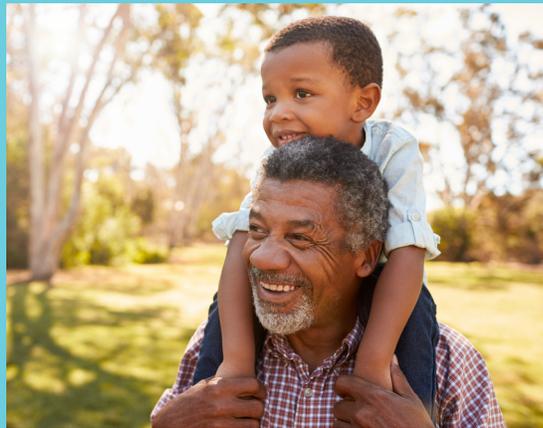


# Handbook for **GRANDPARENTS** *Raising* Grandchildren And Other Relative Caregivers



**San Diego County**



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
HEALTH AND HUMAN  
SERVICES AGENCY



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# Introduction

*This Handbook is intended as a general guide to help you understand and better navigate your caregiver role related to your grandchildren or other children in your care and to help you find and access services. Please know it is not intended, nor should it be used, as specific legal advice for you. You may have factors in your case that are different from the general circumstances described here and your specific circumstances may affect your legal rights and obligations in ways that are not covered in this Handbook.*

*Only an attorney can give you advice about your specific legal rights and obligations regarding your grandchildren or other children in your care.*

***A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.***

**—Forest Witcraft**

Millions of children across the country are being raised by grandparents, other relatives, and non-relative extended family members (godparents, family friends, etc.) and thousands of these children live in San Diego County. Children are placed in the care of their relatives for various reasons including abuse, neglect, substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, incarceration, military deployment, serious illness, and death. Whatever the cause, when parents are unable to care for their children, grandparents and other relatives often step in to provide a safety net to keep families together.

Various studies have found that when children are unable to live with their parents, many benefits are associated with being raised by a relative. Some of the benefits for these children include fewer placement changes, an increased likelihood of living with their siblings, a decreased likelihood of changing schools, more positive perceptions of their placements, fewer behavioral problems, a decreased likelihood of trying to run away, and an increased likelihood of reporting always feeling loved. Caregivers often report benefits as well, including finding life more joyful, interesting, and meaningful. (For more information regarding kinship family research, go to [www.grandfamilies.org/research](http://www.grandfamilies.org/research)).

Despite the gifts that children and caregivers receive, raising a relative's child often brings very specific and difficult challenges. This Handbook was developed by the YMCA of San Diego County and its community partners and it was funded by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency to help grandparents and other relatives all across our county who are experiencing these special challenges.

# Handbook Instructions

Just as children are placed with relatives for many reasons, they are also placed in many different ways. Some grandparents or other relatives have an informal agreement with the child's parent to provide care for the child. Others may have obtained legal guardianship or adoption through the court or had children placed with them by the local child welfare agency (in San Diego County, this is Child Welfare Services).

**It is very important to understand your particular situation so you can learn about your legal rights and identify the resources you may be eligible to receive.**

In order to use this Handbook effectively, complete the following steps:

**STEP 1:** Answer the questions on the flowcharts on the following pages to determine your legal status and learn more about your legal rights, eligibility for public assistance, and options for gaining a higher level of permanency. The first flowchart (in blue) pertains to relatives raising children. The second flowchart (in green) pertains to Non-Relative Extended Family Members (NREFM) raising children (such as adults who are not related to a child but have a familial connection to the child and their family, such as close family friends, godparents, teachers, etc.).

**STEP 2:** Review the rest of the Handbook for the information and resources you need, keeping in mind your current legal status. Many resources apply differently to grandparents and other relatives in different situations.

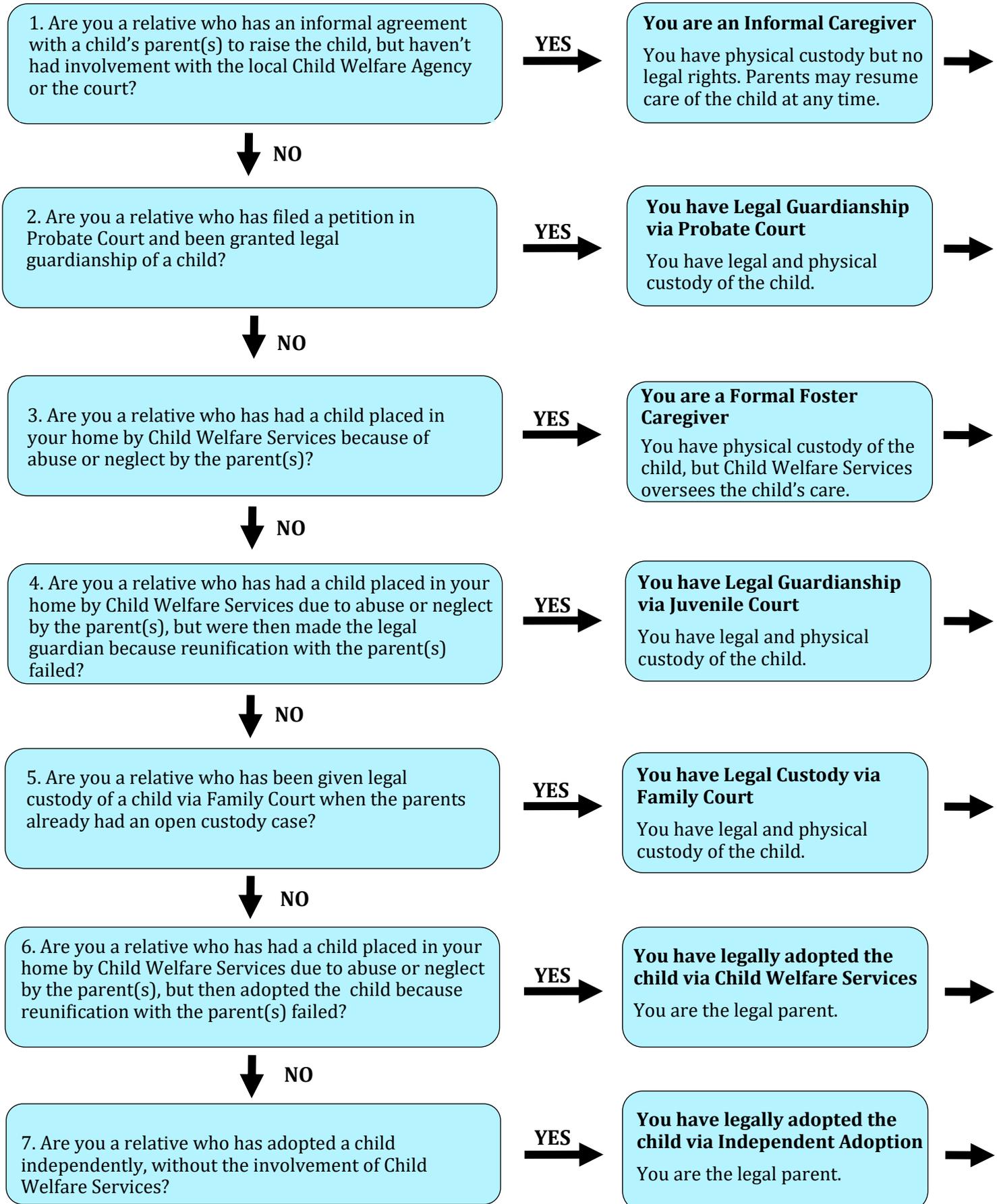
If you have questions or need additional assistance after reviewing this Handbook, please call **211 San Diego** (by dialing 2-1-1 or (858) 300-1211) and/or the **YMCA Kinship Support Program** at (619) 719-9179.



# Permanency Flowchart: Relatives

## YOUR ROLE

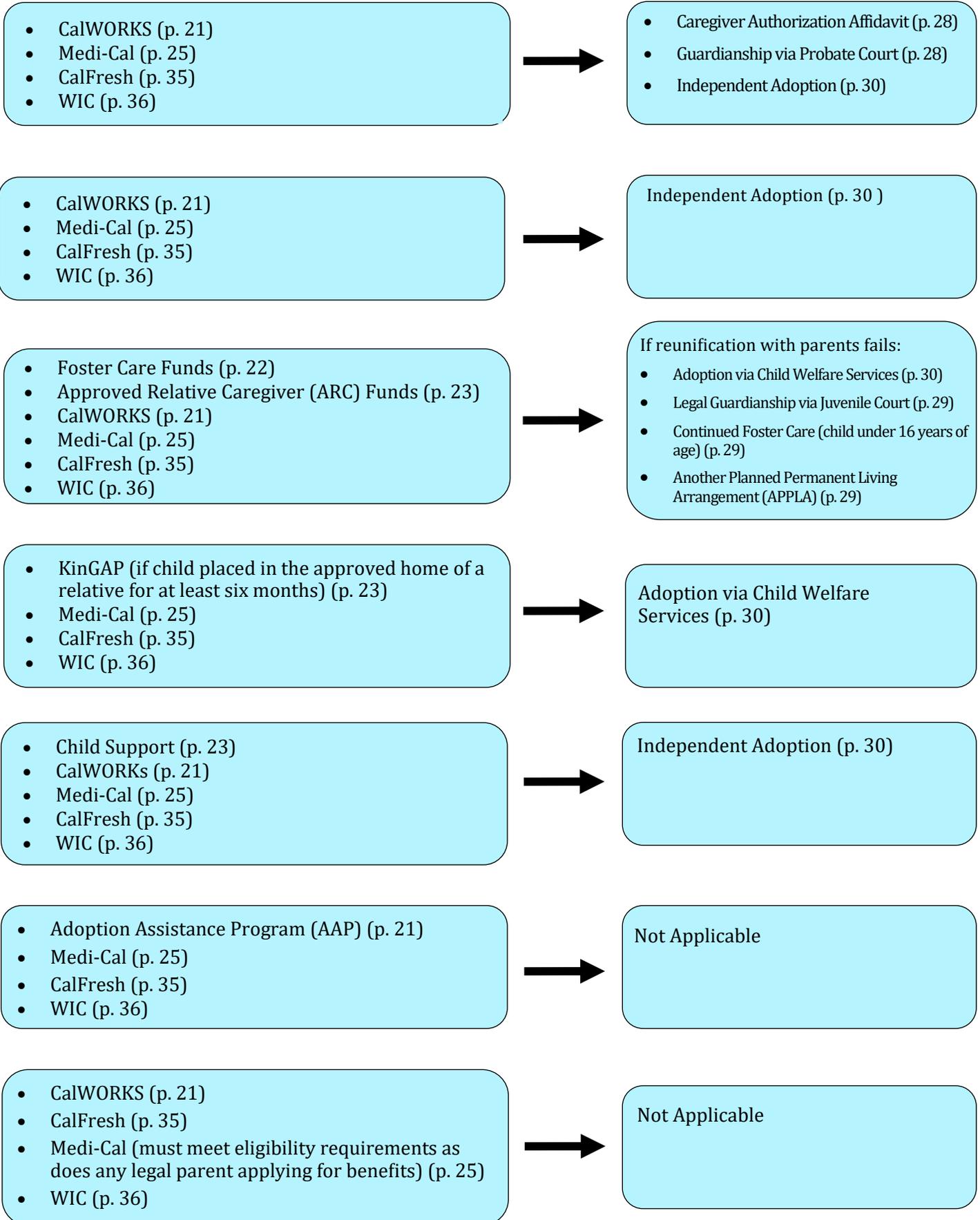
## YOUR LEGAL STATUS AND RIGHTS



NOTE: Medi-Cal accompanies all cash aid programs, such as Foster Care, ARC, CalWORKs, KinGAP, and AAP.

