



Resource Family Orientation

Video

Kern County Department of Human Services Opportunities, Options, & Empowerment



Vision

We create remarkable experiences building resiliency, safety, value and respect. We are passionate and committed to transforming the lives of those we serve and those who serve.



Core Purpose

To care for and enrich the lives of children, families and individuals in our community.



Mission

We partner with children, individuals, families, and the community to provide customer centered services, ensuring safe, protected, and permanent homes for children and employment preparation for adults.

What is the Purpose of Foster Care?

- The purpose of foster care is to keep children safe while in out-of-home care with a Primary goal of returning them safely to their parent/guardian.
- Concurrently, child welfare services are provided to ensure a child has a permanent home IF they cannot return to their parent/guardian.
- Unlike Adoption Agencies that focus solely on matching families.

Annually about 89.11% of children in our care are reunified with their parents (Statistics from the last six years)



Why are Children in Foster Care?

● They become Dependent Children of the court (under WIC 300)

- Moved due to child maltreatment by parent or guardian
- The goal is reunification with their parents or to maintain stable placement for permanency

● They become Wards of the Court (under WIC 600)

- Moved due to delinquent behavior and the home is not suitable
- The goal is rehabilitation, reunification and permanency

Both agencies want the same outcome:

Permanency - Only when a child can not reunify with their parents.



Who are the children in Foster Care?



Children who may have experienced:

- Neglect or abandonment
- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Human Trafficking

These children and youth include:

- All age groups: 0-17 & non-minor dependents
- Teen parents with their babies
- Babies born with prenatal drug or alcohol exposure
- Children with special medical needs

There are over 1,000 county approved resource families. Families open to placement of older youth and children with special needs are particularly in need.

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Probation Foster Youth

- You are typically 13-17 years old
- Similar to Child Welfare, if these youth do not have a suitable home, care, custody and control can be vested with the Probation Department.
- When this happens, the youth is identified as a foster youth and is eligible for a foster care services and support.
- While deemed a Ward of the Court, most just need a resource family for stability and success.

If you are interested in being a resource family for a Probation Youth, please let the Social Workers or Deputy Probation Officer know

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Cultural Considerations

- Race and Ethnicity
- Religion
- Nationality
- LGBTQ+ Youth
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, & Questioning
- Native American & Eskimo
 - ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act)

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Youth Preparing to Live Independently

Foster Youth need your help to prepare for Independent Living!

- Employment
- College
- Self-Reliance
- Ongoing Positive Relationships

Who are the children in Foster Care?



Non-Minor Dependents (NMD)

Assembly Bill (AB) 12

- Young adults may leave foster care at age 18, but receive services until age 21

NMDs need your help!

- Mentoring/family connections
- Housing
- Guidance with college or vocational training



What do Children in Foster Care want?

Children and Youth in Foster Care want to stay connected to family and...

- love their parents and want to be together as a family
- need a caring home with unconditional love
- want to feel safe in an environment that supports personal growth and identity including cultural sensitivity and religious freedom



The Juvenile Court Process...



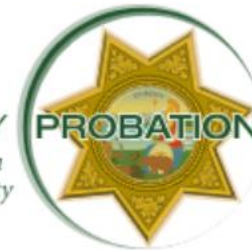
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF KERN

Child Protective Services

- Child Dependency

KERN COUNTY
*Commitment to a
Safe Community*



Juvenile Probation

- Wards of the Court

Child Welfare Court Process (W&IC 300)

A youth is temporarily separated from his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) due to substantiated allegations of child abuse or neglect.

Detention Hearing

Court decides if a child will remain in foster care while it is determined if allegations are true and what the plan for the family will be.

Jurisdictional/ Dispositional Hearing

Court decides if a child will remain in foster care while it is determined if allegations are true and what the plan for the family will be.

Review Hearings

Every 6 months a hearing is scheduled to evaluate progress of the parents in their case plan or the child in his/her permanency plan if parents are not receiving services

366.26
or 366.3
Hearing

Permanency planning hearings for long-term permanency including Adoption, Legal Guardianship, Fit and Willing Relative, or Another Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA)

Juvenile Probation Court Process (W&IC 600)

youth is arrested for committing an offense and temporarily detained Kern's Youth Detention Center.



James G. Bowles YOUTH DETENTION CENTER

Detention Hearing

Continues detention in Kern's Youth Detention Center.

Dispositional Hearing

Care, Custody and Control is taken, and youth is ordered a rehabilitation plan. An appropriate placement for the youth is sought.

Permanency Hearings

Every 6 months to evaluate progress of youth's rehabilitation and progress toward reunification and/or permanency.

Who can be a Resource Parent?



Applicant Qualifications and Requirements

1

Age

You must be at least 18 years of age.

2

Health

You must be in good physical and mental health.

3

Mentor

You must be willing to assist children and youth in preparing for adulthood

4

Parenting Skills

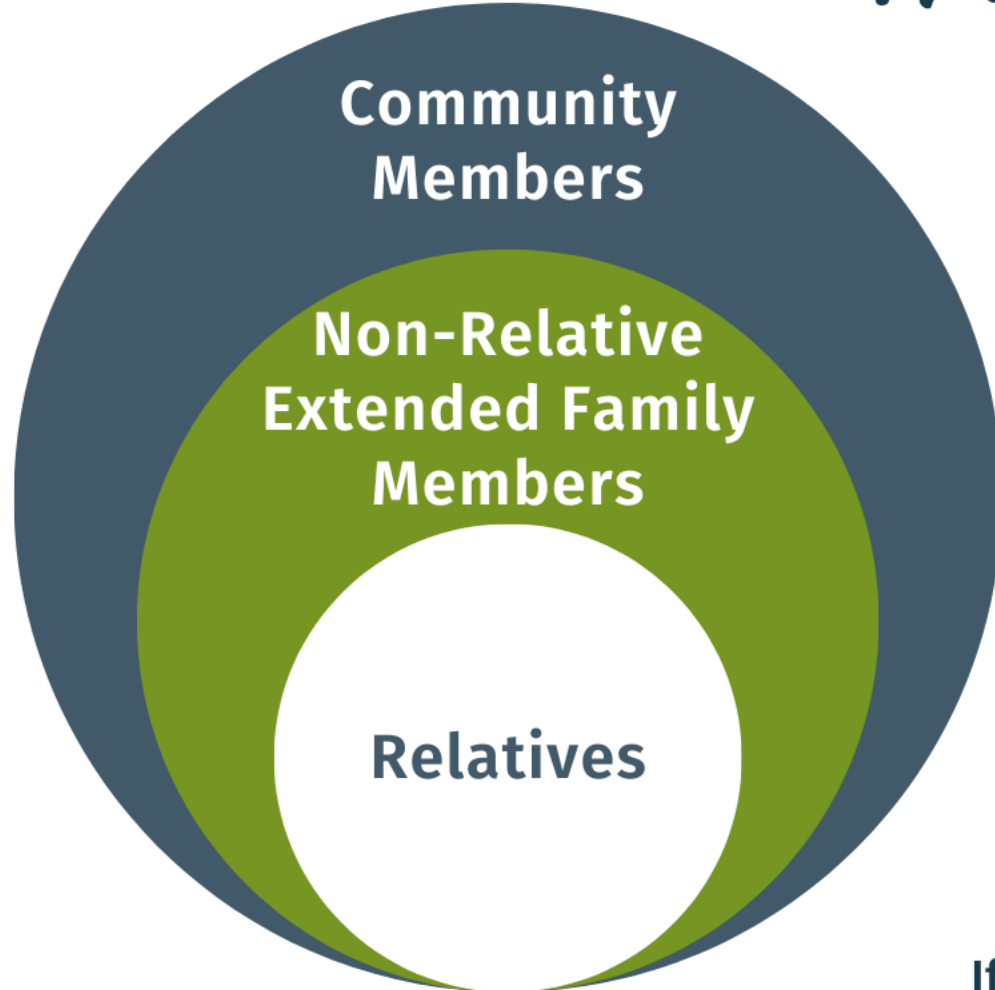
You must use effective parenting skills with children who have been victims of abuse/neglect.

