><i>Legal citations available upon request.</i></p>



FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

15 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE/ CHILD'S RESIDENCE/ MOVES OUT OF STATE/ COUNTRY

The adoptive parents solely determine residence. AAP funding is paid to family regardless of where adoptive families choose to live: in another county, another state, or another country.

Court permission must be obtained to move out of state. If Guardian moves out of state, they are no longer eligible for Kin-GAP funding from California. Guardianship and/or funding may need to be re-established in the new state/country, and is subject to the new state or country's laws and eligibility rules.

Court permission must be obtained to move out of state. If Guardian moves out of state, they are no longer eligible for Kin-GAP funding from California. Guardianship and/or funding may need to be re-established in the new state/country, and is subject to the new state or country's laws and eligibility rules.

Legal residence is determined by residence of birth parents. Courtesy supervision is arranged when a child moves w/ caregiver out of county or out of state. Interstate Compact Program rules must be followed when a child moves out of state and licensing/certification procedures for that state must be followed, in order for payment to be made to caregiver by Agency.

16 ILSP (INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILL PROGRAM) ELIGIBILITY

Only those youth adopted after their 16th birthday are eligible for all ILSP programs, until age 21, except housing assistance programs (see section below on Higher Education).

Only those youth in Legal Guardianship after their 16th birthday are eligible for all ILSP programs, until age 21 (see section below on Higher Education).³¹

Only those youth in Legal Guardianship after their 16th birthday are eligible for all ILSP programs, until age 21 (see section below on Higher Education).

Only those youth who remain in foster care through their 18th birthday are eligible for all ILSP programs, until age 21, including housing assistance programs (see section below on Higher Education).

17 ELIGIBILITY FOR CHAFEER GRANT PROGRAM

Only those youth in foster care at time of their 16th birthday and adopted after are eligible for Chafee Grant funding. Chafee Grant provides up to \$5000 in free money (no pay back required) while youth is in college. Amount awarded depends on cost of the college. Youth must receive Chafee funds prior to 21st birthday; eligibility continues to 23rd birthday.

Only those youth in foster care at time of their 16th birthday and adopted after, are eligible for Chafee Grant funding. Chafee Grant provides up to \$5000 in free money (no pay back required) while youth is in college. Amount awarded depends on cost of the college. Youth must receive Chafee funds prior to 21st birthday; eligibility continues to 23rd birthday.

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Legal citations available upon request.

COMPARISON OF FINANCIAL BENEFITS, ADOPTION, LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP AND FOSTER CARE

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
ALAMEDA COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

FACTOR

ADOPTION

RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Kin-GAP)

NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP (supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

<p>18 ELIGIBILITY FOR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT PROGRAM (THPP)</p>	<p>N/A-Youth must be foster youth age 16 and over to be eligible.</p>	<p>N/A-Youth must be foster youth age 16 and over to be eligible.</p>	<p>N/A-Youth must be foster youth age 16 and over to be eligible.</p>	<p>THPP prepares foster youth age 16 and over for independent living. Program consists of offsite supervised living situation in 2-3 bedroom shared housing units. It is a small program, currently with 22 beds. Foster youth must apply, interview, be active in school, and have letters of reference.</p>
<p>19 ELIGIBILITY FOR ILSP HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS</p>	<p>N/A-Youth must be foster youth age 16 and over to be eligible.</p>	<p>Youth in Legal Guardianship after their 16th birthday are eligible for ILSP Housing and College Housing programs. Slots are limited.</p>	<p>Youth in Legal Guardianship after their 16th birthday are eligible for ILSP Housing and College Housing programs. Slots are limited.</p>	<p>Youth who remain in foster care through their 18th birthday are eligible for all ILSP housing programs, including college dorm housing assistance. Slots are limited.</p>
<p>20 ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION</p>	<p>Adopted youth may be eligible for federal and state financial aid, however, eligibility is based on the youth and adoptive family's income. Youth should consult with school's financial aid office.</p>	<p>Legal Guardianship youth may be eligible for federal and state financial aid. The Legal Guardian's income is not considered. Eligibility is based on the youth's income, and if the biological parents have claimed the youth as a dependent on past two years' income tax reports, their income is also considered. Youth should consult with school's financial aid office.</p>	<p>Legal Guardianship youth may be eligible for federal and state financial aid. The Legal Guardian's income is not considered. Eligibility is based on the youth's income, and if the biological parents have claimed the youth as a dependent on past two years' income tax reports, their income is also considered. Youth should consult with school's financial aid office.</p>	<p>Youth who remain in foster care through their 18th birthday are eligible for federal and state financial aid. Only the youth's income is considered. These youth may also be eligible for other funding designated specifically for foster youth. Youth should consult with school's financial aid office.</p>
<p>21 TAX CREDIT</p>	<p>\$10,390 tax credit allowed year of adoption. If credit is more than tax liability limit, unused credit can be carried forward to next 5 years. (Refer to IRS Publication 968.)</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Legal citations available upon request.



INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
ALAMEDA COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

COMPARISON OF FINANCIAL BENEFITS, ADOPTION, LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP AND FOSTER CARE

FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP

NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP

(supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

<p>1 ELIGIBILITY/ PLACEMENT CRITERIA</p>	<p>Adoptive parents must meet all state guidelines and requirements for approval, including completion of training and assessment, resulting in an approved Adoption Homestudy. Approval must be from a licensed Adoption Agency. Agency must make recommendations to Court for final approval.</p>	<p>Relative and non-related extended family members must meet all state guidelines and requirements first for foster care placement, including training and assessment, and pass Relative Approval process; Agency must make recommendation to Court for Legal Guardian, and final approval comes from Court.</p>	<p>Non-related caregivers must first be licensed or certified foster families. Families must complete training, assessment and meet licensing regulations. Agency must make recommendations to Court, and final approval for Legal Guardian comes from Court.</p>	<p>Caregivers must meet licensing requirements to be approved and licensed by the state, the county or Certified Foster Family Agency. Additionally, families must complete training and undergo an assessment. Relatives must also be approved for placement through a Relative Approval Process. Juvenile Court approves all placements.</p>
<p>2 ONGOING AGENCY INVOLVEMENT</p>	<p>Agency closes child's case following finalization. Agency is involved only for the provision of AAP, if eligible, or if the family requests, post adoption services may be made available.</p>	<p>Court may dismiss Juvenile Court Dependency following order of Guardianship. If so, no further Agency support or involvement. Support may be available through local Kinship Support Service Centers. If dependency is continued, Agency supervision, case management and Court supervision continues.</p>	<p>Court may dismiss Juvenile Court Dependency following order of Guardianship, although technically, court maintains right to supervision of placement. When a family receives foster care funding, they are visited every 6 months by CWM, Court supervision and case management continues if dependency is not dismissed. If child is on SSI and Regional Center client, the Regional Center provides case management.</p>	<p>Agency continues to hold custody of the child and provides case management services to the child and sometimes to the family, care givers must keep license or certification active and are subject to regulations and involvement by the Agency in their home and with the family.</p>
<p>3 LEGAL RELATIONSHIP</p>	<p>Adoptive parents commit to a permanent lifelong relationship with the child. An adopted child becomes their child in all respects. The legal relationship is the same as it is to a child born to them. The child's Court Dependency is dismissed when the adoption is finalized.</p>	<p>Guardianship suspends the legal rights of birth parents. The guardian(s) have parental responsibility for care, custody, control and conduct of the child.</p>	<p>Guardianship suspends the legal rights of birth parents. The guardian(s) have parental responsibility for care, custody, control, and conduct of the child.</p>	<p>While foster parents and relative caregivers provide food, housing and nurturance to a child, the Juvenile Court has legal jurisdiction over the child and the Social Services Agency is responsible for the case management and supervision of the child in the home.</p>

Legal citations available upon request.



FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP

NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE GUARDIANSHIP

(supported by Foster Care Funds)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

4 LEGAL PERMANENCE

Adoption is a lifelong legally binding relationship and provides the highest level of legal permanence. The adoptive parent(s) become the legal parents. Birth parents rights are terminated, and birth parents cannot reclaim the child.

Guardianship provides permanence; however, it is not as legally secure as adoption; the Court can terminate guardianship, and birth parents can petition the court to terminate the guardianship, or the Legal Guardian may ask the court to dismiss guardianship. Birth parent's rights are usually not terminated, and birth parents may have the right to visit the child. The Legal Guardian has authority to allow birth parents to be involved in decisions re: the child. Legal Guardianship ends at age 18, or may be extended if youth is still in high school.

Guardianship provides permanence; however, it is not as legally secure as adoption. The Court can terminate the guardianship, and birth parents can petition the court to terminate the guardianship, or the Legal Guardian may ask the court to dismiss the guardianship. Birth parent's rights are usually not terminated, and birth parents may have the right to visit the child. The Legal Guardian has authority to allow birth parent to be involved in decisions re: the child. Legal Guardianship ends at age 18, or may be extended if youth is still in high school.