**ONE OR MORE PUBLIC BENEFITS THE CHILD MAY QUALIFY FOR**

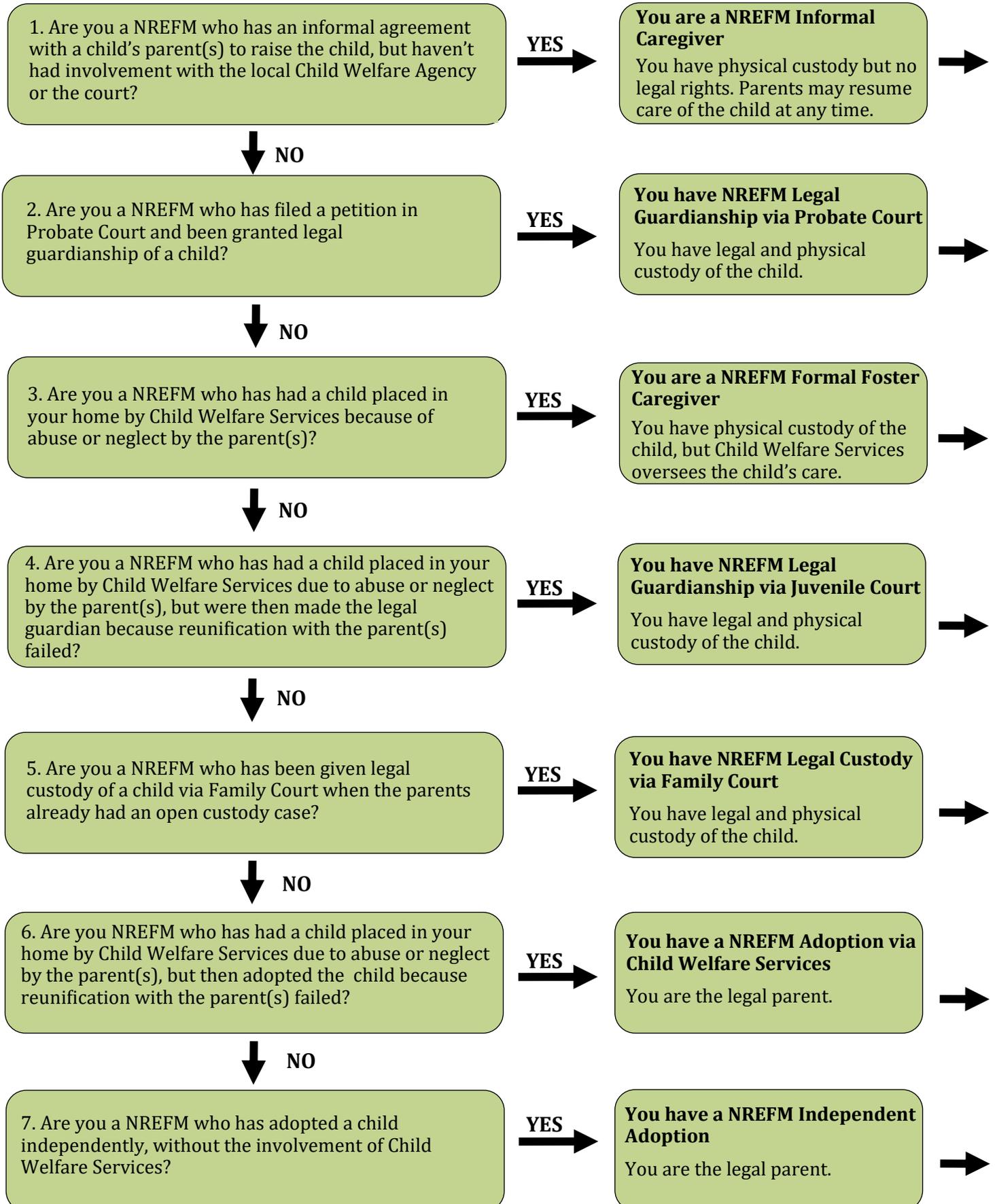
**YOUR PERMANENCY OPTIONS**



# Permanency Flowchart: Non-Relative Extended Family Members (NREFM)

## YOUR ROLE

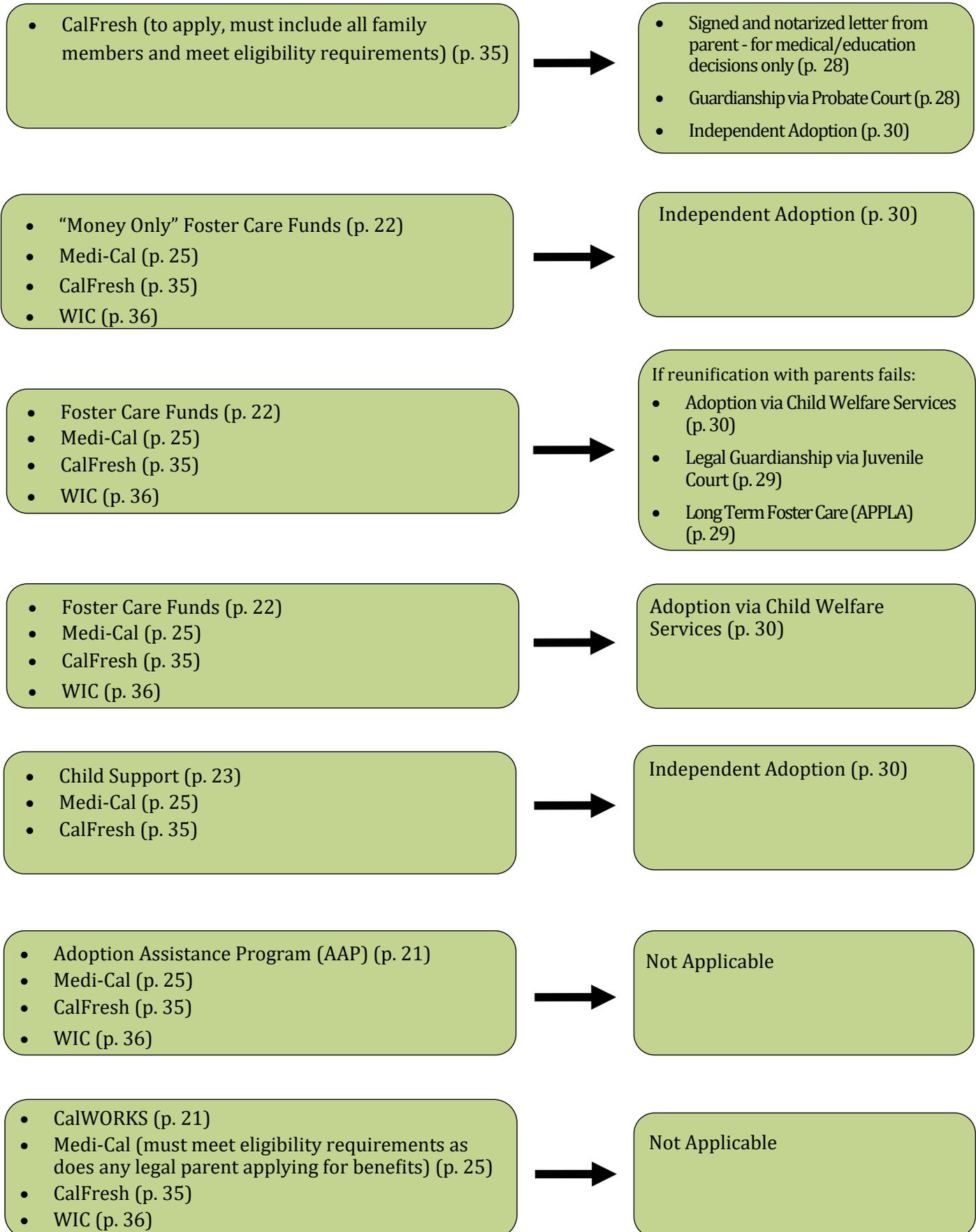
## YOUR LEGAL STATUS AND RIGHTS



NOTE: Medi-Cal accompanies all cash aid programs, such as Foster Care, ARC, CalWORKs, KinGAP, and AAP.

ONE OR MORE PUBLIC BENEFITS THE CHILD MAY QUALIFY FOR

YOUR PERMANENCY OPTIONS



# Basic Safety

Most grandparents and other relatives raising children know how to keep the children in their care safe. However, laws and regulations about children's care sometimes change so safety tips can be a helpful reminder.

Here are some safety tips for children of all ages that may be useful for you:

- Place babies in cribs on their backs (unless a healthcare provider directs otherwise) to help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Children of all ages should always be buckled up in cars.
- All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat.
- Never use a safety seat in a seat that has an air bag in front of it.
- Children up to 8 years old or under 4' 9" must be properly restrained in a child safety seat, booster seat, or other restraint system in the back seat. Children under the age of two shall ride rear-facing. To receive a free safety seat and get the most current safety seat information, contact the **Pacific Safety Council Keep Them Safe Program** at (619) 455-8194.
- A home without firearms is safer for children. If you must keep a gun, keep it unloaded and locked up and lock ammunition in a separate place. Also, teach the child to never touch a gun, leave the area if he or she sees a gun, and tell an adult right away.
- Discipline should teach children and offer them options and choices to help gain self-control. Physical and emotional punishment may succeed temporarily out of fear, but children may learn to do to others what is being done to them and that hurting other people is okay.
- Choose sturdy, well-constructed toys that match the child's age, abilities, and interests.
- Follow all age and safety recommendations on labels.
- Avoid toys with small parts if you have an infant or toddler.
- Avoid toys with sharp edges or points.
- Do not buy electric toys that must be plugged into an outlet if the child is under age 10.
- Inspect toys regularly and throw away broken toys.
- Never give a very young child a balloon as he or she could choke on an un-inflated balloon or broken balloon pieces.



- Insist that the child wears a bike helmet that is labeled as certified by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and meets safety standards according to the age of the child.
- Children who use skates, skateboards, or scooters need a helmet, mouth guards, wrist pads, and kneepads.
- Teach the child his or her personal information including his or her full name and address, as well as the first and last name(s) and phone number(s) of the primary caregiver(s).
- Teach the child to dial 9-1-1 in an emergency.
- Practice home fire drills, draw a map of your home with two escape routes, and pick a spot outside where you will meet if there is a fire.
- Teach the child how to be safe around strangers and never to: open the door for people he or she doesn't know, tell callers he or she is home alone, accept rides from people he or she doesn't know well, give out personal information on the internet, or meet someone in person he or she met online.
- Teach children to tell a trusted adult if someone who they may or may not know asks them to see or touch each other's private parts.

## Biological Parents

Although children can be placed in the care of a relative for many different reasons, some of the most common reasons include parental substance abuse, mental health issues, and domestic violence. These issues not only cause problems in the lives of the biological parents, but can also put a strain on the relationship between the parents and caregivers and make it more difficult for the relative caregivers to raise the children in their care.