Who can Foster or Adopt?

- ◆ **Single or Married**
- ◆ **All races, ethnicities, ages or gender identities**
- ◆ **Related or unrelated**



Who can become Resource Parents?



Relatives:

- Grandparents, aunts & uncles, and adult siblings have **PRIORITY** for placement until disposition of case.

Non-Relative Extended Family Members (NREFM):

- After these relatives, the preference is for family friends or others that the child has a relationship with.

Community Members:

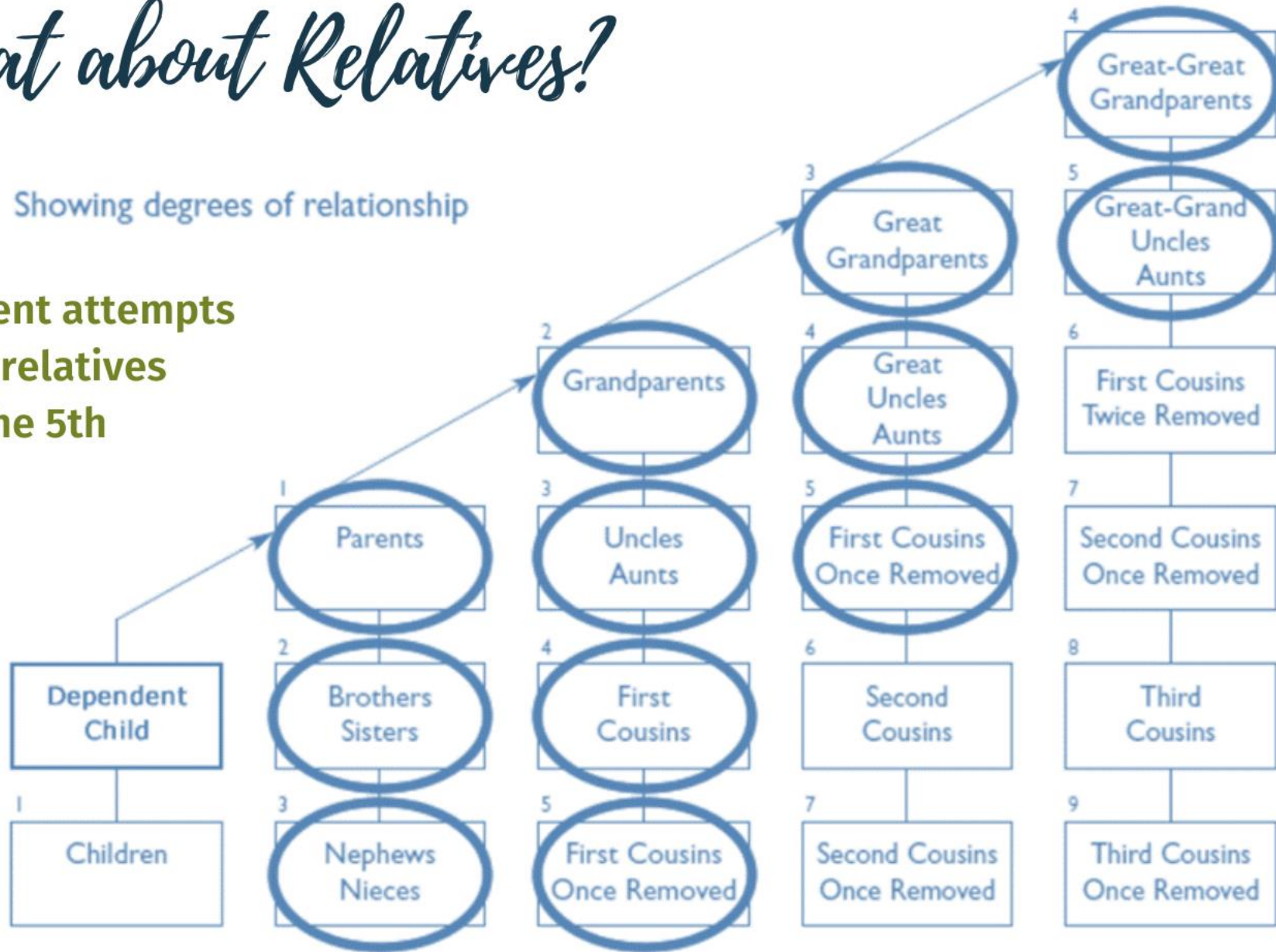
- Any caring and consistent adult able to provide a loving home can may be considered as a resource parent.

If placement with relative or family friend is not possible, the goal is for the children to maintain contact with family if possible. The Department attempts to place with relatives first!

What about Relatives?

Showing degrees of relationship

The Department attempts to place with relatives first with in the 5th degree...



Roles of Resource Parents and Agencies

- Resource Parent
- Child Protective Services (CPS) Social Worker
- Juvenile Probation Officer
- Resource Family Approval Social Worker





What is the Role of a Resource Parent?

- Provide safe loving homes
- Commit to development and success of children and families
 - Help children/youth cope with trauma of abuse and separation from his/her home
 - Mentor the child's birth parents when possible and appropriate
- Maintain a lifelong connection to children whenever possible
 - When in a child's best interest
 - Encourage and support visits with birth family
 - Even after adoption is finalized



What is the Role of a Resource Parent?

- Encourage reunification with parents/guardians
- Be ready to provide a permanent family when reunification is not successful
- Give children/youth a safe, stable and nurturing environment
- Encourage and supervise school participation & attendance



What is the Role of a CPS Social Worker (SW) and Juvenile Probation Officer (PO)?

Each child is assigned a CPS SW or PO depending on why they were brought into care.

- What does a SW or PO do:
 - Arrange and make placement decisions
 - Monitor a child in foster care
 - Are the Case manager for the child and family

CPS SW/PO is Resource Parent/Families link to the agency and court.