Foster care is meant to be temporary, and does not provide legal permanence for a child. The Agency continues to maintain custody of the child through 18th birthday or until age 19/High School graduation. Court can continue jurisdiction up to age 21. (WIC 303). The birth parents can challenge continuing need for custody in Court. The Agency can remove the child from the caregiver's home, or the caregiver can request child's removal. Placement can disrupt at any time. Birth parents rights are generally not terminated, and birth parents maintain right to visit and be involved in major decisions regarding the child, depending on case situation. The Agency makes recommendations to Court regarding the child, and the Juvenile Court makes major decisions.



FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP

NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE

by Foster Care Funds

RELATIVE

GUARDIANSHIP
(supported by Kin-GAP)

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

5 PARENTING RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Adoptive parents possess all parenting rights and responsibilities for the child.

Legal Guardians possess parenting rights and responsibilities. When birth parent rights are not terminated, they retain right to visitation. The court can make visitation orders that limit parent's rights.

Legal Guardians possess parenting rights and responsibilities. When birth parent rights are not terminated, they retain right to visitation. The court can make visitation orders that limit parent's rights.

Caregivers must share parenting rights with the Agency. They must obtain Agency permission for some medical procedures, travel with the child, etc. Agency/Court make major decisions regarding the child. Birth parents may still be involved and may be involved in major decisions regarding the child. Court decides on major medical decisions.

6 EDUCATIONAL DECISIONS

Adoptive parents make all decisions regarding the education of the child. They can request special services from schools, regional centers and any other service provider.

Guardians can choose the child's school and educational program. They can request special services from schools, regional centers and any other service provider. The birth parent may have the right to be involved in school meetings and planning for the child. In special situations, the court may be involved in decisions.

Guardians can choose the child's school and educational program. They can request special services from schools, regional centers and any other service provider. The birth parent may have the right to be involved in school meetings and planning for the child. In special situations, the court may be involved in decisions.

Unless parental rights are terminated the birth parent retains the right to make critical decisions regarding education for the child, including the right to veto any private or parochial schooling. The child welfare agency and the courts are involved in specific decisions. Foster parents can be appointed as surrogate parents. If parental rights are terminated, the court can limit a parent's educational rights.

Legal citations available upon request.



FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE

by Foster Care Funds

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT

(Long Term Foster Care)

<p>7 CHILD'S RESIDENCE/ COUNTY OR OUT OF STATE</p>	<p>Residence is solely determined by the adoptive parents.</p>	<p>Guardians have the right to move anywhere in state, but must notify the court in writing. An Inter County Transfer must be completed. If the Legal Guardian plans to move out of California, they must obtain court permission and the Legal Guardian is no longer eligible for Kin-GAP funding from California. Guardianship and/or funding may need to be re-established in the new state, subject to the new state's laws and eligibility rules.</p>	<p>Guardians have the right to move anywhere in state, but must notify the court in writing. An Inter County Transfer must be completed. If the Legal Guardian plans to move out of state, they must obtain court permission. Guardianship and/or funding may need to be re-established in the new state, subject to the new state's laws and eligibility rules.</p>	<p>Legal residence is determined by residence of birth parents. (However, for educational purposes a foster child may be considered a resident of the location where he or she is placed.) The Juvenile Court and the Child Welfare Agency determine where the child lives. Courtesy supervision is arranged when a child moves w/ caregivers out of county or out of state. Interstate Compact Program rules must be followed when a child moves out of state and licensing/certification procedures for that state must be followed.</p>
<p>8 DRIVING/LICENSE</p>	<p>The adoptive parents may sign for the minor's driver's license. By signing for the license, the parent's assume responsibility for insurance coverage. The parent can withdraw consent at any time.</p>	<p>The guardian may sign for the minor's driver's license. By signing for the license, the parent's assume responsibility for insurance coverage. The parent can withdraw their consent to the license at any time.</p>	<p>The guardian may sign for the minor's driver's license. By signing for the license, the parent's assume responsibility for insurance coverage. The parent can withdraw their consent to the license at any time.</p>	<p>Youth is required to file proof of financial responsibility. A responsible adult can sign the DMV application; liability issues may be of concern.</p>
<p>9 ARMED SERVICES</p>	<p>The adoptive parents may consent to the enlistment of a minor.</p>	<p>A guardian may consent to the enlistment of a minor.</p>	<p>A Guardian may consent to the enlistment of a minor.</p>	<p>The Juvenile Court retains the responsibility to consent to the enlistment of a minor.</p>
<p>10 MARRIAGE OF MINOR CHILD</p>	<p>Adoptive parents may consent to marriage of their minor child.</p>	<p>Both the court and the relative guardians must give consent to the marriage of the minor child.</p>	<p>Both the court and the Guardians must give consent to the marriage of the minor child.</p>	<p>The Juvenile Court maintains the responsibility to consent to the marriage of a minor under its jurisdiction.</p>

