

# DCFS 101



An introduction to the child welfare system in Los Angeles

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Agenda/Overview

- Very broad overview of child welfare in LA and DCFS as an organization
- Very broad overview of the court process
- Role of key social workers you'll meet along the way

### ***CAVEATS!***

Did I mention this is very broad?  
Focus on pre-covid operations

---

---

---

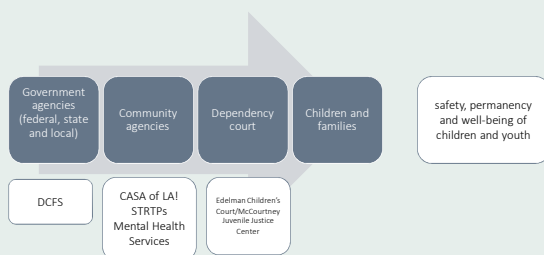
---

---

---

---

## What is the child welfare system?




---

---

---

---

---

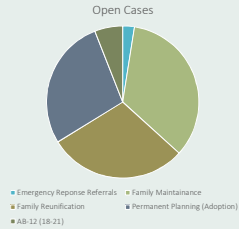
---

---

## What's the scope in Los Angeles?

As of April 2020:

Total Open Cases:  
35,538




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Disproportionality & Disparity

•**Disproportionality:** The under or over representation of an identity group compared to its percentage in the total population

•**Disparity:** The unequal outcomes of one identity group compared to another.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Disproportionality in Los Angeles

	Percent of children in Los Angeles County (Total Population)	Percent of children in DCFS care
African American/Black	7.1%	24.1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.2%	0.2%
Asian American	10.2%	1.7%
Hispanic/Latino	60.8%	59.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%	(captured under Asian American per DCFS)
White	18.2%	10%
Multiracial	3.3%	N/A

Data from KidsData (2018) and DCFS Fact Sheet for 2018

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Department of Children & Family Services

Who?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## DCFS Mission Statement



The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need.

---

---

---

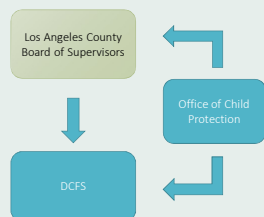
---

---

---

---

## Structure of DCFS



- Budget: \$2-3 billion per year
- Funding comes from federal, state and local sources.

---

---

---

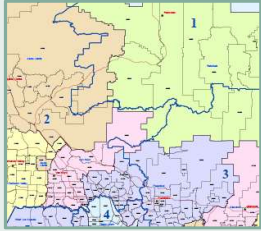
---

---

---

---

## Offices & Coverage Areas



•Regional Offices Map

---

---

---

---

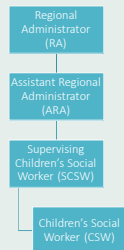
---

---

---

---

## Regional Office Structure




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Specialized Units & Departments

- P3 Unit
- American Indian Unit
- Deaf Services Unit
- Asian Pacific Program
- CSEC Unit
- Runaway Outreach Unit
- MART Unit
- Medical Case Management
- SIJS Unit
- Sensitive Case Unit

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Core Practice Model




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Court Process

How families become involved with DCFS

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The hotline call.....



Created by Eucalypt from Neuen Project

1-800-540-4000

Evaluated Out

Investigation

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What brings families into the system?



Created by ICONCRAFT  
from Noun Project

- For April 2020:
  - 7,127 referred to the child abuse hotline

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The investigation...



Created by Fatemah Manji  
from Noun Project

Assigned to an Emergency Response (ER) Social Worker

Different response times based on severity of situation

- Expedited
- Immediate
- 5-Day

Investigations must be completed within 30 calendar days of initial face-to-face visit.