What is the Role of a Resource Family Approval Social Worker (RFA SW)?

Each Resource Family has an RFA Social Worker who:

- Processes applications
- Completes background checks on families
- Completes Home and Grounds Inspections and Family Evaluations
- Makes approval decisions
- Monitors for compliance with state regulations



What is a Resource Family Home?

Video



Specialized Care

- Mental, Physical & Behavioral Needs
- Additional training & funding may be available



Emergency Foster Care

- Immediate, short-term care, children ages 0-17 years



Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)

- Children with tribal affiliation placed with members of the tribe



Ongoing Care

- Children, youth & sibling sets of all ages, especially older youth
- Temporary or Permanent



Resource Family Approval Comprehensive Assessment Process

From Orientation to Written Report

State of California's Written Directives for Resource Family Approval (RFA)

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.

California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

- the state authority responsible for establishing and maintaining standards for resource family homes and childcare institutions.
<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program>

CDSS Written Directives

- Set of standards and laws in which Resource Families are approved and managed by.
- Once approved, a Resource Family is eligible to care for related and unrelated children in out-of-home placement.
- An approved Resource Family is approved for adoption or legal guardianship as well as ongoing fostering.



RFA Comprehensive Assessment Process

1



Orientation
(What you are
completing now)

2



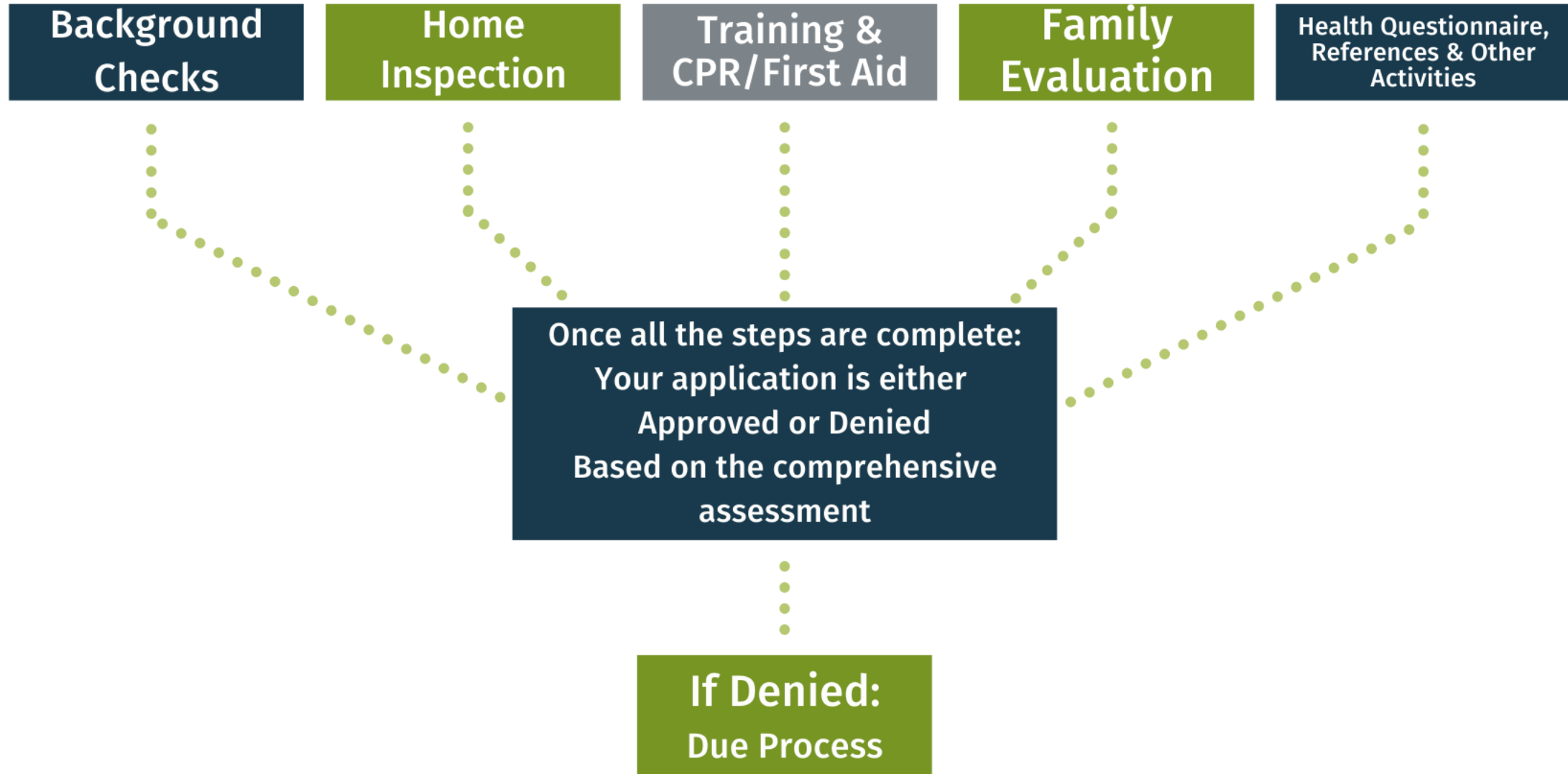
**Complete an
Online
Application**

3



**Complete a
Comprehensive
Assessment**

Comprehensive Assessment includes:



APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Last Name	First Name
Address	City
Phone	Email

RFA Application Process

Resource Family Application Process

Kern County uses the eAdopt web based system

- Online application process
- Assigned via email
- Assigned to an RFA social worker who will assist you through the process

Options for assistance:

- If no computer, or internet access, your assigned RFA social worker will assist you with the process
- A worker of the day is also available to help with the application



Resource Family Application Process

5 STEPS TO COMPLETE RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL APPLICATION PROCESS



Step 1

Complete an RFA Orientation Online

<https://www.kcdhs.org/services/resource-foster-families/orientation-training/orientation-online>

Step 2*

Receive your online e-Adopt temporary password to log-in, create your profile and begin the application process.

Step 3*

Continue the online application process by completing all of the health and safety clearances for family home approval.

Step 4*

Schedule a home and grounds inspection. Your RFA social worker will call you to discuss what to expect and how to prepare.

Step 5*

Complete family interviews and a family evaluation to receive your final report of approval. Your RFA social worker will review your final report with you.

An approved Resource Family may take placement of a child in their home.

***Step 2** - Call (661) 873-2800 to ask for the RFA worker of the day, or visit the Columbus Center at 3711 Columbus Street if you need help, have questions, or want to use a computer to access your online e-Adopt account during normal business hours: 7:30 am – 4:00 pm.