To obtain assistance with resolving family dynamics issues and setting appropriate boundaries you can call the **San Diego County Access and Crisis Line** at (888) 724-7240 to find a mental health professional in your area. You can also call **211 San Diego** to locate support services like Alcoholics, Narcotics, and Co-dependents Anonymous for family members of individuals with substance abuse, mental illness, and other challenging issues. Bio-parents can call the San Diego County Access and Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240 to find referrals for mental health and substance abuse treatment programs and services or the **San Diego Domestic Violence (DV) Hotline** at (888) DVLINKS or (888) 385-4657 for information about DV shelter bed availability, counseling referrals, batterer treatment information, safety planning, and more.

*Love is the greatest gift that one generation can leave to another.*

—Richard Garnett

# Child Abuse and Neglect

Understanding child abuse and neglect can help you recognize warning signs and prevent the maltreatment of children.

## Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect mean the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen (or the age specified by the child protection laws of the state) by a person. This can include any employee of a residential facility or any staff person providing out of home care who is responsible for the child's welfare. The term encompasses both acts and omissions on the part of a responsible person.

Most states recognize four major types of maltreatment: **physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse**. Although any of the forms of child maltreatment may be found separately, they often occur in combination. In many states, abandonment and parental substance abuse are also defined as forms of child abuse or neglect.

The examples provided below are for general information purposes only. Not all state's definitions will include all of the examples listed below, and individual state's definitions may cover additional situations not mentioned here.

**Physical abuse** is non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child, that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child.

**Neglect** is the failure of a parent, guardian, or other caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs.

Neglect may be:

- **Physical** (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter, or lack of appropriate supervision)
- **Medical** (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- **Educational** (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs)
- **Emotional** (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs, failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs)

These situations do not always mean a child is neglected. Sometimes cultural values, the standards of care in the community, and poverty may be contributing factors, indicating the family is in need

of information or assistance. When a family fails to use information and resources and the child's health or safety is at risk, then child welfare intervention may be required. In addition, many states provide an exception to the definition of neglect for parents who choose not to seek medical care for their children due to religious beliefs that may prohibit medical intervention.

**Sexual abuse** includes activities by a parent or caregiver such as fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Sexual abuse is defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and (in cases of caregiver or inter-familial relationships), the statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

**Emotional abuse** (or psychological abuse) is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove and therefore, child protective services may not be able to intervene without evidence of harm or mental injury to the child. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms of abuse are identified.

In addition to the types of abuse discussed above, other circumstances that may be considered abuse or neglect in some states are described as follows:

- Abandonment is now defined in many states as a form of neglect. In general, a child is considered to be abandoned when the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left alone in circumstances where the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or provide reasonable support for a specified period of time.
- Substance abuse is an element of the definition of child abuse or neglect in many states.
- Prenatal exposure of a child to harm due to the mother's use of an illegal drug or other substance.
- Manufacture of methamphetamine in the presence of a child.
- Selling, distributing, or giving illegal drugs or alcohol to a child.

**For more information about child abuse and neglect and preventing child maltreatment, please visit [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov). To report suspected child abuse, call the **Child Abuse Hotline** at (858) 560-2191 or (800) 344-6000.**

# Child Care

For many grandparents and other relatives who need or want to work, paying for childcare, especially for young children, can be extremely difficult. Here are some childcare resources that may help you:

## For children between the ages of 0-5, call:

- **Head Start/Early Head Start** at (888) 873-5145 (for Central, East and South regions), (760) 966-7135 (for the North Coastal region), or (858) 391-9084 (for the North Inland region) to find out if you qualify for free or low-cost, home-based childcare or preschool.
- **YMCA Childcare Resource Service** to apply for the countywide Centralized Eligibility List for subsidized childcare (including before and after school care for school age children) and to get referrals for licensed childcare facilities in your area:

- ◇ Centralized Eligibility List:  
[www.childcaresandiego.com](http://www.childcaresandiego.com)
- ◇ Referral Line: (800) 521-0560



## For school-age children:

- Call the child's school and ask if free or low-cost before and after school care is available. Apply as instructed.

# Child Welfare Services

Not every grandparent or other relative raising children is involved with the local child welfare agency, Child Welfare Services (CWS). For those who are, here is some information to help you better understand the agency and its processes.

On October 11, 2015, California Governor Edmund (Jerry) Brown signed legislation that comprehensively reforms placement and treatment options for youth in foster care. This legislation, Assembly Bill (AB) 403, sponsored by the California Department of Social Services, builds upon years of policy changes to improve outcomes for youth in foster care.

This effort, known as Continuum of Care Reform, draws together a series of existing and new reforms to our Child Welfare Services program and is designed out of an understanding that

children who must live apart from their biological parents do best when they are cared for in committed, nurturing family homes. AB 403 provides the statutory and policy framework to ensure services and supports provided to the child or youth and his or her family are tailored toward the ultimate goal of maintaining a stable, permanent family. Reliance on congregate care (such as group homes) should be limited to short-term, therapeutic interventions that are just one part of a continuum of care available for children, youth, and young adults.

The **Resource Family Approval (RFA)** process supports the Continuum of Care Reform. RFA is a new family-friendly and child-centered caregiver approval process that combines elements of the former foster parent licensing, relative approval, and adoption and guardianship approval processes and replaces those processes. RFA was implemented statewide on January 1, 2017. RFA:

- Is streamlined and eliminates the duplication of existing processes.
- Unifies approval standards for all caregivers, regardless of the child's case plan.
- Includes a comprehensive psychosocial assessment, home environment check, and training for all families, including relatives.
- Prepares families to better meet the needs of vulnerable children in the foster care system.
- Allows seamless transition to permanency.

The RFA process improves the way caregivers (related and non-related) of children in foster care are approved and prepared to parent vulnerable children, whether temporarily or permanently. **All caregivers (related and non-related) caring for children in foster care are known as resource parents or resource families.**



## Mandated Reporters

- Some individuals are identified by law as mandated reporters, such as doctors, teachers, therapists, social workers, or other legally mandated professionals, and must contact the **Child Abuse Hotline** at (858) 560-2191 and make a child abuse report if they suspect that a child is being abused or neglected. Neighbors, friends, or relatives concerned about a child's safety, parents who are afraid they may hurt or neglect their child, and children who believe they are being abused may also call the hotline.
- When a report is made that meets legal criteria, a Child Welfare Social Worker is assigned to investigate the report. A social worker may visit the child's home or school unannounced to talk to the parent/guardian or the child about the incident that was reported.

## Investigations

If a referral warrants an investigation, the investigation can have the following results:

- The referral may be closed with no further action.
- CWS may refer the family to community resources.
- CWS may open a Voluntary Services Case, which means that the case with CWS will be open for about six months while the parent or guardian addresses the concerns regarding the child's safety. Children often remain in the home during a voluntary case, but sometimes children are placed with a resource family (related or non-related caregivers as previously described).
- CWS may petition the court to open a Dependency Case, which means that the case with CWS may be open for 6-18 months while the parent or guardian addresses the concerns for the child's safety. Children are made dependents of juvenile court and usually removed from the home during a dependency case. When children are removed, efforts are made to reduce trauma by placing the child with relatives or non-related extended family members (NREFM—adults who are not blood related to a child but have a familial connection to the child and their family, such as close family friends, godparents, teachers, etc.), if the relatives/NREFM meet state requirements. This may be done on an emergency basis if all requirements are met, pending Resource Family Approval (RFA). When placement with relatives is not an option, children may also be placed in a foster/RFA home, pending the identification of a relative/NREFM. CWS makes on-going, concerted efforts to identify relatives/NREFM for placement. Children at times may be temporarily placed up to 10 days at Polinsky Children's Center, pending the placement of the child with a relative or resource family.

In order to open a Dependency Case, the social worker must file a petition within 48 hours of taking the child into custody.

A Detention Hearing is held the following business day after a petition has been filed to determine if there is enough evidence to keep the child in custody.

At the Jurisdictional Hearing, held twenty-one days after the child was taken into custody, the court reviews the petition and makes a true finding if it is determined that the child needs the protection of the juvenile court.

If the court determines that the child needs court protection, a Disposition Hearing is held to address placement, protective orders, visitation, and services and the child is declared a dependent of the court. The Disposition Hearing may be held in conjunction with the Jurisdictional Hearing.



The parents/guardians may receive services with the child in the home (family maintenance) or out of the home (family reunification) for up to 18 months.

During this period, the court will hold a Status Review Hearing every six months to review the case.

When services are terminated, a Permanent Plan for the child is made, which could include return of the child to the parents/guardians, or guardianship or adoption with a resource family.

If you have questions about a child's case or are unsure what type of case the child has, contact the child's social worker for more information.

If you do not know who the child's social worker is, call the **Child Welfare Services KIDSLine** at (877) 792-5437 or the **Child Abuse Hotline** at (800) 344-6000 to find out his or her name and phone number.

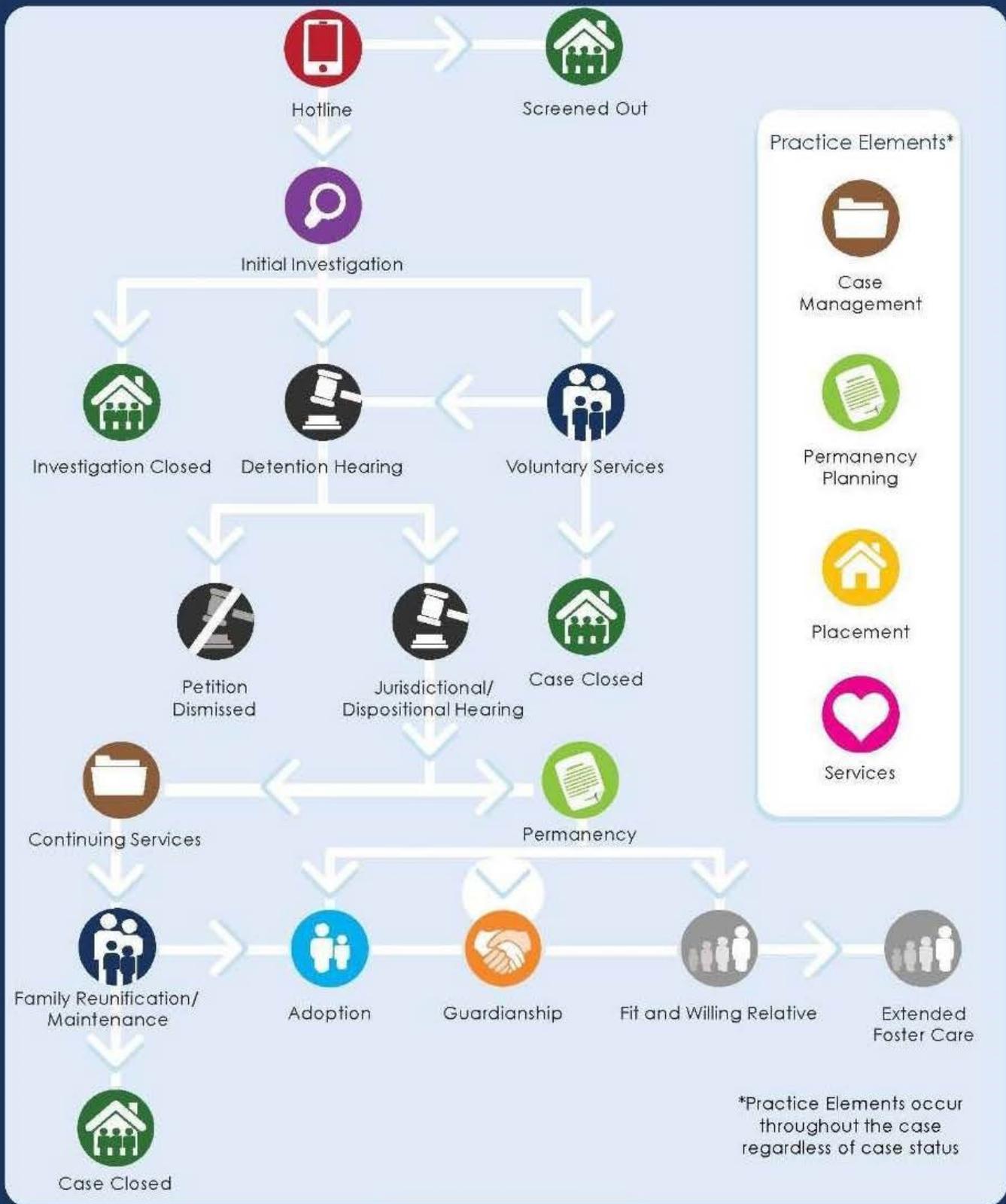
If you are not able to get the information you need from the child's social worker or have other concerns, call the social worker's supervisor (contact information should be available on the social worker's voicemail) or the **Office of the Ombudsman** at (619) 338-2098.