Unfounded, Inconclusive, Substantiated

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Detentions




---

---

---

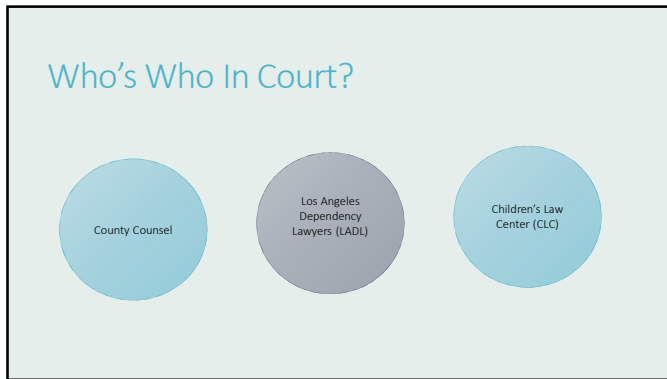
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

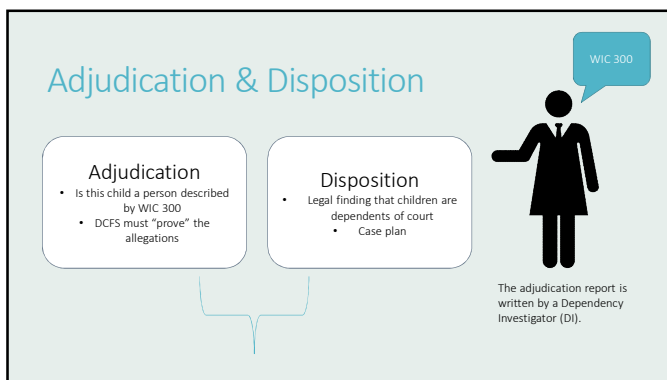
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

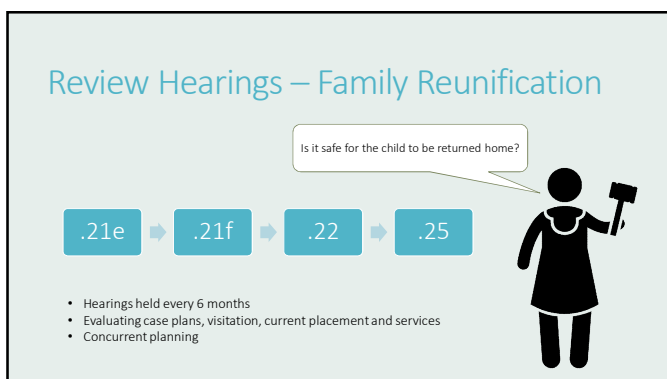
---

---

---

---

---




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


## Review Hearings – Family Maintenance

364

387 Petition

Jurisdiction terminated

Is the child safe at home?



- Hearings held every 6 months
- Evaluating case plans, safety at home and services
- Concurrent planning

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# STOP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Let's talk about social workers.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Social Workers you might meet...

*Who we've met so far...*

- Emergency Response CSW:** "Front end worker" Assigned to complete the initial investigation of abuse and/or neglect. Writes the detention report.
- Dependency Investigator:** Assigned to prepare the jurisdictional/disposition reports.

*And now...*

- Continuing Services CSW:** "Back end worker". Assigned after the disposition hearing. Continues throughout the case.

*And later...*

- Adoptions CSW:** May be assigned at any point in the case when adoption is identified as permanent plan. Responsible for locating/matching potential adoptive families and assessing adoptive homes.

---

---

---

---

---

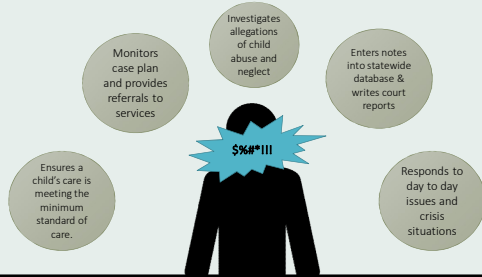
---

---

---



## Continuing Services CSW




---

---

---

---

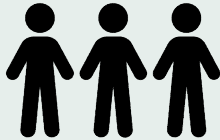
---

---

---

---

## Other DCFS Players (a select list):



- Eligibility Workers
- Court officers
- Education Consultants
- Human Services Assistant (HSA)
- Independent Living Program (ILP)
- P3 Worker
- Department of Mental Health (DMH) liaison
- Accelerated Placement Team (APT) worker

Created by Alice Design  
from Noun Project

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Who's who

### Children's Social Worker

- Employee of DCFS (government agency)
- Bound by the laws and policies of that agency, court and state.
- Have caseloads of 20+
- Primary concern is child safety.