Legal citations available upon request.



FACTOR

ADOPTION

LEGAL GUARDIANSHIP NON RELATIVE/RELATIVE by Foster Care Funds

PLANNED PERMANENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT (Long Term Foster Care)

<p>11 SERVICES AVAILABLE</p>	<p>The adoptive family is eligible for post-adoption services, which may include providing resource and referral, brief case management, and crisis intervention.</p>	<p>The family is eligible for services available for any family receiving TANF funding. If dependency is dismissed, Agency no longer provides support. Support may be available through local kinship centers.</p>	<p>When dependency is dismissed, the Agency continues to provide support, through resource and referral, and home visits every 6 months. If court dependency continues, child continues to be eligible for services through the Agency</p>	<p>Child and caregiver eligible for services through the Agency. Agency provides supervision, case management and crisis intervention services.</p>
<p>12 DEATH OF CAREGIVER</p>	<p>The adopted child is treated the same as a birth child. The adoptive parent can designate in their will who will raise the child in the event of their death.</p>	<p>Guardianship terminates in the event of death of the guardian. Birth parents may attempt to regain custody. The court may appoint a successor guardian or re-establish dependency and place the child in foster care.</p>	<p>Guardianship terminates in the event of death of the guardian. Birth parents may attempt to regain custody. The court may appoint a successor guardian or re-establish dependency and place the child in foster care.</p>	<p>The Social Services Agency retains placement authority and must locate another living arrangement for the child.</p>
<p>13 SPECIAL CONDITIONS/ COURT JURISDICTION</p>	<p>If adoptive parents agree, a post adopt mediation may occur prior to the adoption and plan may be ordered at the adoption regarding visitation/contact with birth parents and/or relatives.</p>	<p>The Court may ask the Guardian to agree to other special agreements concerning the child's welfare.</p>	<p>The Court may ask the Guardian to agree to other special agreements concerning the child's welfare.</p>	<p>Caregivers must follow Agency and Court directions re: visitation and supervision. They must be accountable for any funds received on behalf of the child. They must adhere to Court orders.</p>
<p>14 INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAM (ILSP) ELIGIBILITY</p>	<p>Youth adopted after their 16th birthday may participate in ILSP programs, except for Housing Assistance Programs. (Refer to Financial Comparison chart)</p>	<p>Youth under relative Legal Guardianship after their 16th birthday may participate and benefit from all ILSP programs.</p>	<p>Youth under relative and non-relative Legal Guardianship after their 16th birthday may participate and benefit from all ILSP programs.</p>	<p>Youth who remain in Foster care may participate and benefit from all ILSP services.</p>

Legal citations available upon request.



DID YOU KNOW...?

THE FOSTER CARE NON DISCRIMINATION ACT (AB 458)

The Foster Care Non Discrimination Act became effective January 1, 2004. This law states that it is **illegal to harass or discriminate** against youth and adults in the California foster care system because they **are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ), or because someone thinks that they are**. The law also protects those involved in the California foster care system from being harassed or discriminated against because of their **race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, mental or physical disability, or HIV status**.

AS A FOSTER YOUTH, YOU HAVE RIGHTS TO:

- Live in a safe, comfortable home where you are treated with respect.
- Be moved to another placement if your foster parents will not accept your gender identity or sexual orientation, and you feel unsafe.
- Go to school every day and continue in the same school until the end of the year if you move placements.
- Start a new school right away when you move, even if you don't have all your records.
- Visit and contact your brothers, sisters, other family members, and parents (unless a judge says you cannot).
- Participate (or not participate) in religious activities, and to choose your religion and how you practice it.
- Have friends and mentors outside of the foster care system, including teachers, coaches, church members and other LGBTQ youth and adults.
- Be free from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- Be told by your social worker or probation officer and your attorney about any changes in your placement or case plan.
- Safe medical care that is right for you (including medical doctor, dentist, therapist, and eye doctor).
- Cut and style your hair and wear clothes that make sense for your gender expression.
- Tell the judge what you want to happen in your case and how you feel about your family, lawyer and social worker.
- Keep your personal belongings private, unless there is a good and legal reason not to.
- Engage in age-appropriate dating (either same-sex or opposite sex) if other youth in your placement have permission to do so.
- Live with a family member or mentor that would be a safe place.
- Call the FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN at 1-877-846-1602 (It is a free call!)