For more information about Resource Family Approval, please download the **Resource Family Approval Guide**, a project of the **Step Up Coalition** and **Alliance for Children's Rights** at [www.stepupforkin.org/RFAToolkit/](http://www.stepupforkin.org/RFAToolkit/).

**For more information about the process described above, see the *Child Welfare Case Flow Chart* on the next page.**

You can also go to [www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/cs/child\\_welfare\\_services/cws-information-and-data-summary.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/cs/child_welfare_services/cws-information-and-data-summary.html) for more detailed information about this chart.

# CHILD WELFARE CASE FLOW



# Clothing

Purchasing adequate clothing as children grow can be difficult for many grandparents and other relatives raising children. If the child is a dependent of the court, he or she qualifies for an annual clothing stipend and caregivers can ask the child's social worker for more information. For children who are not eligible for a clothing stipend, caregivers can locate local discount clothing stores and programs by calling **211 San Diego**.

# Education

From enrolling the child in school to accessing special services, navigating the school system can be extremely challenging for grandparents and other relatives raising children. Here is some information to help you:

- If you are having trouble enrolling the child in school because you do not have legal rights over the child, try downloading a **Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit** ([www.saccourt.ca.gov/forms/docs/pr-023.pdf](http://www.saccourt.ca.gov/forms/docs/pr-023.pdf)). Complete the form and take it to the child's school. You can also try getting a letter from one or both of the parents giving you permission to enroll the child in school. Please note that the Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit may only be accepted at public schools and not private institutions.

## For children 0-5:

- Call **First 5 San Diego** at (888) 5-FIRST-5 or (888) 534-7785 (toll free program information) and request information about services that will help the child be prepared to enter kindergarten.
- Call **Head Start/Early Head Start** at (888) 873-5145 (for Central, East and South regions), (760) 436-4800 (for the North Coastal region), or (858) 391-9084 (for the North Inland region) to find out if you qualify for free or low-cost, home-based childcare or preschool.

## For school-age children:

- Call **Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)** at (619) 282-0846 for free information about **Individual Education Programs (IEPs)** and other special resources at school (if you think the child has special behavior challenges or learning needs). You can also visit [www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide](http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide) for more information about IEPs.
- Call the **San Diego County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Program** (through **Casey Family Programs**) at (858) 298-2064 for information about education liaisons, free tutoring, and other educational services for foster youth.

The **San Diego County Office of Education** also has information about alternative education options (for example, for students who are incarcerated, pregnant or parenting, chronically truant, etc.) such as Juvenile Court and Community Schools. Call (858) 292-3500 for more information. In addition, a school directory including information about schools in San Diego County and the entire state (both public and private) can be found on the **California Department of Education's** website: [www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory/](http://www.cde.ca.gov/schooldirectory/).

### **For teens who are thinking about college and vocational programs:**

- Call the **San Diego County Office of Education** at (858) 292-3500 for information about programs that help high school seniors in foster and kinship care learn about grants and loans they may be eligible to receive, how to apply for financial aid, and how to apply for college.
- Talk to the child's school counselor to get more information about the college application process.
- Review the **Foster Youth Educational Planning Guide** at <https://ilponline.org/Documents/FosterYouthEducationalPlanningGuide.pdf>

### **Here are some other tips you may find helpful:**

- Enroll the child in school as soon as possible (many children who live with a grandparent or other relative have already missed a lot of school).
- Call your local school district to find out which school the child should attend.
- Ask which documents you will need to enroll the child in school.
- Share your situation with school staff. Knowing the child's background can help school personnel better understand his or her behavior or other issues.
- If possible, go to open houses and meetings at school. Being involved with the child's school is important and you may even meet other grandparents or relatives raising children!
- Encourage a love of reading by reading aloud to young children every day if possible, providing reading materials for children of all ages, and letting the child see you reading as well.



# Elder Abuse

Understanding elder abuse can help you recognize warning signs and prevent the maltreatment of elderly and dependent adults. Elder abuse may include physical, emotional/psychological, financial, and sexual abuse. It can also include neglect, abandonment, and self-neglect. Often victims of elder abuse can be abused in more ways than one. For example, an abuser may hit the elder (physical abuse) in order to convince him or her to turn over money to the abuser (financial abuse).

If a situation appears to be life threatening or a crime is in progress, call 9-1-1 or your local law enforcement agency. If you believe elder (age 60 and older) or dependent adult (age 18 and older) abuse has occurred, call **Adult Protective Services** through the **Aging & Independence Services Call Center** at (800) 339-4661, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

# Estate Planning

Grandparents and other relatives raising children are often concerned about what might happen to the children in their care in the event that the grandparent or other relative passes away or develops a health problem that would prohibit child rearing. Estate planning is the act of making a plan in advance and naming whom you want to receive the things you own (and the children you are raising) after you die and should:

- Include instructions for passing your values (religion, education, hard work, etc.) in addition to your valuables.
- Include instructions for your care if you become disabled before you die.
- Name a guardian and an inheritance manager for minor children.
- Provide for family members with special needs without disrupting government benefits.
- Provide for loved ones who might be irresponsible with money or who may need future protection from creditors or divorce.
- Provide for the transfer of your business at your retirement, disability, or death.
- Minimize taxes, court costs, and unnecessary legal fees.
- Be an ongoing process, not a one-time event. Your plan should be reviewed and updated as your family and financial situations (and laws) change over your lifetime.

## Other elements of estate planning to consider are:

- Life insurance to provide for your family at your death
- Disability income insurance to replace your income if you cannot work due to illness or injury
- Long-term care insurance to help pay for your care in case of an extended illness or injury

For more information about estate planning, speak with an attorney. To find an attorney that does estate planning, you can visit [www.estateplanning.com](http://www.estateplanning.com). In addition, **Elder Law & Advocacy** provides free legal services to residents of San Diego and Imperial Counties over the age of 60 through their **Senior Legal Services** program and can discuss estate planning options. For more information, call Elder Law & Advocacy at (858) 565-1392 or visit [www.seniorlaw-sd.org](http://www.seniorlaw-sd.org).

## Family Resource Centers

To apply for public assistance programs such as CalWORKs, CalFresh, and/or Medi-Cal in person, please visit one of the **County of San Diego Family Resource Centers** listed below. Please note that not all locations may offer services for all programs. You may also call **211 San Diego** for over-the-phone application assistance for CalFresh and combined CalFresh/Medi-Cal applications, or information about local nonprofits that provide free in-person application assistance for CalFresh and Medi-Cal.

Family Resource Center	Address	Hours (M-F)
Centre City	1255 Imperial Avenue; San Diego, CA 92101	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
El Cajon	220 S. 1st Street; El Cajon, CA 92019	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Lemon Grove	7065 Broadway; Lemon Grove, CA 91945	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Metro	1130 10th Avenue; San Diego, CA 92101	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
North Central	5055 Ruffin Road; San Diego, CA 92123	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
North Coastal	3708 Ocean Ranch Blvd; Oceanside, CA 92056	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
North Inland	649 West Mission Avenue; Escondido, CA 92025	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Chula Vista	690 Oxford Street; Chula Vista, CA 91911	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Southeast	4588 Market Street; San Diego, CA 92102	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
National City	401 Mile of Cars; National City, CA 91950	7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For more information about the San Diego County Family Resource Centers, please:

- Call the **Access Customer Service Center** at (866) 262-9881
- Visit [www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/ssp/food\\_stamps/family\\_resource\\_centers.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/ssp/food_stamps/family_resource_centers.html)

# Financial Support

Many grandparents and other relatives raising children live on limited incomes and the expense of raising a child can make money even tighter. Concrete supports, like financial assistance, are extremely important for grandparents and other relatives raising children. You may be eligible for just one form of on-going monthly support. Refer back to the **Permanency Flowcharts** (pages 4-7) to remind yourself which forms of support you may be eligible for and then read this section for more information. The different types of potential financial support for grandparents and other relatives raising children are:

## CalWORKs

- CalWORKs Child Only Grants (or non-needy caregiver cash aid) provide money and Medi-Cal benefits for the support of the child and are based on the child's income only. Call **211 San Diego** for information about your local welfare office and items to bring when you apply. Please note that when you receive CalWORKs funding, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency attempts to locate one or both parents for repayment.
- CalWORKs Family Grants provide money and Medi-Cal benefits for everyone in a household that meets income requirements. Call **211 San Diego** for information about your local welfare office and items to bring when you apply.
- If you have already applied for CalWORKs but have questions about your application or benefits, call the **ACCESS Customer Service Center** at (866) 262-9881 (toll free).
- Your SSI income is not counted in the CalWORKs program budget.
- To qualify for CalWORKs you must be a California resident and either a U.S. citizen or certain Qualified Non-Citizen.
- You must provide proof of some information you give in the application. More information about verification you may need to provide can be found at [www.mybenefitscalwin.org](http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org) under Cash Aid Options and CalWORKs/RCA Required Documents.

## Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) Benefit Payment

AAP is a financial benefit to cover child-rearing expenses for a child who has been adopted through Child Welfare Services. To learn more about the program and find out if you are eligible, talk to the child's social worker. Children with special needs may receive additional funding. The child's social worker can assist in determining if the child is eligible to receive a special care rate.

The AAP benefit is:

- Based on the child's special needs, age, sibling group, adverse parent background, and/or race/ethnicity
- Reassessed every two years or per request of the caregiver to address changing needs of the child
- Able to cover the cost of group homes or residential treatment programs

## Extended Foster Care (EFC)

Extended Foster Care (EFC) is available to youth age 18 to 21 who are under a foster care placement order at age 18. The goal of EFC is to provide extended assistance to better prepare youth for a successful transition into adulthood and self-sufficiency through education and employment opportunities and help maintaining a safety net of support.