### CASA

- Volunteer officer of the court!
- Bound by the policies of CASA/LA, the court and the state.
- Has a caseload of 1!
- Advocating for child's best interest.



### Child's Attorney

- Employee of nonprofit law firm (CLC)
- Bound by the laws and policies of that agency, court and the state.
- Have caseloads of 100-200
- Advocates in a client-direct/best interest way.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Let's go back to court...

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Termination of Reunification Services

Termination of  
Reunification  
Services



.26 hearing

What is the  
permanent plan  
for this child?



- Termination of reunification services vs termination of parental rights.
- Fast Track cases

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Permanency Options

	Adoption	Legal Guardianship	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
<b>Parental Rights</b>	Terminated	Remain in place	Remain in place
<b>Who makes decisions?</b>	Adoptive parents	Most decisions can be made by LG. Depends on which rights parents have retained.	Current caregiver, court, social worker.
<b>Can the child have visits with family?</b>	Up to the adoptive parents.	Yes – court ordered, some discretion with guardian	Yes – court orders visitation.
<b>Funding available?</b>	Yes – AAP	Yes	Yes – foster care payments provided to resource parent.
<b>What happens to court?</b>	Case closes	Case may/may not close	Case continues

---

---

---

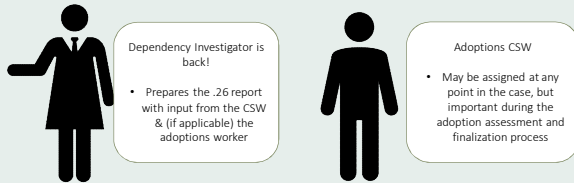
---

---

---

---

## More social workers....!




---

---

---

---

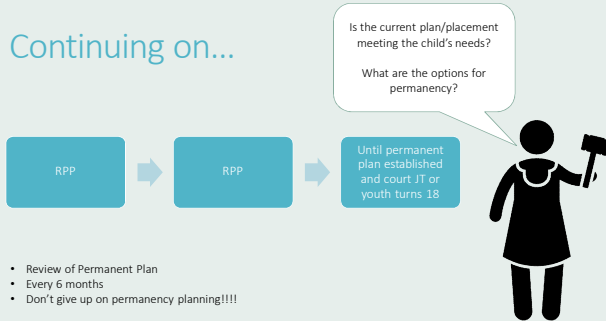
---

---

---

---

## Continuing on...




---

---

---

---

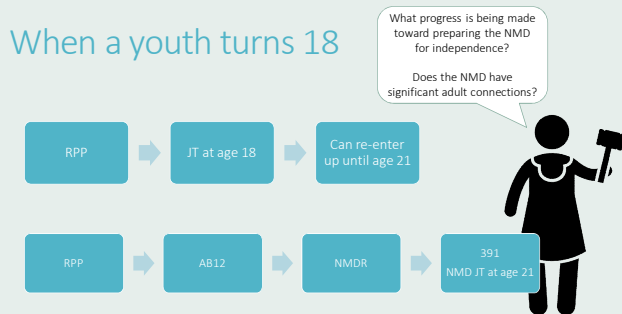
---

---

---

---

## When a youth turns 18




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Supports beyond 21



Created by Gan Khoun Lay  
from Noun Project

- Some housing programs can go up to age 24 (Check out [ilponline.org](http://ilponline.org))
- Former foster youth are eligible for some supports and programs (ex: Chafee Grant)
- Really important to have those adult connections!!!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Resources

- DCFS Policy Online: <http://policy.dcf.lacounty.gov/>
- DCFS COVID Response/Resources: <https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/>
- ILP Online: <https://www.ilponline.org/Home/>
- Alliance for Children's Rights: <https://kids-alliance.org/>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Questions and Thank you!

Maegan Mattock, Chief Program Officer  
[mmattock@casala.org](mailto:mmattock@casala.org)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---