***Step 3** – Things to do as part of the application process:

- a. Live Scan (fingerprint) all adults in the home and those adults who are regularly present. Call (661) 631-6879 to schedule appointments.
- b. Request criminal record exemption as needed. Forms are on e-Adopt or call your RFA social worker.
- c. Complete the Health Questionnaire form and your RFA Social Worker will assess to determine whether further medical health clearance is needed by a licensed health care professional.
- d. CPR/First Aid certification. Call (661) 319-1836 to register.
- e. Attend Pre-Service Training. Call (661) 395-4991 to register.

PLEASE NOTE: Being an approved Resource Family does not guarantee a child will be placed in your home. A child's social worker must consider the best interests of the child before placing a child in a home.

Resource Family Application Process

Online or Paper Application:

- Provide your email address to RFAinbox@kerndhs.com after completing the online orientation.
- You will receive a link to access and set up your personal account. You have 48 hours to access the link before it expires. You may have your password resent by asking your RFA Worker or email RFAinbox@kerndhs.com.
- Complete and submit an online application. A Social Service Worker will be assigned to further assist with your application.
- Email RFAinbox@kerndhs.com to request a paper application.

Resource Family Application Process

E-Adopt web-based system

- Provide your e-mail address during the Orientation
- You will be emailed a temporary password
- Create your profile
- Complete the application
- State requires an original signature on the application
- Follow your application progress online
- If no computer access, a paper copy will be made available, or a computer kiosk is available at Columbus Center
- If you have any questions you can call 661-873-2800.

RESOURCE FAMILY APPLICATION

County Use Only
County: _____

Instructions: This is an application for Resource Family Approval by a County. Please type or print clearly.

☐ Application ☐ Other (Specify): _____

I. APPLICANT(S): EACH APPLICANT MUST COMPLETE A CRIMINAL RECORD STATEMENT RFA 01B.

First	Middle	Last
Applicant One:		
Previous Name Used: <i>*including maiden name</i>		Highest Level of Education Completed
Date of Birth	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Email Address (Optional)		Cell Phone Number
Name/Address of Employer		Work Phone Number
		Occupation
		Annual Income

First	Middle	Last
Applicant Two:		
Previous Name Used: <i>*including maiden name</i>		Highest Level of Education Completed
Date of Birth	Gender	Race/Ethnicity
Email Address (Optional)		Cell Phone Number
Name/Address of Employer		Work Phone Number
		Occupation
		Annual Income

If more than one applicant, what is your relationship? Please check one.			
☐ Married	☐ Domestic Partnership	☐ Related (Family Member)	☐ Cohabitants
☐ Other _____			

Resource Family Application Process

- Printing forms at your convenience. (i.e. LiveScans, Health Questionnaire etc.)
- Scanning and uploading all required documents (i.e. Picture ID, income verification, etc.)
- View important documents (i.e. Home Health & Safety Assessment etc.)
- Have access to documents that can be useful (i.e. Tips on how to prepare for your home assessment)
- Receive important emails regarding your application status and reminders of yearly trainings.
- Keep track of your application status.

For additional information please contact your
Resource Family Social Service Worker

Resource Family Application Process

Paper Application Process

- Provide your mailing address to RFAinbox@kerndhs.com
- A paper application and required forms will be mailed out to you with a self-addressed envelope.
- You can mail your signed application in the self-addressed envelope or drop it off in person at the drop box located at 3711 Columbus Avenue Bakersfield, Ca 93306.
- Once an application is completed and received you will be assigned a Resource Family Approval Social Service Worker.

RESOURCE FAMILY APPLICATION

County Use Only
County: _____

Instructions: This is an application for Resource Family Approval by a County. Please type or print clearly.

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		Occupation
		Annual Income

If more than one applicant, what is your relationship? Please check one.			
☐ Married	☐ Domestic Partnership	☐ Related (Family Member)	☐ Cohabitants
☐ Other _____			

Background Checks

The Resource Family Approval “RFA Background Assessment Guide” is available as a resource for the RFA background check procedures.

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program>

- All adults (18 years and older) residing, or regularly present, in the home must complete a background check.
 - A review of an individual's state and federal criminal record information will be completed.
 - All substantiated allegations of child abuse and severe neglect listed on the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI) will be reviewed and assessed.
- All adults residing or regularly present in the home that have lived in another state within the last five years will be required to complete an Adam Walsh clearance.
- - Additional Clearances:
 - CPS Clearance, Megan's Law registered sex offender clearance, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) check for an applicant or any adult residing in the home.
 - Clearance of prior licensing history and criminal record exemption denial or rescissions maintained by other agencies.
 - Criminal Exemptions are subject to review and are granted or denied.

Home Inspection

The home health and safety inspection is a health and safety assessment of the home, grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas. In addition, a review of the applicant's ability to care and supervise children.

The home inspection consists of but not limited to:

- Living area (fireplace/heater, carpets, and furniture clean and in good repair)
- Bedrooms (linens, lighting, furniture, closet/drawer space)
- Kitchen area (food, knives, cleaning supplies)
- Bathrooms (safe, clean, & operating)
- Yard (free from hazards & debris)
- Guns/weapons & ammunition (safely stored)
- Pool/bodies of water (made inaccessible)
- Capacity limited to 6 children in the home including adopted, biological, guardianship, and children of a Non-Minor Dependents (18 years - 21 years old) per home
- Capacity will be determined by your RFA social worker in consultation with you

Preparing for your Home Inspection



Child Proof your Home

- Install safety devices
- Prevent access to dangerous items



First Aid Kits

- First Aid Kit
- First Aid Manual



Pet Recommendations

- Vaccinations
- License



To help you prepare for the Home Inspection...

The following slides provide:

- Examples of homes ready for inspection.
- Examples of homes with hazards to a child's health/safety.



**Is your home
clean, safe,
sanitary, and
in good
repair?**



Think Safety!

Are there unsafe items in child's reach? Are the counters & tables too cluttered to clean or use?

What should a prospective child's bedroom have?



Applicant(s) shall ensure each child has sufficient storage space.

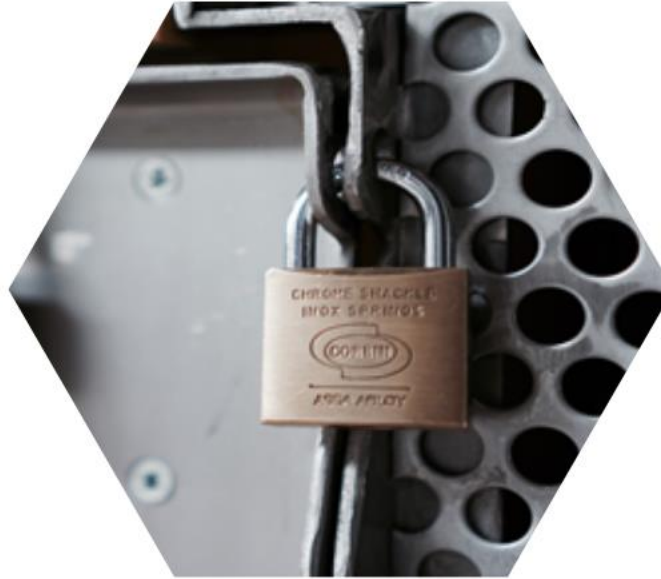
Applicant(s) should ensure that each prospective child's bedroom have an operable window or door that ensures a safe, direct emergency exit to the outside.