Beginning January 1, 2015, EFC eligibility was expanded to include additional populations of youth, referred to as EFC re-entry. To be eligible for EFC re-entry, the youth must meet all EFC requirements and all of the following:

- The guardian or adoptive parent must have received payment for the youth (AAP, KinGAP, or guardianship payment) for the month the youth turned 18.
- The guardian or adoptive parent must have stopped receiving payment for the youth (AAP, KinGAP, or guardianship payment) after the youth turned 18, meaning they cannot be receiving aid at the time of application for re-entry.
- The guardian or adoptive parent must have stopped providing ongoing support to the youth after they attained 18 years of age.
- The non-minor would have otherwise been eligible to continue to receive extended AAP, or guardianship payments.



## Foster Care Funds

Foster Care funds provide money and Medi-Cal benefits for the support of the child while the child is a dependent of juvenile court. Some, but not all relatives are eligible to receive funds. If you are caring for a child who is currently a dependent of juvenile court, but have not received foster care funds or Medi-Cal, call the child's social worker who will assist with determination of eligibility for the foster care or CalWORKs programs. Children with special needs may receive a special care rate, which provides additional funding. Discuss the child's potential need with his/her social

worker. Additionally, with the passing of Assembly Bill (AB) 12, financial assistance and services continue up to the age of 21 for youth eligible for Extended Foster Care.

A child residing with a non-related legal guardian established via dependency court or probate courts is also eligible for foster care funds. There must be an open Child Welfare Services “money only” case for funding purposes.

## Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Funds

Approved relative caregivers caring for foster children who are not eligible for federal foster care funds are eligible to receive ARC funding. The funding sources consist of CalWORKS and ARC payments that equal the basic foster care rate.

## Child Support

Child Support can sometimes be obtained by grandparents and other relatives raising children, especially when a relative has been given legal custody through Family Court. For information about receiving child support, call the **Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)** at (866) 901-3212.

## Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGAP)

KinGAP is a California state financial benefit to cover child-rearing expenses for a child whose relative has taken guardianship of him/her through Child Welfare Services. To learn more about the program and find out if you are eligible, talk to the child’s social worker. Children with special needs may receive a special care rate, which provides additional funding. The child’s social worker can assist in determining if the child is eligible to receive a special care rate.

The KinGAP benefit is for relative caregivers who:

- Have been assessed by County Child Welfare Services
- Have been receiving funding from the foster care program
- Have had the child formally placed in their home by Child Welfare Services for at least six consecutive months. The caregiver’s home must be an approved, certified, licensed, or Resource Family-approved home
- Are no longer in need of supervision by a social worker or the court
- Have taken legal guardianship of the youth after juvenile court dependency has been dismissed

KinGAP benefits (without court involvement) may be extended until age 21, if KinGAP payment commences on or after the youth’s 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, or if one of the following conditions apply:

- Child or youth has a documented mental or physical disability that warrants the continuation of assistance, regardless of the age the child/youth was when the kin guardianship was ordered.

- Child or youth does not have a documented mental or physical disability but meets one of the five participation criteria:
  - 1) Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential
  - 2) Enrolled in an institution, which provides post-secondary or vocational education
  - 3) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment
  - 4) Employed for at least 80 hours per month
  - 5) Incapable of doing any of the aforementioned activities (numbers 1 to 4) due to a medical condition

### Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited incomes and resources. Call the **Social Security Disability Help Center** at (619) 282-1761 or your local **Social Security Office** at (800) 772-1213 for assistance applying for SSI benefits for a child. If the child is a dependent of Juvenile Court, the child's social worker and eligibility worker will apply on the child's behalf. Call the child's social worker to discuss. If a child has a disability or special need, the child may qualify for SSI regardless of a caregiver's legal status.

### Social Security Survivor Benefits

Social Security Survivor Benefits provide assistance to children whose parents are deceased or disabled. Call your local **Social Security Office** at (800) 772-1213 for assistance applying for Social Security Survivor Benefits. If the child is a dependent of Juvenile Court, please notify the child's social worker of any benefits received or the potential benefits the child may be eligible to receive. If a child has a deceased parent, the child may qualify for Social Security Survivor Benefits regardless of a caregiver's legal status.



# Grief and Loss

Children can be placed in the care of their relatives for many different reasons. Sometimes it is because one or both of the child's biological parents has died. A child can experience feelings of loss any time he or she is not being raised by a biological parent; however, dealing with the death of a parent is usually extremely difficult. Children who are being raised by a relative because their parent has died are eligible to receive up to a year of free bereavement counseling at a local hospice agency. Call **211 San Diego** for more information about bereavement counseling and other services available at a hospice agency near you.

# Health and Dental Care

Grandparents and other relatives raising children often have concerns about accessing appropriate health and dental services for the children in their care. Refer back to the **Permanency Flowchart** (pages 4-7) to remind yourself which health programs you are eligible for and then read this section for more information.

It is important to take the child in for a physical examination as soon as possible to address any health issues he or she may have, especially if the child has not seen a doctor or dentist regularly in the past.

If you are having trouble accessing medical care for the child because you do not have legal rights over the child, try downloading a **Caregiver Authorization Affidavit** at [www.saccourt.ca.gov/forms/docs/pr-023.pdf](http://www.saccourt.ca.gov/forms/docs/pr-023.pdf). Complete the form and take it to the child's doctor. You can also try getting a letter from one or both of the parents giving you permission to access medical care for the child.



## Medi-Cal

Children being raised by a relative usually qualify for Medi-Cal, which provides free or low-cost health and dental coverage for children and families (please note that Medi-Cal only provides

dental benefits for children under 18 years of age). If you are a relative caregiver who is raising a child informally (not as a formal foster child), you can call **211 San Diego** for assistance with your application (when combined with a **CalFresh** application), information about your local office, or information about non-profits that provide free, in-person application assistance. You can also apply online at [www.mybenefitscalwin.org](http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org).

If you are a relative caregiver who is raising a child formally as a foster child, he or she should be automatically provided Medi-Cal benefits by the County. If you have not received the child's Medi-Cal card or have questions about using the program, call your child's social worker.

If you are a relative caregiver who is raising a child under informal care and you have already applied for Medi-Cal but have questions about your application or benefits, call the **ACCESS Customer Service Center** at (866) 262-9881.

If you need help resolving an issue related to Medi-Cal, another insurance carrier, or a past due medical bill, call the **Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy** at (877) 734-3258.

Sometimes, children can be covered by a relative caregiver's private health insurance in addition to Medi-Cal after obtaining legal guardianship or adoption—check with your employer.

If you have other health coverage, you can still apply for Medi-Cal. Your health plan or HMO will be billed for services it covers. Medi-Cal will be billed for services your health plan does not cover.

The County may need proof of the information you gave in your application. More information about the verification you may need to provide may be found at [www.mybenefitscalwin.org](http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org) under Medical Services and Medi-Cal Required Documents.

## Housing

Grandparents and other relatives raising children often face challenges related to stable housing. Many grandparents and other relatives are faced with not having enough space to absorb children into their homes or must move due to age restrictions where they live. If you find yourself struggling to secure or keep stable housing, here is some information that may help:

- The San Diego Housing Commission and the County of San Diego's Housing & Community Development Services have programs — like the Section 8 Housing Voucher Program — for low-income households to help them pay their rent. A portion of the rent is paid on behalf of the families directly to their landlords.
  - ◇ If you would like to apply for rental assistance within the City of San Diego, you may submit an application online and find additional information at the **San Diego Housing Commission's** website ([www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org)) or call (619) 231-9400.
  - ◇ For all other cities and municipalities within San Diego County, submit an application on-line and find additional information at the **Housing & Community Development Services'** website ([www.sandiegocounty.gov/sdhcd](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/sdhcd)) or call (858) 694-4801.

- The County of San Diego has a **housing directory** that contains listings and contact information for affordable housing complexes located throughout the county, as well as resources to assist with fair housing issues. To view this directory, visit [www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/sdhcd/docs/rental-assistance/housing-resource-2020-rev.pdf](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/sdhcd/docs/rental-assistance/housing-resource-2020-rev.pdf). Call **211 San Diego** for information about other housing programs in your area.



## iFoster

iFoster is a national non-profit organization dedicated to providing life-changing resources that aid vulnerable children and youth. **iFoster** programs can be found at [www.ifoster.org](http://www.ifoster.org) to members of the foster, adoptive and kinship community; youth who have emancipated out of the system; and the organizations that support them. iFoster negotiates and collaborates with hundreds of partners who can provide products, services, and opportunities for foster youth. The iFoster resource categories are Daily Living Expenses, Technology, Recreational Activities, Educational/School Support, Youth Employment, Health & Wellness, Child Care/Parenting Help, and Advisers/Support Groups.

# Legal Issues

As you learned in the introduction section of this Handbook, children can be placed in the homes of grandparents and other relatives in many different ways and it is extremely important to understand your specific situation so that you can learn about your legal rights and permanency options. Refer back to the **Permanency Flowchart** (pages 4-7) to remind yourself which legal status currently applies to you and what permanency options you have, then read this section for more information.

## Informal Care

You have an informal agreement with the child's parent(s) to raise the child but have not had any legal involvement with the local child welfare agency or the court. You have physical custody of the child, but no legal rights because legal custody remains with the biological parents, who may resume care of the child at any time.

In order to access medical care and enroll the child in school, download a **Caregiver Authorization Affidavit** at [www.saccourt.ca.gov/forms/docs/pr-023.pdf](http://www.saccourt.ca.gov/forms/docs/pr-023.pdf). Complete the form and take it to the child's doctor and school. You can also try getting a letter from one or both of the parents giving you permission to access medical care and enroll the child in school.

If you want to obtain legal guardianship of the child, call the **Guardianship Assistance Program** at (619) 844-2869 or the **San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program** at (619) 235-5656 for assistance with the process. Probate cases may be referred to Juvenile Court for review, which could result in biological parents being offered reunification services. Probate cases may also be referred to Family Court if there is already an open case in Family Court.

If you want to legally adopt the child, call **San Diego County Adoptions** at (877) 423-6788 for assistance with an independent adoption.

## Legal Guardianship via Probate Court

You have filed a petition in Probate Court and been granted legal guardianship of the child. You have legal and physical custody of the child and have authority to make decisions regarding the child's care.

If you want to legally adopt the child, call **San Diego County Adoptions** at (877) 792-5437 for assistance with an independent adoption.

## Formal Foster Care

You have had a child placed in your home by Child Welfare Services (CWS) due to abuse or neglect by the parent(s). You have physical custody of the child and the child is a dependent of Juvenile Court; care and control of the child falls under CWS.

If reunification with the biological parent(s) fails and you are identified as a potential permanent placement option for the child, five alternatives to discuss with the child's social worker are:

1. Adoption via Juvenile Court in which you become the child's legal parent, parental rights are terminated, and court dependency is terminated.
2. Legal Guardianship via Juvenile Court in which you become the legal guardian of the child until age 18, parental rights are not terminated, and court dependency is terminated.
3. Placement with a Fit and Willing Relative in which a child remains a dependent of the Juvenile Court and the child is placed with a relative caregiver. The relative must be an approved Resource Family (see pg. 13).
4. Continued Foster Care in which a child under the age of 16 remains a dependent of Juvenile Court and is placed with a Non-Relative Extended Family Member (NREFM) or with an approved Resource Family (RFA), a Licensed Group Home (LGH), or a Short-Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP).
5. Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA), in which a child over the age of 16 remains a dependent of the Juvenile Court and is placed with a Non-Relative Extended Family Member (NREFM) or in Licensed Foster Care (LFH), a Licensed Group Home (LGH) or a Short-Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP).



