

## VISION

**Every child grows up safe and nurtured.**

## OUR CORE VALUES

Six values guide our work within the community:

1. Relationships With Children, Youth, and Families are the Foundation
2. Collaborative Partnerships With Kinship and Resource Families
3. Helping Children and Youth Achieve Their Full Potential and Develop Lifelong Relationships
4. Shared Responsibility With Community Partners
5. A Strong Working Relationship With the Legal System
6. A Workplace Culture Characterized by Reflection, Appreciation and Ongoing Learning

*“Values bind people together and create the energy for transformation.”*

- Nick Macchione

Child Abuse Hotline: 1.800.344.6000

Toll-Free Access Line: 1.866.262.9881

TDD (hearing impaired): 1.858.514.6889

Adoption/Foster Care Info Line: 1.877.423.6788

(en Español llame al 1.619.585.5290)



**SAFETY ENHANCED TOGETHER**

County of San Diego Child Welfare Services



**Through teamwork and family engagement:  
In San Diego, Our Families are SET to Live Well.**



**WHAT TO EXPECT  
FROM CHILD WELFARE:**

**A GUIDE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

[WWW.SDCOUNTY.CA.GOV](http://WWW.SDCOUNTY.CA.GOV)

For more information call: 1.858.616.5811

## WHAT IS CHILD WELFARE SERVICES?

We are a department of the County of San Diego that works with families and the community to respond to, reduce, and prevent child neglect and abuse. Our primary focus is strengthening families so that children grow up safe and nurtured.

## HOW DO WE PROTECT CHILDREN AND STRENGTHEN FAMILIES?

We have a legal duty to respond to concerns about child abuse and neglect. Our staff have been trained to help families and communities develop plans and make decisions to keep children safe. We use three priorities to guide these decisions:

1. Safely stabilize and preserve families; and if that is not possible...
2. Safely care for children and reunify children to their families of origin; and if reunification is not possible...
3. Safely support the development of permanency and lifelong relationships for children and youth.

## HOW ARE FAMILIES REFERRED TO US?

A community member calls the Child Abuse Hotline to report a concern about a child's safety. We review the report and decide whether the issue is serious enough to investigate.



*85% of referrals are closed following the investigation.*

## WHAT IF WE NEED TO INVESTIGATE?

A social worker meets with family members and people close to the family to talk about safety concerns. We often close the investigation once we educate the family about keeping children safe. We also refer families to community services. If we determine that the child is not safe, we may open a child welfare case.

## HOW DO WE STRENGTHEN FAMILIES SO THAT CHILDREN CAN RETURN HOME?

When Child Welfare opens a case, a social worker partners with the family to identify extended family and community members who can become part of the child and family's network of safety and support. This network strengthens and prepares the family to help their children remain safe and thrive after the Child Welfare case closes.

*Over 70% of all children return home within 36 months.*

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE OPEN A CASE?

We work with each family to create a plan for their child's safety. We also help families build networks of support they can call on for help. Cases may be opened through the Voluntary Services Program or through the Juvenile Court.

- ◆ When we believe that a family can keep their child safe without the court's involvement, we offer the family **Voluntary Services**.
- ◆ **Juvenile Court** gets involved when the family cannot keep their child safe without the court's involvement. Depending on the family's situation, the child may live in or out of the family's home during this period.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHILD CANNOT SAFELY LIVE AT HOME?

We work with the child's family to identify people who can care for the child. We try to keep the child in a familiar setting to reduce the trauma they experience. The child may live with a relative, family friend, or licensed foster home within the community until they can return home.

If the child cannot return home within legal time frames, we recommend developing a permanent plan for the child. This plan identifies a guardian or adoptive family who can support the child's growth and well-being.