* This is only a PARTIAL list of foster youth rights. For a COMPLETE list, visit the websites: www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov & www.nclrights.org

The above information was gathered from the "You Have Rights, Too!" brochure published by the Office of the State Ombudsman, and the "Queer and Trans Youth in California Foster Care Have Rights" brochure published by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR).

GETTING THE FACTS!

THE FRESNO COUNTY INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ILP)



MYTH: ILP services, such as job training, money for college and assistance with housing, make up for what the youth misses out on by not being with family.

FACT: Although services and resources such as these are helpful, they do not replace the essential network of relationships for a young adult to be happy and successful throughout their lives. Having a permanent, life-long family is the way to go!

“What is ILP?”

The Independent Living Program (ILP) provides services to Fresno County Probation and Foster Youth with the goal of providing them with a sense of community and belonging, as well as the necessary skills and support to obtain self-sufficiency.

“Who is eligible for ILP?”

Services and activities of ILP are designed to meet the needs of current and former probation and foster youth from ages 15 ½ to 21. Beginning in the summer of 2006, ILP services will be expanded to include youth ages 14 to 24. Youth who entered legal guardianship or adoption after their 16th birthday are still able to access ILP services. Those who are placed in relative care or in the Kin-GAP program may be eligible.



“I miss my Grandma...well, she’s not my real Grandma, but I call her that. She used to be my Foster Mom, but she couldn’t take care of me anymore. I haven’t seen her in a year...can I see her? Am I allowed to?”

~ Current Foster Youth

GETTING THE FACTS!

THE FRESNO COUNTY INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ILP)



“How many youth are in ILP?”

In early 2006, Fresno County ILP was serving approximately 1,800 probation and foster youth. It is estimated that by 2008, as many as 3,000 youth will need support transitioning out of Fresno County child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

“What services can an ILP social worker provide?”

ILP social workers provide supportive services to youth and their social worker or probation officer, in order to best address the youths’ unique transitional needs. Social workers who work in the ILP program assist in the development of an emancipation plan, provide academic advising, housing assistance, and a number of other services that are designed to assist in the transition into adulthood.

“What role does an ILP social worker play in the permanency process?”

The ILP social worker can assist youth in finding permanency by encouraging youth to take the lead in their permanency process. ILP social workers can also assist by engaging youth in discussions relating to possible life-long connections and can provide support in identifying these connections.

“If I take the basic life skills classes, does that mean that I have finished ILP?”

No, the basic life skills classes are only one service offered by ILP. You may participate in a variety of ILP services until the day before your 21st birthday.

“What else can I find at ILP?”

ILP also offers the opportunity for youth to learn about the resources that are available to them in their community and provides an on-site resource center for them to make these connections. Groups such as California Youth Connection (CYC) and Explorer Post 300 serve to engage youth in community activities, leadership development, and advocacy.

GETTING THE FACTS!

THE FRESNO COUNTY INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ILP)



“Can you tell me more specifics?”

Other services available through ILP include: employment services, basic living skills classes, workshops, financial incentives, transportation, support groups, social events, high school graduation celebrations, referrals for physical and mental health services, and much more!

“What is a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP)?”

A TILP is an assessment of a youth’s strengths, needs, and limitations in areas of education, employment, financial budgeting, housing, and basic living skills. Completing the TILP is a joint process between the youth and their social worker or probation officer. In order for a youth to continue to receive ILP services, a TILP must be updated every six months.

“What is an Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA)?”

An ACLSA is a measure of life skill mastery in a number of areas: daily living tasks, self care, social development, work and study skills, money management, housing and community resources. The ACLSA score is used to create an individualized TILP for every youth. Much like the TILP, this assessment must also be updated every six months. In this way, these two work together to cater to the specific transitional needs of each youth as they develop new skills. The ACLSA can be accessed at www.caseylifeskills.org.

“How can I contact ILP?”