Applicant(s) shall ensure there is appropriate bedding for each individual child.

How to store cleaning solutions, poisons, and dangerous weapons?



Resource Families shall ensure that all poisons such as pesticides, paint products, antifreeze and other dangerous items are stored in a locked storage area or out of the child's reach.



All Household items such as knives, medications, and cleaning solutions should only be accessible to children if age appropriate and monitored.

Ammo must be stored in a locked container, separate from firearms.



Resource Families shall ensure that firearms and other dangerous weapons are stored in locked container such as lock box or gun safe.

Note: In lieu of Locked storage resource families may use trigger locks or cable locks as described in penal code section 16860.

Acceptable vs. Not Acceptable



Not Acceptable

Blocked door, items hanging or stored in child's reach.



Acceptable

Clean/safe access to sports items and recycling.

A photograph of a child's birthday party in a backyard. The yard is decorated with colorful tables (yellow, blue, red), chairs, and a large green inflatable slide. A wooden fence and trees are in the background.

Resource families & applicant(s) shall ensure that the yard or outdoor activity spaces are free from hazards that may endanger the health and safety of a child or NMD.

What are the safety regulations for swimming pools?



Pool Covers

Resource families or applicant(s) shall ensure that swimming pools, fixed-in-place wading pools, hot tubs, spas, and similar bodies of water are secured and inaccessible to: Children under 10 years of age; a child/NMD and parents of a child/NMD who is developmentally, mentally or physically disabled. Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard shall be taken into consideration as well.

What are the safety regulations for swimming pools?



Resource families or applicant(s) shall ensure pool safety using of the following:

- Pool enclosure (Fences)
- Certified Safety pool cover. (All pool enclosures and covers are subject to health and safety codes 115921,115922,115923.)

Note: Exit alarms may only be used if it is not structurally possible to use an enclosure or cover.

**Pool Fences must
be 5ft or 60in. tall**

What about ponds, creeks, or fountains?

Resource families or applicant(s) shall ensure secure and creeks, ponds, fountains, lakes etc. using of the following:

- Enclosure or cover
- Certified Safety pool cover. (All pool enclosures and covers are subject to health and safety codes 115921,115922,115923.)

A resource family shall apply the reasonable and parent prudent standard, as set forth in Written Directive section 11-12, when securing any body of water and the level of access a child has to it.

Note: Exit alarms may only be used if it is not structurally possible to use an enclosure or cover.



Training Requirements

Each applicant needs to complete a minimum of 12 hours of pre-approval training prior to becoming an approved Resource Family.

The training requirements consists of but not limited to:



Pre-Approval Training

- 12 Hour Course- Certificate provided upon completion
 - In-person and on-line options
 - Mandated Reporter Training included
 - Call 661-395-4991 to sign-up
 - Free Annual Training
 - 8 hours required annually



CPR and First Aid Training

- CPR/First Aid must be completed within 90 days of RFA Approval
 - Required to be renewed every 2 years for approved homes/families
 - Call 661-395-4991 to sign-up

Health Questionnaire



The application requirements consists of but not limited to:

- ◆ Health Questionnaire
 - Each applicant must submit a Health Questionnaire that includes the applicant's medical history and medications

- ◆ As deemed necessary, the county reserves the right to require an applicant to complete a health screening from a health professional to verify the applicant is in good physical health.

Family Evaluation



The application requirements consist of but not limited to:

- ◆ A minimum of 2 in-person interviews with applicants (Most often in the home):
 - One individual interview of each applicant
 - One joint interview with both applicants (if applicable)
 - A minimum of one separate face to face interview with all other persons residing in the home (Example: other adults and children).
 - These conversations allow for more thoughtful matches of children and families.

If an applicant refuses to participate in an interview, the County shall deny the application

Permanency Assessment



The application requirements consist of but not limited to:

- ◆ Willingness and suitability to provide permanency (foster, adoption, legal guardianship) to a child or non-minor dependent at the time of undergoing RFA process.
- ◆ Please note: While RFA includes a general permanency assessment, when a specific child's case goes to adoptions, there may be additional requirements to assess suitability as a prospective adoptive parent for that child. You may collect the documents below and provide them to the RFA social worker for future use in an adoption.



May include Health Screening, marriage certificate, and divorce decree

Reference Letter Requirements



The application requirements consist of but not limited to:

- ◆ 2-3 Reference Letters
 - Criminal exemptions will require 3 reference letters
- ◆
 - Of your good character and ability to provide a safe environment.
 - From a co-worker, neighbor and close friends (cannot be someone in the same household).
 - We will contact your references by phone, mail and/or email.



Written Reports



The application requirements consist of but not limited to:

◆ Final Written Reports

- Summary and analysis of the comprehensive assessment and a determination of applicant's capacity to foster.
- Agency and applicant receive a copy.
- Provides approval or denial of application.

Funding Benefits

For funding to care for a specific child, please speak to the child's assigned social worker/primary worker.

- **Emergency Caregiver Funding:** Temporary Emergency Assistance is available for relatives that are caring for relative children on an emergency or compelling reason placement while going through the RFA Process.
- **Foster Care** funding is reimbursement provided to a caregiver on a monthly basis to care for a child placed in a resource home. Medi-Cal is available.
- **Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option** is a program for approved relative caregivers with whom an eligible child is placed that will be able to receive a payment equal to the basic foster care rate. Medi-Cal is available.
- **Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)** Payments provides financial and other supports to help adoptive families meet the basic and unique needs of children in care, including Medi-Cal and monthly payments until age 18. In some circumstances, if the youth have a disability, the AAP payments and Medi-Cal may continue to age 21.
- **Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP)** Program offers financial assistance and Medi-Cal for a child who is placed with an approved relative legal guardian. The payment cannot exceed the amount the child would have received if he/she remained in foster care.

Resource Family Application

What you need to
know!



Approval is not automatically granted.

- An applicant's comprehensive assessment must meet
- Written Directives to be approved.

**Receiving approval does not guarantee a
child will be placed in your home.**

- A child's social worker or probation officer makes placement decisions.
- Placement decisions are made in the child's best interests.
- Application process times vary
 - Emergency placements follow a stricter timeline due to California State Requirements

What if my Application is Denied?

◆ If Your Application is Denied

- You will receive a notice of action and instructions for appealing the decision.
- If the decision is not appealed on or before the due date, the action will be final.

◆ Reasons to deny may include, but are not limited to:

- Inability to cooperate or failure to meet requirements.
- Non-exemptible criminal record or child abuse allegations of a serious nature.
- Home did not meet Buildings & Grounds standards, per RFA Written Directives and Health & Safety Codes.