## Legal Guardianship via Juvenile Court

You have had a child placed in your home by Child Welfare Services due to abuse or neglect by the parent(s), but were then made the legal guardian because reunification with the parent(s) failed. You have legal and physical custody of the child and have authority to make decisions regarding the child's care.

If you want to legally adopt the child, call the **Child Abuse Hotline** at (858) 560-2191 to request that Juvenile Court dependency be reinstated so that you can begin the process to legally adopt the child via Juvenile Court.

## Legal Custody via Family Court

You have been given legal custody of a child via Family Court because the parents already had an open custody case when a report of abuse or neglect was made. You have legal and physical custody of the child and have authority to make decisions regarding the child's care.

If you want to legally adopt the child, call **San Diego County Adoptions** at (877) 792-5437 for assistance with an independent adoption.

## CWS (Child Welfare Services) Adoption

You have had a child placed in your home by Child Welfare Services due to abuse or neglect by the parent(s), but then adopted the child because reunification with the parent(s) failed. After court termination of the biological parents' parental rights, you become the legal parent.



## Independent Adoption

You have adopted a child independently, without the involvement of Child Welfare Services. After court termination of the biological parents' parental rights, you become the legal parent.

## Emancipation

Emancipation is a legal way for children to become adults before they are 18. Once a child is emancipated, his/her parents or guardians do not have custody or control of him/her anymore; however, emancipated minors are still required to go to school, obey the law, and get a parent or guardian's permission before getting married. Emancipation is usually forever, but the court can cancel the emancipation if the minor asking for the emancipation lies to the court or is no longer able to support himself/herself.

For more information about emancipation, you can call the **Juvenile Court** at (858) 634-1600. An **Emancipation Pamphlet** can also be found at [www.courts.ca.gov/documents/em100info.pdf](http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/em100info.pdf).

Here are some additional permanency tips you may find useful:

- Keep a copy of Caregiver Authorization Affidavits, placement agreements, and guardianship or adoption paperwork with you at all times.
- Consider keeping a journal of when the child's parent calls, visits, writes, or sends gifts to the child and when he or she promises to call or visit but doesn't follow through. This record may help you in possible future legal proceedings.
- Gather important documents including: birth certificates for yourself, the child, and the child's parent; marriage licenses or divorce decrees if your name has changed since the child was born; financial records to show that you have been financially supporting the child; records of events (like the journal mentioned above); and the child's social security card.
- Be sure to attend all legal proceedings and hearings.
- Set a professional tone in court by following the rules of the court, dressing professionally, keeping your cool, and sticking to the facts.
- For other legal resources, call the **Legal Aid Society of San Diego** at 1-877 LEGAL AID (1-877-534-2524), the **San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program** at (619) 235-5656, or **211 San Diego**.

## Mental Health and Trauma

Most children who are being raised by a grandparent or other relative have experienced one or more traumatic events. Traumatic experiences can include, but are not limited to: physical, sexual, or psychological abuse and neglect, family or community violence, the sudden or violent loss of a loved one, and substance abuse by a family member. When children have been in situations where they feared for their lives, believed that they would be injured, witnessed violence, or tragically lost a loved one, they may show signs of child traumatic stress.

Children who suffer from child traumatic stress are those who have been exposed to one or more traumas over the course of their lives and develop reactions that persist and affect their daily lives after the events have ended. Traumatic reactions can include a variety of responses, such as intense and ongoing emotional upset, depressive symptoms or anxiety, behavioral changes, difficulties with self-regulation (control of oneself), problems relating to others or forming attachments, regression or loss of previously acquired skills, attention and academic difficulties, nightmares, difficulty sleeping and eating, and physical symptoms such as aches and pains. Older children may use drugs or alcohol, behave in risky ways, or engage in unhealthy sexual activity.

***Whatever happens to you, once you have hope you will survive.***

**-Lailah Gifty Akita**

## Children being raised by a grandparent or other relative may feel:

- Confusion about why the parent is not caring for him or her
- Anger about negative events that have taken place, especially abuse or neglect
- Grief if the child's parent has died or is alive but absent from the child's life
- Guilt — blaming him/herself for family problems or for wanting to live away from the parent
- Shame about family problems or the fact that they do not live with their parents like other kids
- Lack of trust of adults due to past abuse or neglect
- Fear due to past abuse or neglect
- Divided loyalties — a child may feel torn between love for the birth parent and the caregiver

## How to talk to children being raised by a grandparent or other relative about their feelings:

- Too much information can be overwhelming while too little can cause confusion and anxiety
- Don't pretend that nothing is wrong — be honest, but age appropriate
- Talk to the child about how he/she is feeling and remember to be respectful by paying attention when he/she talks; really listen rather than jumping in with advice right away
- Accept the child's feelings and do not dismiss them as unimportant
- Ask the child's school counselor or therapist for suggestions about how to talk to the child about their parent's absence

## Expect questions — children often wonder things like:

- Why did this happen?
- Is it my fault?
- Who will take care of me?
- Why can't I have a "normal" family?



**Make sure to seek professional help if you feel that the child's experiences before coming to live with you are causing serious emotional or behavioral problems or if you notice any of these warning signs:**

- Suicidal thoughts/attempts
- Self harm/injury
- Depression
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Use of alcohol or other drugs
- Anger out of proportion to the cause
- Poor concentration
- Excessive worries or fears
- Destruction of property
- Social isolation
- Low energy
- Going back to earlier behaviors like thumb sucking or bedwetting
- Behaviors like throwing temper tantrums, lying, hitting, yelling, and biting that:
  - ◇ Happen often or continue past the expected age
  - ◇ Seem too extreme to be normal
  - ◇ Affect the child's ability to function at school or at home

Documenting any concerning behaviors and warning signs in a journal can be helpful if you later need to share these issues with doctors and other professionals.



## Individual and family counseling, health and development assessments, and parenting classes can often help the child heal from trauma and address emotional and behavioral issues:

- For children between the ages of 0-5 who are not dependents of Juvenile Court, call **First 5 San Diego** at (888) 5 FIRST 5 (888-534-7785) and request a free **Healthy Development Assessment**. More information about services may also be found at [www.first5sandiego.org](http://www.first5sandiego.org).
- For children between the ages of 0-5 who are dependents of Juvenile Court, ask the child's social worker how he/she can be assessed by the **Developmental Screening and Enhancement Program (DSEP)** and if you can see the assessment report. Once you review the report, ask the social worker for help accessing services to address the needs of the child.
- For school-age children who are not dependents of Juvenile Court, access individual/family counseling services by:
  - ◇ Calling the child's school counselor and asking if **Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)** services are available. This program pays for therapists from outside community agencies to visit schools a few times per week to do on-going, individual counseling with students who have Medi-Cal or no insurance.
  - ◇ Calling the **San Diego County Access and Crisis Line** at (888) 724-7240 to receive referrals for mental health services in your area for individuals with Medi-Cal or no insurance. The Access and Crisis Line can also help with services for alcohol or drug abuse, suicide prevention, medication needs, and more.
- For school-age children who are dependents of Juvenile Court, access individual/family counseling services by:
  - ◇ Asking the child's social worker if the court has ordered therapy/counseling for the child. If so, ask the social worker for a list of approved therapists in your area or take the child to the services arranged by the social worker.
  - ◇ Trying the tips listed above for non-dependent children.

More helpful information about **child traumatic stress** can be found at [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org) (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network).

## Mentoring

Children who are being raised by a grandparent or other relative might benefit from having additional positive adult role models in their lives. Mentoring programs can match the child with a caring adult mentor who will make a commitment to spend time with the child playing sports, playing board games, or just talking. Your child will get another caring adult in his or her life and you will get a break while the child is with his or her mentor. In order to find out more about mentoring programs in San Diego County:

- Learn more about **Big Brothers Big Sisters** by calling (858) 536-4900 or visiting [www.sdbigs.org](http://www.sdbigs.org).
- Visit [www.sdmentorcoalition.org](http://www.sdmentorcoalition.org) for a list of other mentoring programs in your area.

# Nutrition

Many grandparents and other relatives raising children have limited incomes and it can be difficult to afford healthy food. Just like financial assistance, food assistance programs are a concrete support that are very important for grandparents and other relatives raising children. If you are concerned that you cannot afford healthy food for your family, read the information below.

## CalFresh

If your family meets income requirements, you may qualify for CalFresh, also known as the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides a debit card to purchase groceries. Call **211 San Diego** for over-the-phone application assistance and information about your local **Family Resource Center** or apply online at [www.mybenefitscalwin.org](http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org).

If you have already applied for CalFresh but have questions about your application or benefits, call the **ACCESS Customer Service Center** at (866) 262-9881.

- You can buy food as well as plants and seeds to grow food. You will not be charged sales tax on items you buy with CalFresh. You cannot buy non-food items such as pet food, vitamins, medicines, alcohol, tobacco, or paper products. You may not buy hot or prepared food. Exception: You may participate in the **CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program (RMP)** in San Diego County if you are elderly (60 or older), disabled, and/or homeless. If you are eligible for the RMP, you can use your CalFresh benefits to purchase food at approved restaurants. A list of participating restaurants, identified by the Restaurant Meals Program logo, can be found by visiting the RMP website at [www.SanDiegoRMP.org](http://www.SanDiegoRMP.org) or by calling **211 San Diego**.
- The County has up to 30 days to approve or deny your CalFresh application. If you have an emergency need for food, you may be eligible for Expedited Services.
- Having a criminal record does not affect your eligibility for CalFresh unless you have been convicted of a drug-related felony. A record of arrests (with no convictions) has no bearing on your eligibility for CalFresh.
- The County may need proof for some of the information you give in the application. The County will need to have your verifications before your application can be certified. If you are eligible for Expedited Services, you will need to show your identification. The other information can be given to the County later. You will need to show one document for each type of verification asked for.
- More information about verification you may need to provide may be found at [www.mybenefitscalwin.org](http://www.mybenefitscalwin.org).



## Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)

- If your child is between the ages of 0-5, he or she may qualify for WIC, which provides vouchers for fruits, vegetables, milk, whole wheat bread, cereal, eggs, cheese, peanut butter, baby foods, and more. Call 1-888-WIC-WORKS (1-888-942-9675) to find your local WIC office.

Please note:

- Any child on Medi-Cal automatically qualifies for WIC.
- Undocumented children can qualify for WIC.
- A caregiver does not need to have guardianship of the child in order to obtain WIC benefits; notices of action of a placement or a written note from the child's mother can be accepted.

## National School Lunch Program

If your child is school age, he or she may qualify for the National School Lunch Program, which provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. You can apply for school meals at any time throughout the school year by submitting a household application directly to your school. Your school will provide you with an application upon request. If your child receives public assistance, be sure to include the amount he or she receives and the case number, which should automatically qualify your child for the program.

## Food Banks

If you are in need of emergency food, you might want to consider visiting your local food distribution site. To find a location or program near you, contact the **San Diego Food Bank** at (866) 350-3663 or visit [www.sandiegofoodbank.org](http://www.sandiegofoodbank.org) and **Feeding San Diego** at (858) 452-3663 or visit [www.feedingsandiego.org](http://www.feedingsandiego.org).

For other nutrition tips, talk to your child's doctor and visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).

