

Child Protective Services



The CPS is the major system of intervention of child abuse and neglect in California. Existing law provides for services to abused and neglected children and their families. The CPS goal is to keep the child in his/her own home when it is safe, and when the child is at risk, to develop an alternate plan as quickly as possible.

When a referral is received, the social service staff obtains facts from the person making the referral to determine if the referral alleges abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The Emergency Response staff determines if an in-person response is indicated. Whenever an report indicates the need for protection, CPS will:

- Accept the case
- Intervene in the crisis, if required
- Apply Family Preservation and Support Services for some families
- Assess or identify problems, gather facts and clarify the problems
- Plan and provide services, set goals, identify resources and timeframes
- Document the case
- Terminate the case or transfer it to another program

Approximately 12 months of services are provided to children who remain safely in the home while the family receives services. If it is determined that a child cannot remain in the home, even with family preservation and support services, then foster placement is arranged in the most family-like setting, that is located close to the parent's home, consistent with the best interests of the child.

Up to 18 months of services are provided to children and their families when a child has been removed from the home and the family is making progress toward reunification. When a child cannot be returned to a safe home after services have been delivered, the child must be provided with a family-like living arrangement as soon as possible.

FOR WHOM

These services are available to children and their families when children are victims of, or at risk of, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or parental absence.

California law defines child abuse as any of the following:

- A child is physically injured by other than accidental means.
- A child is subjected to willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment.
- A child is abused or exploited sexually.
- A child is neglected by a parent or caretaker who fails to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision.

WHERE TO GET HELP

If you need help, or if a child needs help, contact your local county welfare office via this list: [Child Protective Services \(CPS\) Hotlines](#) for each California County, or consult the county listings in your telephone directory. The World of Children Visit the [Children and Family Services Division website](#).

HIGHLIGHTS

Community members have an important role in protecting children from abuse and neglect. If abuse is suspected, a report should be filed with qualified and experienced agencies that will investigate the situation. The California State Child Abuse Reporting Law provides the legal basis for action to protect children and to allow intervention by public agencies if a child is being abused.

If you suspect that a child has been, or is in danger of, abuse or neglect , contact: The police or county sheriff, or the county Children's Protective Services 24-hour emergency response phone.