DENIED

Due Process

If a Resource Parent, applicant, or individual receives a:

- Notice of denial or rescission of approval,
- Notice of exemption denial or rescission,
- Notice of exclusion, that person may appeal the decision by requesting a state hearing.

***If the decision is not appealed on, or before, the due date,
the action will be final***





Adoption Process

At any point in time there are more Resource Families interested in pursuing adoption than the number of children in foster care in need of adoption.

Adoption Court Process

Disposition or Reunification Review Hearing

- Court terminates REUNIFICATION SERVICES to Parents
- Sets Selection and Implementation 366.26 Hearing within 120 Days

120 Day Child Assessment

- Prior to 366.26 hearing, Adoption social worker determines child's best interests for permanency (adoption, guardianship, or another planned permanent living arrangement)
- Visitation with parents continues
- Court report supports recommendation to terminate parental rights and identifies prospective adoptive parent or legal guardian

Selection and Implementation 366.26 Hearing (Adoption/Guardianship)

- Court terminates PARENTAL RIGHTS & visitation (for adoption cases)
- Court orders legal guardianship to be established and case is closed
- Parents may appeal within 60 days

Post Permanency Review every 6 months

- Court continues dependency & services until adoption is finalized
- Placement and child's needs are monitored

Adoption is Finalized

- Court dependency is terminated, and the case is closed

Adoption Court Process

Caregiver requirements needed to finalize adoption

- **Must be at least 10 years older than child (exceptions)**
- **Pre-adoption/post adoption services are available**
- **Including Adoption Assistance Program assistance, and Medi-Cal, until the child is 18 (or up to age 21 if certain conditions are met)**
- **Social Worker remains assigned**
- **Counseling, case management, and support groups are available**
- **Must provide verification of all marriages & dissolutions**
- **Must address child support, inheritance issues, etc.**
- **Must address plan for post-adoption sibling visitation, if applicable**



Adoption: Questions You Should Ask



To ensure the child coming into your home has the best possible chance of adoption, ask these questions before accepting a foster care placement:

- Have the parents lost previous children to adoptions?
 - Often the court will not order reunification.
 - These children usually have a greater likelihood of adoption.
- Have relatives come forward requesting placement of the child?
 - The Department always attempts to place with relatives initially
 - Relatives have preferential consideration if they apply for placement before the disposition hearing.
- Did the parents claim Native American Heritage & Does ICWA apply?
 - Agency will make ACTIVE EFFORTS to place the child with a relative or Native American family/Tribe.

****** Anyone only interested in adoption without fostering should look into Private Adoption Agencies which have less risks but are also costly. Feel free to contact Foster Family Agencies that may be of assistance and a good fit for your interests. ******

Adoption Process

Video



Finalization Process

- All of children's records are given to adopting parents
- Caregiver signs adoption assistance documents
- Legal documents are signed and approved
- Child may have new legal name
- Child now has a forever home!
- You may be contacted about participation at Child Family Team Meetings if child's siblings come into care after adoption finalization



Post Approval Responsibilities

Kern County is committed to the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) and ensuring all children receive excellent parenting, which includes collaboration and partnerships with everyone in the child's team.

Quality Parenting Initiative



What is QPI?

- The Quality Parenting Initiative is a national movement for foster care change, made up of a network of states, counties and private agencies committed to ensuring that all children in care have excellent parenting and lasting relationships so they can thrive and grow.



QPI is Based on Three Core Principles:

- Consistent excellent parenting and meaningful relationships are the most important services we can provide to children and youth in foster care.
- Research on child, youth and brain development and the effect of trauma not only demonstrates the importance of parenting and positive relationships but provides guidance on how best to support them.
- The individuals most affected by policies and practices are in the best position to design and implement change so that systems ensure excellent parenting and meaningful relationships for children who enter their care.



What does QPI look like?

- Engaging in Comfort Calls with birth parents
- Initial contact with the foster youth's parents at the time of placement, discussing the care and support of the child. Helping to ease the stress of the child and parent being separated by establishing a foundation of communication and support. The primary social worker will assist with setting up these calls and help to mediate any challenges.
- When appropriate, encourage birth parents to be involved in appointments for the child, events at school and other important milestones.
- Advocating for the youth and birth family at Child & Family Team Meetings. As a part of the child and family team, resource parents should be regularly present at these meetings and also provide their input.
- **WORKING TOWARD REUNIFICATION!**
- Supporting and helping to maintain a healthy productive relationship with birth families.



Biennial Updates:

Approved Resource Families are assessed every 24 months

- RFA Social Worker will remain your ongoing worker and will schedule:
 - Home environment check
 - Annual Training Completed
 - RFA Written Report update

Post Approval Responsibilities

Other Updates: Relocation or New Person in the home

- Always notify RFA Social Worker AND Placement Social Worker when planning to move and provide new address
- Home inspection must be approved in advance, and no more than 30 days from date of address change, or funding may be terminated
- Always notify RFA Social Worker of any significant changes in your home such as: Someone moving in or moving out.

Post Approval Responsibilities

◆ Post Approval Training (661-395-4991)

- 8 hours annually (online, virtual and in-person)
- CPR & First Aid (every 2 years)

◆ Resource Parent must report:

- Injury or illness requiring emergency medical attention or hospitalization
- Report any suspected child abuse/neglect (661-631-6011)
- ANY unusual incident or absence (including runaway)
 - Contact RFA social worker AND
 - Contact child's primary social worker



Post Approval Responsibilities

◆ General Requirements

- Ensure children receive ongoing medical, dental and educational services
- Maintain first aid supplies
- Maintain children's records and keep confidential
- Two telephone numbers and, if available, two email addresses for 24-hour contact. Telephone service must be working at all times:
 - Can be cellular, internet, or landline
 - Shall be accessible to a child/NMD unless prohibited by court order (reasonable restrictions must be approved by the placement worker)
- Emergency telephone numbers in a prominent location in the home



Post Approval Responsibilities

◆ General Requirements

- Maintain a hard copy emergency binder in the home containing
- Child/NMD's information, including, name, date of birth and any medical conditions.
 - As applicable, a child/NMD's current health care and mental health care providers names and contact information, including 24-hour contact numbers.
 - Contact information for the child/NMD's social worker and placement agency.
 - 24-hour contact information for the county child welfare agency or probation department.
- You may ask the child/NMD's social worker for a "My Journey" binder for each child/NMD placed in your home.

Post Approval Responsibilities

General Requirements

Comfort Calls

- Per Welfare and Institutions Code Section 308(a) the bio-parents SHALL be given a phone number the child can be reached at
- The phone number listed as your primary contact will be provided, unless you provide an alternate
- Goal: To make a connection and work as part of the same team for the child.
 - Ask about child's medical needs, allergies, favorite foods, routines, favorite shows, nicknames, etc...