Feel free to call the office at **559-453-6689** with any questions or to speak to an ILP social worker. Staff is generally available to speak to you in English, Spanish or Hmong. The ILP office is located on the third floor of the Crocker Building at **2135 Fresno Street, Suite 345A** in downtown Fresno.

FRESNO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN OF ACTION FOR PERMANENCY

THE VISION:

All Fresno County foster and probation youth will transition out of the child welfare system with permanence through adoption, guardianship, returning to parents, or alternatives and/or a permanent life-long connection.



GOAL #1: Administration and staff will have a better understanding of all elements of permanency and its critical importance to all foster and probation youth.

GOAL #2: Group homes will share the vision around permanency and must be engaged as a full partner to achieve permanency outcomes for youth.

GOAL #3: Social workers will incorporate the principles of CPYP in their daily practice.

GOAL #4: Existing partnerships and DCFS community/collaboratives will be oriented to a better understanding and view on permanency in efforts to support permanency outcomes for older foster and probation youth.

GOAL #5: To increase the number of child specific permanent home options for the target youth.



“A child has the initial trauma of losing birth parents, a second trauma of losing other relatives, siblings, friends and neighborhood, PLUS the compounded trauma from lost foster families. A placement move is not simply “placing” a child somewhere...it is a decision about severing connections and removing a child from people they have come to know as family. Can you imagine it? Ten, twenty, thirty placements...This is hundreds of lost relationships over the years. It is no wonder some of youth seem so lost and so sad.”

~Social Worker

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

ADVOCACY

California Youth Connection (CYC)

 Fresno Chapter, 559-453-6785

 www.calyouthconn.org

An organized group of current and former foster youth who work to improve the foster care system. Local chapters exist throughout the state.

Centro La Familia Advocacy Services, Inc

2014 Tulare Street #717, Fresno CA 93721

 1-800-877-294-3772 or 559-237-2961

Assisting low (and no) income families in remaining or becoming self-sufficient through education, training, legal advocacy, help with restraining orders and domestic violence issues, as well as other social services.

COUNSELING

Comprehensive Youth Services (CYS)

3795 E. Shields, Fresno CA 93726

 559-229-3561

 www.cysfresno.org

Full-scope youth and adult mental health services, parenting and anger management classes, school-based Student Assistance Program (SAP) counselors, sexual abuse survivors groups, and child abuse/neglect treatment. Sliding-scale, Medi-Cal and/or free services offered.

Managed Care for Medi-Cal Mental Health

 1-800-654-3937

Linkage to therapists accepting Medi-Cal for mental health services. Call hotline to verify Medi-Cal eligibility and listing of providers accepting new clients.

DISABILITY

Central Valley Regional Center (CVRC)

5168 N. Blythe #101, Fresno CA 93722

 559-276-4000

 www.cvrc.org

Diagnostic, counseling and educational services for individuals with neurological or developmental disabilities and their families.

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/RAPE

Marjaree Mason Center (MMC)

Confidential shelter location

 559-233-HELP (4357); 559-237-4706

 www.mmcenter.org

Counseling, shelter, support groups, batterer's treatment, services for children, legal advocacy.

Rape Counseling Services of Fresno

1060 Fulton Mall #901; Fresno CA 93721; 559-497-2900

West Fresno Crisis Center (Coalinga): 1-800-891-2141; 559-934-0915

West Center Crisis Center (Firebaugh): 559-659-0232

Individual and group counseling for children and adolescents who have been victims of sexual assault.

DRUG/ALCOHOL ABUSE

Fresno New Connections

4411 N. Cedar #108, Fresno CA 93726

 559-248-1548

Adolescent substance abuse services and groups.

West Care

2772 Martin Luther King Blvd, Fresno CA 93706

 559-265-4800

 www.westcare.com

Adolescent drug treatment services (counseling, support groups); Drug MediCal or Minor Consent for payment of services.

EDUCATION

Fresno Adult School & Community Education

Main office 559-457-6011

Cesar E. Chavez Adult Education Center @ 2500 Stanislaus, Fresno CA 93721

559-457-6000

 www.fresnoadultschool.com

Contact for more information about various programs and sites: GED/High School diploma preparation and testing, supplemental high school classes, language, technology and life-long learning.

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

Fresno City College – Extended Opportunity & Services (EOPS)

1101 E. University Avenue, Fresno CA 93741

 559-442-4600

 www.fresnocitycollege.edu/student-services/eops.html

Special program for low-income, academically challenged students. Includes academic tutoring and mentoring, financial aid, loans, book grants, career guidance, etc.