# Parenting Education

Many relatives raising children have raised children of their own; however, parenting a second time around or parenting children who have experienced trauma can be different. Taking a parenting class with a curriculum that has evidence proving its effectiveness can often help caregivers by teaching about child development, nurturing and attachment, and positive discipline.

For more information about parenting classes and resources:

- Call **Grossmont College Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Care Education Program** at (800) 200-1222 or visit [www.fakce.org](http://www.fakce.org).
- Call **SAY San Diego's Project KEEP** (a 16-week group education and peer support program) at (858) 565-4148, ext. 278 or visit [www.saysandiego.org/program/project-keep/](http://www.saysandiego.org/program/project-keep/).
- Call Maty Felman-Bicas with **Assertive Family Solutions** (for court approved, 5-week parenting and co-parenting classes in English and Spanish) at (619) 787-0807.
- Call **211 San Diego** and ask about evidence-based parenting classes like **Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)** for help with implementing positive discipline, understanding the child's behavior, improving challenging child behaviors, and feeling less stressed. Also ask about early intervention programs for babies and young children like the **Nurse Family Partnership Program** and **First 5 Programs**.

For general information about parenting and child development, read the sections below.

The purpose of positive discipline is to help the child:

- Stay safe
- Learn right from wrong
- Develop values
- Learn to respect others
- Build self-esteem
- Develop self-control
- Understand consequences
- Be successful at school and later in life

Remember to:

- Be firm, but flexible
- Focus on providing a learning experience rather than just gaining control



- Teach what to do and what not to do — and why
- Make consequences that seem logical and fit the misbehavior
- Praise positive behavior
- Be consistent
- Teach good values
- Show the child your love every day
- Adjust rules and responsibilities as the child gets older
- Be a good role model



## Bonding with a Baby

- Nurturing and attachment are crucial elements for the healthy growth of a baby's body and mind. You might be seeing that your baby has brief periods of sleep, crying, and alertness many times each day; often cries for long periods of time for no apparent reason; loves to be held and cuddled; responds to and imitates facial expressions; loves soothing voices; grows and develops each day; and learns new skills quickly.
- Some things you can do for your baby include: responding when your baby cries; holding and touching your baby as much as possible; using feeding and diapering times to look into your baby's eyes, smile, and talk; reading and singing to your baby; spending time on the floor with your baby playing with toys and puzzles, and talking to your baby's pediatrician if you feel you are having trouble bonding with your baby.

## Parenting a School-Age Child

- School-age children go through big changes as they spend more time at school and work to develop an identity of their own. You might be seeing that your school-age child is maturing unevenly (for example, his/her body is growing, but he/she still may be having temper tantrums and need reminders to do things like brushing teeth); is very concerned about fairness and rules; is capable of doing chores and homework more independently; is capable of getting distracted easily and may lack organizational skills; and is starting to develop deeper relationships with peers.
- Some things you can do for your school-age child include: modeling the behavior you want to see; making a few important rules and enforcing them every time; talking about your expectations; supporting healthy growth with nutritious meals and plenty of sleep; limiting time spent watching TV, playing video games, or using the computer; being involved with the

child's school; offering support and understanding when problems with peers arise; and talking with the child about sex, alcohol, and drugs before he or she learns it from peers.



## Connecting with a Teen

- As teens become more independent, relationships with friends become very important. Although it may sometimes feel like your teen does not need you anymore, he or she still needs your love, support, and guidance. You might be seeing that your teen is craving more independence; questioning rules and authority figures; testing limits; acting impulsively; and making mature decisions sometimes, but childish ones at other times.
- Some things you can do for your teen include sharing family meals and “ordinary” time by taking everyday opportunities to bond; getting involved with your teen’s interests, hobbies, and school activities; getting to know your teen’s friends; showing that you are interested in your teen’s ideas, feelings, and experiences; and setting clear limits, but allowing your teen to help make rules and consequences.

## Parenting a Child with Special Needs

- Children develop in many ways and at different rates, but when milestones do not develop within broad, expected timeframes or do not appear at all, caregivers may become concerned. You might be seeing that your special needs child is delayed in his or her development of gross and fine motor skills, language, and cognitive and social skills.
- Some things you can do for your special needs child include calling the child’s primary care physician to request a developmental screening or **First 5 San Diego** at (888)-5FIRST5 (888-534-7785) to request a free **Healthy Development Assessment**. If the child is



diagnosed with a developmental delay or disability, you can meet with other families whose children have the same identified disability, learn the specifics about the child’s special needs, locate a support group for ongoing support, access respite care, and identify community resources for the child. Contact the **San Diego Regional Center** at (858) 576-2996 (Main Office: 4335 Ruffin Road #200, San Diego) or **Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)** at (619) 282-0846.

# Respite Care

Raising a child is a full-time job and grandparents and other relatives often need a break. Read the information below to find out if you are eligible to receive respite care, which is a temporary break or rest for the caregiver through a community service provider. In addition, do not forget to use your informal support system as well — consider asking a friend or family member to babysit!

- Grandparents and other relatives who are 55 and older can call the **YMCA Kinship Respite Program** at (619) 719-9179 to get information about applying to send the child to part-time childcare, AM/PM care, day camp, or overnight camp for free.
- Grandparents and other relatives who are raising a Child Welfare Services (CWS) court-dependent child may access the **CWS Respite Program** by contacting their CWS social worker or emailing [CWSRespite.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:CWSRespite.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov) to obtain approval for up to 34 hours per month of respite care when needed for emergencies, stress alleviation, or required trainings. Respite services cannot be used for routine babysitting, vacations, employment, or to allow the caregiver to provide respite care for other children.
- Grandparents and other relatives who are raising a child with special needs can call:
  - ◇ The **San Diego Regional Center** at (858) 576-2996
  - ◇ **YMCA Childcare Resource Service for Special Needs** at (858) 292-9622
  - ◇ Military Branch's **Exceptional Family Member Program** (for active duty military personnel only). You can enroll in the Exceptional Family Member Program by obtaining paperwork from the Exceptional Family Member Program medical point of contact at your local military treatment facility.

# Self Care

It is extremely important for grandparents and others raising relative children to take care of themselves because it reduces stress, increases parental resilience, and is one of the most important factors in helping children heal from trauma. You might feel lonely if your new role cuts you off from friends and activities, embarrassed about what friends or neighbors may think, resentful of the loss of freedom, guilty about feeling resentful, or overwhelmed. These feelings are completely normal, but are important reasons to think about self care. Besides getting respite care, some other things you can do to take care of yourself are get plenty of physical activity, maintain a healthy diet, and engage in hobbies and enjoyable activities with friends.

# Substance-Exposed Infants

Some children who are being raised by a grandparent or other relative are born to mothers who abused substances during pregnancy. Illegal drugs as well as legal substances like alcohol, caffeine, and over-the-counter medications can have lasting effects on an unborn child. Studies show that taking drugs during pregnancy may increase the chance of birth defects, premature babies, underweight babies, and stillborn births. Negative effects can be seen after birth as well and can include problems with behavior, cognitive performance, information processing, memory, attentiveness and even brain structure changes that persist into early adolescence. If you know or suspect that an infant in your care was exposed to substances in utero, you can call **First 5 San Diego** at 888-5FIRST5 (888-534-7785) to request a free Healthy Development Assessment and services.

## Support Groups

Maintaining and increasing social connections is very important for grandparents and other relatives raising children. Several community organizations offer support groups for grandparents and other relatives raising children throughout San Diego County. To find a support group in your area, contact the **YMCA Kinship Support Program** at (619) 719-9179. Other support group resources in the county include:

- **Family Engagement Grandfamilies Support Group**; for more information, call (619) 777-6241.
- **The Grandparents Connection** at (619) 931-9548 or [www.thegrandparentsconnection.org](http://www.thegrandparentsconnection.org).
- **SAY San Diego Project KEEP** (16-week group education and peer support program) at (858) 565-4148, ext. 278 or [www.saysandiego.org/program/project-keep/](http://www.saysandiego.org/program/project-keep/).

Additional support for families who have adopted a child is available through the **Adoption Support Services Program** at **San Diego Youth Services**. For more information, call (619) 221-8600, ext. 2240.

In addition, remember that using informal support is important too! Build a safety network of family and friends who might be able to help with things like clothing, furniture, and childcare in an emergency or when you need a break.

*Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.*

**-Ryunosuke Satoro**

# Technology

Like the general public, grandparents and other relatives raising children have varying levels of comfort using computers and other forms of technology. Gaining education and experience using technology can not only make your life easier, but is also an important way to connect with the children and teens in your care and make sure they are staying safe while using social media. For more information about technology programs and classes you can call **211 San Diego**, your local library branch, or community college. To find the library branch nearest you, please visit <http://sdcl.org> and select hours and locations. To find the community college nearest you, please visit [www.cccco.edu](http://www.cccco.edu) and enter your zip code.



For information about training and low-cost, refurbished computers for families that qualify, contact the **San Diego Futures Foundation** at (619) 391-0050 or visit [www.sdfutures.org](http://www.sdfutures.org).

# Transportation

Transportation can be a challenge for many grandparents and other relatives raising children. For more information about various forms of public transportation available within San Diego County, please call **MTS** at (619) 557-4555 or visit [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com). For information about specific programs available through community service providers, please call **211 San Diego**. For transportation resources specifically for older adults and/or disabled individuals, you can also call **FACT (Facilitating Access to Coordinated Transportation)** at (888) 924-3228 or visit [www.factsd.org](http://www.factsd.org). In addition, the **Ride Well to Age Well Guide** highlights transportation options throughout San Diego County and can be found at <https://bit.ly/RideWell2AgeWellENG>.

# Utilities

The **San Diego Gas & Electric (SDGE) CARE Program** provides a 35% discount on monthly utility bills for families who receive public assistance. To apply for the CARE Program by phone, call (877) 646-5525. To apply for the CARE Program online or for more information about other SDGE assistance programs, visit [www.sdge.com/residential/pay-bill/get-payment-bill-assistance/assistance-programs](http://www.sdge.com/residential/pay-bill/get-payment-bill-assistance/assistance-programs).

# Additional Resources

Other resources may be available to help you and your family. For information about other resources that may help, please contact the **YMCA Kinship Support Program** at (619) 719-9179 or visit <https://www.ymcasd.org/community-support/ymca-youth-and-family-services/family-support-and-preservation/kinship-support-services>.

You can also call **211 San Diego**, search their comprehensive online database at [211sandiego.org](http://211sandiego.org), or visit their dedicated webpage for kinship families at [www.211sandiego.org/grandparents](http://www.211sandiego.org/grandparents). This site posts updates on special events happening around the county for kinship families (such as free regional symposiums and family enrichment events), along with additional helpful information.

For resources specific to older adults and persons with disabilities, contact the Call Center for the **County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Aging & Independence Services** at (800) 339-4661 or visit [www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov](http://www.aging.sandiegocounty.gov).

To find services available in other counties in California, you can call the **California Kinship Navigator** at (800) KIN-0047 or (800) 546-0047. For additional information about resources and services in other states, as well as legislation, policy changes, research, and other issues affecting grandparents and other relatives raising children visit:

- [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org) (**Generations United**)
- [www.grandfamilies.org](http://www.grandfamilies.org)
- [www.grandfactsheets.org](http://www.grandfactsheets.org)
- [www.ifoster.org](http://www.ifoster.org)
- [www.stepupforkin.org](http://www.stepupforkin.org)



To obtain more information about this Handbook, please contact the **YMCA Kinship Support Program** at (619) 719-9179 or visit <https://www.ymcasd.org/community-support/ymca-youth-and-family-services/family-support-and-preservation/kinship-support-services>.