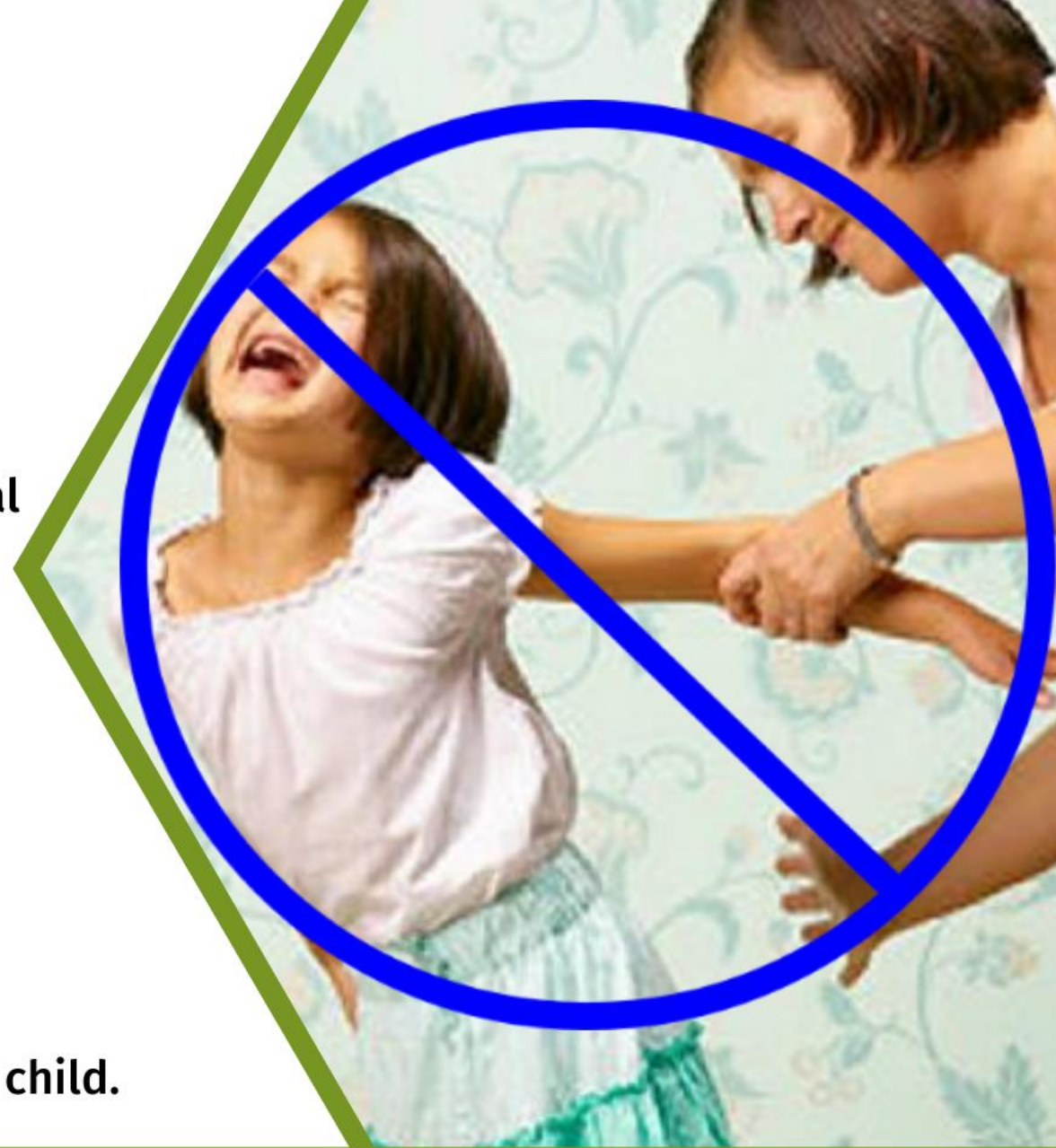
Post Approval Responsibilities

ABSOLUTELY NO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT!

- Spanking another parent's child is physical assault!
- Foster children have suffered physical and emotional abuse, spanking repeats the abuse!

PROHIBITED.....

- Spanking
 - Hitting
 - Slapping
 - Hair pulling
 - Pinching
 - Kicking, etc.
- No corporal punishment of birth child in front of foster child.



Post Approval Responsibilities

Discipline is necessary!

Consider other approved strategies:

- Time out
- Remove Privileges
- Positive Discipline
- Behavioral Management
- Counseling – Whole Family

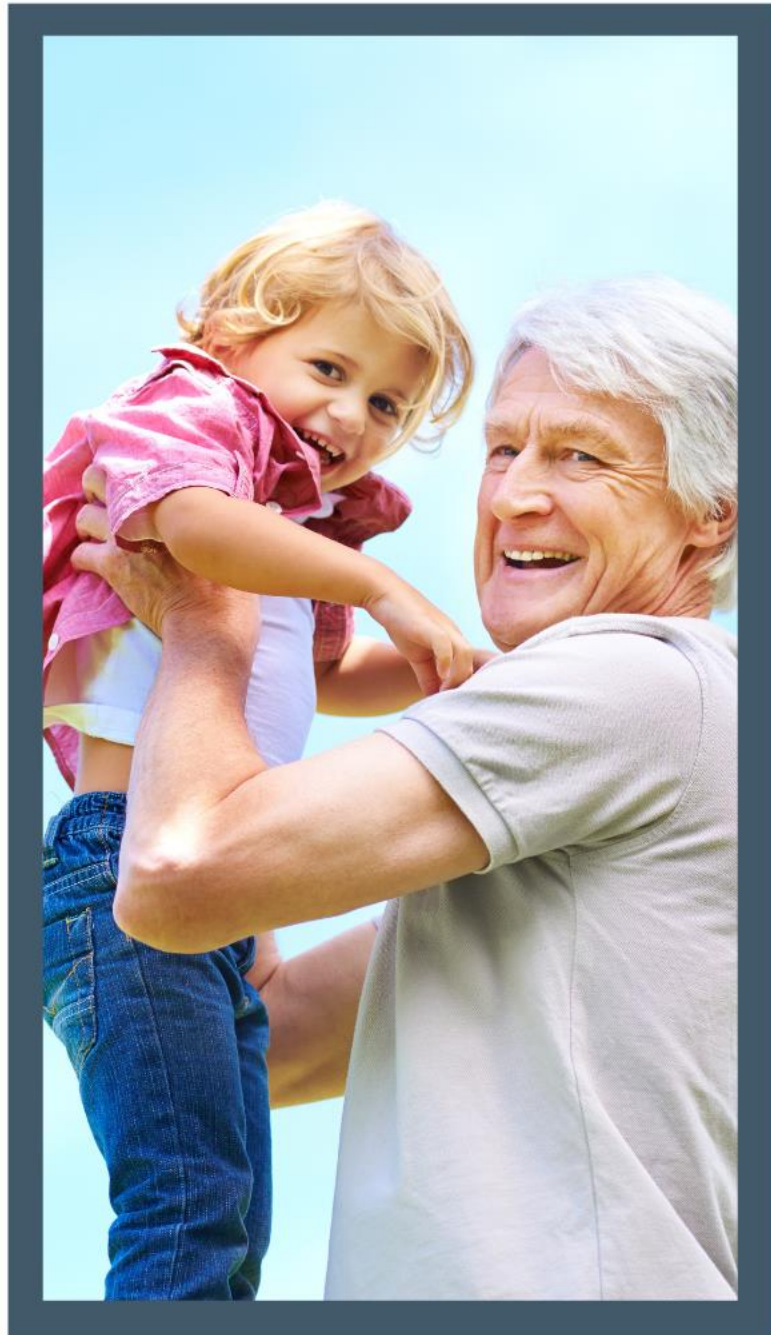


Post Approval Responsibilities

OCCASIONAL SHORT-TERM BABYSITTER

Resource parent may arrange for the occasional use of a short-term babysitter (less than 24 hours at a time)