Fresno County Office of Education

111 N. Van Ness Avenue, Fresno CA 93721

 559-497-3877

 www.fcoe.k12.ca.us

Contact for more information about various programs: Foster Youth Services, Transition Services, and Vocational Assessment Center Services.

EMPLOYMENT

Ameri Corps

 National toll free number 1-800-942-2677

 www.americorps.org

Network provides full and part time job opportunities, scholarship money available for completion of program.

Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC)

1920 Mariposa Mall, Fresno CA 93721

 559-263-1000

 www.fresnoeoc.org

Contact for more information on extensive programs designed to serve and empower youth and families: Health Clinic, Youth Employment Services, Transit System, Transitional Living Center, Teen Connection, Local Conservation Corps, Home Energy Assistance and Energy Crisis Intervention (HEAP/ECIP), Incarcerated Youth Project, Workforce Connection.

Job Corps

1900 Mariposa Mall #360, Fresno CA 93721

 559-233-3868 for males/559-233-0061 for females

 www.jobcorps.doleta.gov/

Serving low income, ages 16-24 with vocational and educational assistance, GED or High School Diploma courses, employment skills.

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

FOOD & CLOTHING

Catholic Charities

149 N. Fulton, Fresno CA 93701

 559-264-6414

 www.ccdof.org

Assistance to families, persons with no means of support.

Salvation Army Family Service Center

1752 Fulton, Fresno CA 93721

 559-233-0138

Assistance with food, utilities, seasonal toys and specialized clothing.

Women, Infant, and Children Program (WIC)

1920 Mariposa Mall #120, Fresno CA 93721

 559-263-1150

Nutritional education and supplemental food vouchers for pregnant and breast-feeding women, and at-risk infants and children up to 5 years old.

GRIEF & SUICIDE

Foot Steps (of Saint Agnes)

1111 E. Spruce, Fresno CA 93720

 559-450-5605

 www.samc.com

Groups for grief and loss support. Services for youth 4-18 years of age.

Fresno Survivors of Suicide Loss

2585 E. Perrin #102, Fresno CA 93720

 559-322-5877

 www.FresnoSOS.org

Support groups for survivors of suicide loss and suicide prevention education.

Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program

 Referral numbers for intervention- 559-453-6616 (Fresno County)

 and 1-800-784-2433 (Hope Line Network).

HEALTH

West Fresno Health Care Coalition, Inc

1135 Fresno Street, Fresno CA 93706

 559-264-7185

Health care insurance applications and health education for youth and families. Promotes community safety and health awareness.

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

HEALTH (CONTINUED)

Central Valley Indian Health

20 N. DeWitt Avenue, Clovis CA 93612



559-229-2570

Tribal verification is necessary for free medical, optical and dental services. Provides prenatal services and parenting classes, public health nursing, rural outreach, substance abuse services, child abuse prevention and education.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER & QUESTIONING (LGBTQ) SUPPORT

Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Network

928 N. Van Ness Avenue, Fresno CA 93728



559-268-2780



www.gsanetwork.org

Statewide organization that supports GSA clubs in high schools, provides resources, training, advocacy and youth development activities.

PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays)

Local chapter Helpline 559-434-6540



www.pflag.org

National organization of families with LGBTQ members. Fresno group meets 2nd Sunday of the month at Wesley United Methodist Church.

OUTREACH

House of Hope for Youth, Inc

1260 N. Mariposa, Fresno CA 93703



559-233-3246

Helping youth gang members and runaways with alternatives to street life through specialized services and street outreach program.

PARENTING

California Youth Outreach

821 N. Van Ness, Fresno CA 93728



559-445-2680



cyofresno@aol.com

Parenting classes, life skills, social development activities, also serve adjudicated youth.

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

PARENTING (CONTINUED)

Exceptional Parents Unlimited (EPU)

4440 N. First Street, Fresno CA 93726



559-229-2000

3745 McCall Avenue, Selma CA 93622



559-896-5900



www.exceptionalparents.org

Various programs include home visitation, counseling, educational classes and support groups for teen parents and overburdened families, comprehensive services for children with disabilities and/or special needs, along with their families.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & PREGNANCY

Planned Parenthood

650 N. Fulton, Fresno CA 93728



559-488-4900

5727 N. Fresno, Fresno CA 93710;



559-446-1515



1-800-711-9848



www.plannedparenthood.org

Family planning, contraception, medical exams, pregnancy testing, safe-sex and reproductive health education, services for LGBTQ youth.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Fresno County Department of Employment and Temporary Assistance (E&TA)

4468 E. Kings Canyon Road, Fresno CA 93702



CalWORKS & Food Stamps call 559-454-5402



General Relief & Food Stamps call 559-453-3746

Applications taken for financial assistance programs for low-income individuals and families. Rural sites available.