Information contained in this Handbook was gathered from a variety of websites and other resources including:

- [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org) (**Generations United**)
- [www.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa](http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa)
- [www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Continuum-of-Care-Reform](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Continuum-of-Care-Reform)
- [www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program)
- [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org) (**The National Child Traumatic Stress Network**)



# Glossary of Terms

<p><b>211 San Diego</b></p>	<p>The region’s trusted source for access to community, health, social, and disaster services—24 hours a day, 365 days a year. By simply dialing 2-1-1, the call is free, confidential, and available in more than 200 languages. They also provide access to more than 6,000 services and resources through their online database (<a href="http://www.211sandiego.org">www.211sandiego.org</a>). This website also features a dedicated page for kinship families with helpful resources and updates about special events (<a href="http://www.211sandiego.org/grandparents">www.211sandiego.org/grandparents</a>).</p>
<p><b>Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)</b></p>	<p>A financial benefit to cover child-rearing expenses for a child who has been adopted through Child Welfare Services.</p>
<p><b>Adult Protective Services (APS)</b></p>	<p>Serves adults 60 and older and dependent adults 18 and older who are harmed, or threatened with harm, to ensure their right to safety and dignity. Investigates elder and dependent adult abuse, including cases of neglect and abandonment, as well as physical, sexual, and financial abuse.</p>
<p><b>Aging &amp; Independence Services (AIS)</b></p>	<p>A department within the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency that provides assistance, information, referrals, and support to older adults and people living with disabilities, as well as their family members, through a variety of services that promote safe, healthy, and vital living.</p>
<p><b>Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) Funds</b></p>	<p>Funding for eligible approved relative caregivers on behalf of non-federally eligible children in an amount equal to the basic foster care rate paid to Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) providers.</p>
<p><b>CalFresh</b></p>	<p>Provides monthly food benefits to individuals and families with low income; is known federally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly known as "Food Stamps").</p>
<p><b>California Department of Social Services (CDSS)</b></p>	<p>A state agency for many programs defined as part of the social safety net, and is within the auspices of the California Health and Human Services Agency. Distributes Federal and State funds for adoptions, foster care, aid to the disabled, family crisis counseling, subsistence payments to poor families with children, child welfare services and many other efforts.</p>
<p><b>California Work Opportunity &amp; Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)</b></p>	<p>Provides temporary cash aid and services to eligible families with minor children and helps to move families with children from dependency to self-sufficiency through employment. Aid may continue for some eligible children.</p>

# Glossary of Terms

<p><b>Caregiver Authorization Affidavit</b></p>	<p>A document available to grandparents and other relatives raising minor children without parental involvement. It authorizes a caregiver to enroll a child in public school and obtain educational and medical services for the child.</p>
<p><b>Child &amp; Family Team Meetings (CFT)</b></p>	<p>A group of people that includes the youth, family, and their natural (informal) and formal support network invested in the youth and family's success. The CFT creates one unified teaming and meeting process.</p>
<p><b>Child Support</b></p>	<p>An ongoing, periodic payment made by a parent for the financial benefit of a child following the end of a marriage or other relationship.</p>
<p><b>Child Welfare Services (CWS)</b></p>	<p>Committed to excellence in the delivery of culturally competent, family-centered and child-focused protective services. Investigates reports of suspected child abuse and neglect and intervenes with families who do not meet the minimum community standards of health and safety as required by law. Provides services to families that need assistance in the protection and care of their children; arranges for children to live with kin or with foster families when they are not safe at home; and arranges for reunification, adoption, or other permanent family connections for children leaving foster care.</p>
<p><b>County Probation Department (CPD)</b></p>	<p>Operates as an arm of the Court, and is responsible for services required by the Adult and Juvenile Courts, including pretrial assessments, probation, post-trial alternative custody, and juvenile detention.</p>
<p><b>Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)</b></p>	<p>Individuals appointed by a judge in a court of law to represent the interests of a person who is unable to represent his or her own interests. In other words, a special advocate speaks for someone who cannot speak for himself (such as a child), giving that person a legal voice.</p>
<p><b>Domestic Violence (DV)</b></p>	<p>Violence or other abuse by one person against another in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation. It may be termed intimate partner violence when committed by a spouse or partner in an intimate relationship against the other spouse or partner, and can take place in heterosexual or same-sex relationships, or between former spouses or partners.</p>

# Glossary of Terms

<p><b>Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)</b></p>	<p>A federally mandated service which provides preventive and comprehensive health services for children from birth up to age 21 who are eligible for Medicaid (known as Medi-Cal in California). It provides critical services to improve the health of infants, children, and adolescents. It provides a way for children to get medical exams, checkups, follow-up treatment, and special care they need to make sure they enjoy the benefits of good health.</p>
<p><b>Family Court</b></p>	<p>Oversees actions regarding divorce, legal separation, annulment, parentage, child custody, visitation, support (child and spousal), domestic violence restraining orders, and family-related issues.</p>
<p><b>Family Maintenance (FM)</b></p>	<p>Time-limited protective services for families in which social workers work with the family and the child remains in the home.</p>
<p><b>Family Resource Centers (FRC)</b></p>	<p>Community-based, family-focused, and culturally-sensitive facilities operated by the County of San Diego that provide programs and services based on the needs of the families, such as CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and more.</p>
<p><b>Family Reunification (FR)</b></p>	<p>Process of returning children in temporary, out-of-home care to their family of origin. The goal is to assist parents in removing barriers to reunification including strengthening parenting skills, promoting child development, finding stable housing/employment, connecting with mental health or drug and alcohol treatment, and facilitating parent-child visitations.</p>
<p><b>Formal Caregivers</b></p>	<p>Caregivers who have a child placed in their home by Child Welfare Services (CWS) due to abuse or neglect by the parent(s). The child is a dependent of Juvenile Court; care and control of the child falls under CWS.</p>
<p><b>Foster Care Funds</b></p>	<p>This term refers to money and Medi-Cal benefits for the support of a child while the child is a dependent of juvenile court.</p>
<p><b>Head Start</b></p>	<p>A federal program that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and families.</p>
<p><b>Health and Human Services Agency (HHS)</b></p>	<p>One of four groups within San Diego County government. Child Welfare Services and Aging &amp; Independence Services fall under this group, as do Behavioral Health Services and Family Resource Centers.</p>

# Glossary of Terms

<p><b>Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)</b></p>	<p>Gives tribal governments a strong voice concerning child custody proceedings that involve Native American children, by allocating tribes exclusive jurisdiction over the case when the child resides on, or is domiciled on, the reservation, or when the child is a ward of a tribe; also gives concurrent, but presumptive, jurisdiction over non-reservation Native Americans' foster care placement proceedings.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Education Program (IEP)</b></p>	<p>Both a process and a written document developed for a public school child who needs special education.</p>
<p><b>Informal Caregivers</b></p>	<p>Caregivers who have an informal agreement with the child's parent(s) to raise the child, but have not had any legal involvement with the local Child Welfare Agency and do not have legal guardianship.</p>
<p><b>Juvenile Court</b></p>	<p>Conducts proceedings involving children and youth under the age of 18 and nonminor dependents 18 to 21 years of age. The primary role is to ensure public safety and to protect each youth under its jurisdiction. Promotes juvenile rehabilitation and protects children who are or may become dependents of the court.</p>
<p><b>Kinship Caregivers</b></p>	<p>Caregivers who are raising a family member's child, such as a grandparent raising a grandchild, an aunt/uncle raising a niece/nephew, an older sibling raising a younger sibling. Can also refer to caregivers raising a child they are not related to, but are like family to, such as a close family friend or godparent. These types of families are also referred to as "kinship families".</p>
<p><b>Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (KinGAP)</b></p>	<p>A California state financial benefit to cover child-rearing expenses for a child whose relative has taken guardianship of him/her through Child Welfare Services.</p>
<p><b>Medi-Cal</b></p>	<p>This medical assistance program is California's Medicaid program serving low-income individuals, including families, seniors, persons with disabilities, children in foster care, pregnant women, and childless adults with incomes below 138% of federal poverty level.</p>

# Glossary of Terms

<b>Non-Relative Extended Family Member (NREFM)</b>	An adult caregiver who has an established familial relationship with a relative of the child or familial or mentoring relationship with the child (such as a close family friend or godparent).
<b>Permanent Placement (PP)</b>	A juvenile is placed by the court in the custody of the Department of Human Services or in another out-of-home placement until there is a permanent order of custody, guardianship, or other permanent placement for the juvenile.
<b>Probate Court</b>	Manages decedents' estates/trusts, guardianship of minors, and conservatorship of adults who are unable to provide for their personal needs or manage their financial resources.
<b>Resource Family Approval (RFA)</b>	A family-friendly and child-centered resource family approval process implemented statewide on January 1, 2017, to replace previous multiple processes for licensing foster family homes and approving relatives and non-relative extended family members as foster care providers, and approving families for legal guardianship or adoption.
<b>Resource Parent/Family (RP)</b>	An individual or family that is determined to have successfully met the application and assessment criteria necessary for providing care for a child or non-minor dependent who is under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court, or otherwise in the care of a county child welfare agency or probation department.
<b>Respite Care</b>	A break or rest for caregivers, typically provided through an agency.
<b>San Diego Regional Center</b>	One of 21 regional centers that provide services to persons with developmental disabilities in California. Any resident of San Diego or Imperial County believed to have a developmental disability may apply for services.
<b>Social Security Survivor Benefit (for children)</b>	Intended to replace lost household income following a parent's death; they can be used to pay for expenses associated with housing, feeding, clothing, educating, and providing other necessities of life.

# Glossary of Terms

<b>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</b>	A federal program that provides additional income for older and disabled people with little to no income. This program provides participants with monthly cash distributions to help them meet their basic needs.
<b>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</b>	Provides temporary financial assistance for pregnant women and families with one or more dependent children. Provides financial assistance to help pay for food, shelter, utilities, and expenses other than medical.
<b>Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)</b>	A process that ends the legal parent-child relationship.
<b>Welfare &amp; Institutions Code (WIC)</b>	One of the sets of legal codes enacted by the California State Legislature, which together form the general statutory law of California.
<b>Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)</b>	A federal assistance program for healthcare and nutrition of low-income pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and children under the age of five.

# We value your feedback!

Please take a few minutes to fill out the questions below to help us continually improve this Handbook. Your responses can be confidential and there is no need to provide your name unless you would like someone to contact you for direct input.

**This Handbook helped increase my knowledge about resources and supportive services.**

Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

**As a result of reading the information in this Handbook, I feel better able to manage my role as a kinship caregiver.**

Strongly Agree    Agree    Neutral    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

**Are there any important topics and/or resources you feel are missing from this Handbook that you would suggest be included in future versions?**

**Did you find any information that was misleading, confusing, or inaccurate? If so, please reference the information and page number.**

**Would you like to talk directly with someone about feedback regarding this Handbook? If so, please provide your contact information below:**

Name (Optional):

Email Address and/or Phone Number (Optional):

**Please detach and mail (or scan and email) this page to:**

**Mail:** YMCA Kinship Support Program

4451 30th Street

San Diego, CA 92116

**Email:** [kinshipyfs@ymcasd.org](mailto:kinshipyfs@ymcasd.org)

# Thank you!