- For care exceeding 24 hours at a time:
 - On an occasional basis only
 - Caregiver must be 18 or older
 - Cannot exceed 72 hours without social worker or probation officer approval
- Respite care, temporary care of the child in another home, can occasionally be provided but must be approved, in advance, by the child's social worker or probation officer.



Post Approval Responsibilities

Extra-Curricular Activities

Provide opportunities for and encourage a child's participation in group sports, clubs, school activities, etc.

- Include your foster child in family vacations and weekend trips
- Create a Life Book
- Scrapbook a child's stories, photos, artwork
- Encourage journaling
- Allow your foster child to dream!

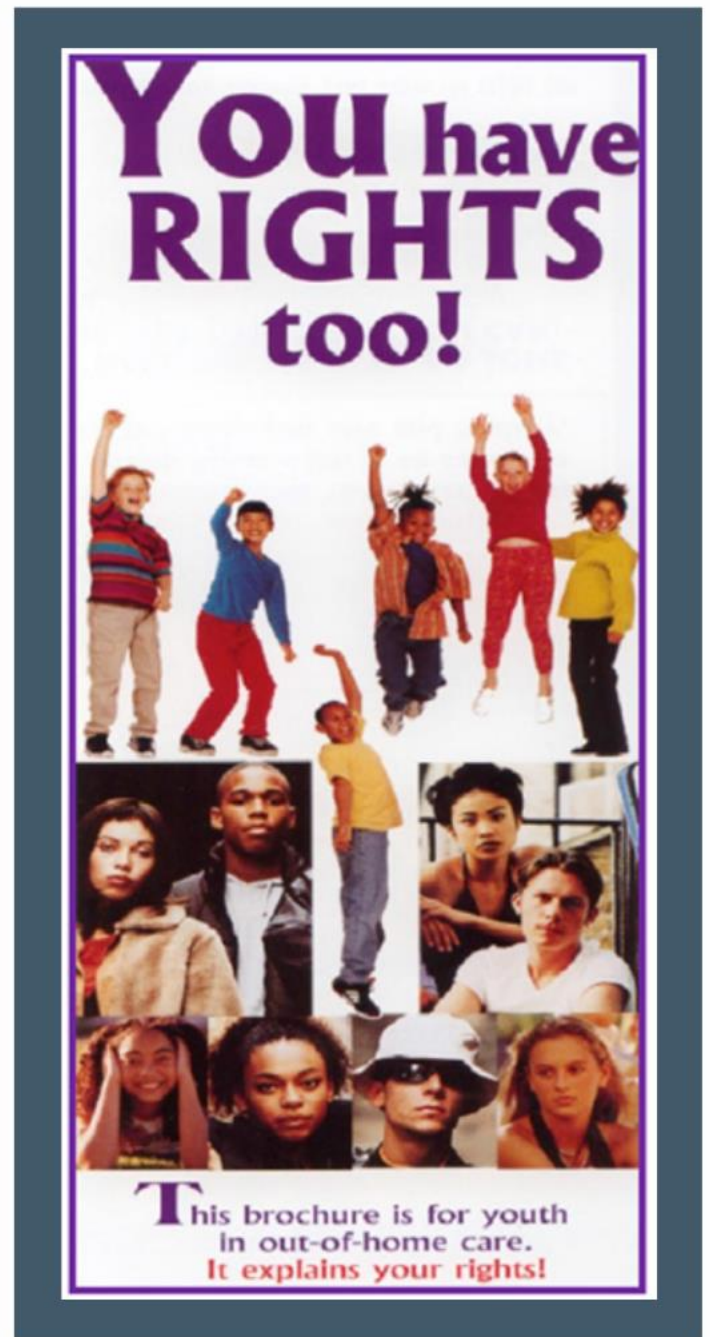


Post Approval Responsibilities

PERSONAL RIGHTS OF FOSTER CHILDREN

A Resource Parent shall ensure that each child is accorded the following personal rights:

- Safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations
- Independence appropriate to the child's age, maturity and capability
- Free from corporal or unusual punishment
- Unless prohibited by a court order, or placement agency, a child may acquire, possess and use their own cell phone



Post Approval Responsibilities



Resource parents are held to the
“Reasonable and prudent parent standard”

- Making sensible decisions that protect the child while at the same time encouraging their emotional and developmental growth.
- Encourages considering the best interest of the child at all times.
- In making decisions about the child consider the following:
 - Age, maturity, and developmental level of a child.
 - Nature and inherent risks of harm of the activity.
 - Best interests of a child based on information about the child such as their developmental level or behavioral tendencies.

Post Approval Responsibilities

A County shall monitor Resource Families as follows:

- Conduct biennial updates and be available to answer questions or address concerns.
- Investigate complaints against, or made by, a Resource Family.
- When needed, work with a Resource Family to develop plans to correct identified concerns.
- Ensure Resource Families are treated with dignity and respect.

Post Approval Responsibilities



Approval may be rescinded for:

- False or misleading statements to maintain approval
- Violation of any applicable law or the Written Directives
- Conduct threatening the health and safety of child/NMD
- Using Child/Youth/NMD funds/property/services for personal benefit or in a way not consistent with the child's best interests

If your approval is rescinded:

- You will receive a notice of action and instructions for appealing the decision
- If the decision is not appealed on, or before, the due date, the action will be final

If your approval is rescinded, you will have an opportunity to appeal the decision.

Resource Family Application Process

**If this seems overwhelming,
we are here to help you!**

RFA staff are available to answer your questions and help you access eAdopt on a visitor computer.

- Call (661) 873-2800 to ask for the RFA worker of the day.
- Call ahead before visiting the Columbus Center at 3711 Columbus St. Bakersfield, CA 93306



Our Children Are All Unique!



- Siblings want to stay together, to reside in the same resource family.
- Children with medical needs require specialized care.
- Older children & youth need permanent families as much as younger children!
- Juvenile Probation youth need support!



Thank you for attending Resource Family Orientation!