REFUGEE SERVICES

Fresno Center for New Americans (FCNA)

4879 E. Kings Canyon, Fresno CA 93727



559-255-8395



www.fresnocenter.com

Services include assistance with employment and social services, health and English classes, special projects for the refugee and new American community.

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

REFUGEE SERVICES (CONTINUED)

Lao Family Community of Fresno

4903 E. Kings Canyon Road, Fresno CA 93727



559-453-9775



www.laofamilyfresno.org

Employment, parenting, family counseling and translation for Hmong, Lao, and Cambodian residents.

RECREATION & YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Boys and Girls Clubs of Fresno County



Main office 559-266-3117



www.bgclubfc.org

Offering programs in character and leadership development, health and life skills, education and career development, sports, technology and the arts to help young people to reach their full potential. Contact for more information, offer 17 different sites within Fresno County.

Chicano Youth Center

50 N. Calaveras, Fresno CA 93701



559-488-1212 or 559-497-8552

Educational, recreational, and cultural leadership to low-income youth and ethnic minorities.

Fresno Barrios Unidos

4403 E. Tulare, Fresno CA 93702



559-453-9662



www.barrios-unidos.com

Various programs designed to keep youth of gangs and to promote peace and healthy living. Includes recreational activities, multicultural services and presentations, conflict resolution, counseling and advocacy.

SHELTER

Evangel Home

137 N. Yosemite, Fresno CA 93701



559-264-4714

Emergency shelter and meals for women and their children.

The Family Shelter

315 "G" Street, Fresno CA 93706



559-237-4118

Emergency shelter for families with children. Length of stay is limited to 2 weeks to 30 days.

FRESNO COUNTY RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

SHELTER (CONTINUED)

Fresno Rescue Mission

310 G Street, Fresno CA 93706



559-237-4118



www.fresnorescuemission.org

Meals and shelter for runaways and abused children, provides clothing and other resources for those in need.

Holy Cross Center for Women

421 F Street, Fresno CA 93706



559-237-3379



www.samc.com

Day use respite haven for women and children, food, shower, laundry facilities, clothing, social, and educational activities, medical assistance, counseling, and work programs.

First Step Outreach

1538 L Street, Fresno CA 93721



559-268-2205

Provides assistance to mentally ill, homeless adult. Resources include case management services, psychiatric services, access to medication and possible board and care placement.

The Sanctuary

1545 N Street, Fresno CA 93721



559-498-8543; 1-800-820-4968



www.fresnoeoc.org/programs.html

Emergency shelter-food-clothing, peer counseling, crisis intervention, support groups, recreation, tutoring, referrals to other shelter and state services for homeless youth.

Naomi's House

445 F Street, Fresno CA 93706



559-498-6988



www.naomishouse.org

Provides women shelter, meals, medical and dental care, case management and medical assessment, education and referrals.

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For Additional Information or Copies of Handbook
Please notify Veronica Salmeron at vsalmeron@co.fresno.ca.us or Lisa Nichols at nichol@co.fresno.ca.us





“We need to exhaust all options to try to preserve a potential permanent home for a youth. There are so many ways we can support families. There are new services that are more intensive and focus on helping the family as a whole. We have to be accountable about the youth’s future — someone has to step up and make permanency happens.”

~Social Worker

*“No body loves
or cares about me,
so why should I
care about myself?”*

~ CURRENT FOSTER YOUTH~

BE A PART OF A "FOREVER FAMILY" TREE



FIRST AND LAST
ON A NEW APARTMENT

\$1400

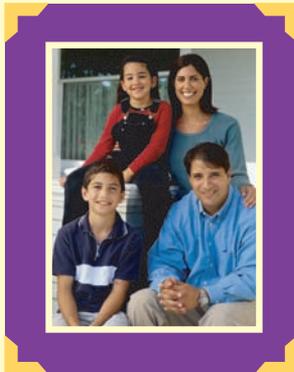


A SEMESTER'S TUITION AT
FRESNO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

\$416



PERMANENT,
LIFELONG, RELATIONSHIPS



 **PRICELESS**