



CHRONOLOGY

Child Welfare Services

The following is a brief chronology of legislative and landmark activities relative to the history of child welfare services in California, beginning with the most recent events.

- 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act.
Federal Public Law 110-351 is signed into law and hailed as the most significant federal legislation since 1997. The Act will assist hundreds of thousands of children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. The Act also extends federal support for youth to age 21 and offers important federal protections and support to American Indian children.
- 2008 The California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care releases sweeping recommendations for “changing the way juvenile dependency courts do business” and improving collaboration among courts and agencies that serve children and families. The Judicial Council unanimously approves the recommendations and directs the commission to develop an implementation plan.
- 2007 The federal government conducts California’s second Child and Family Services Review. Due every five years, the review evaluates California’s compliance with federal measures. While California shows progress, challenges remain and the state prepares a Program Improvement Plan that details the actions that the state and counties will take to improve child welfare outcomes.
- 2006 Assembly Bill 1808
California state law expands the Kinship Guardian Assistance Payment Program to allow relatives caring for children in foster care to exit the child welfare system and to receive the same specialized care payments and clothing allowances as provided for in the foster care program. The bill also requires county human service departments to provide information on the independent living service program to all eligible youth nearing 16 years of age and his/her kinship guardian.
- 2006 The Child Welfare Leadership and Performance Accountability Act
California state law establishes the Child Welfare Council, a new state advisory body charged with improving child and youth outcomes through increased collaboration and coordination among the state agencies and courts that serve children and youth in California’s child welfare system.



- 2006 Chief Justice Ronald M. George appoints a high-level Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care to provide recommendations on how courts and their partners can improve child welfare and fairness outcomes. The commission is California's first-ever examination of the courts' role in foster care and is chaired by Supreme Court Justice Carlos R. Moreno, a relative caregiver and foster parent.
- 2004 On January 1, California's Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act goes into effect and counties begin receiving quarterly data reports to monitor efforts to improve results for children and youth. Counties also undertake comprehensive self-assessments that enlist community organizations in sharing responsibility for children and develop system improvement plans for approval by boards of supervisors and subsequent submission to the state.
- 2004 Assembly Bill 2946
California state law creates the Child Welfare Services Program Improvement Fund to enable the California Department of Social Services to receive donated funds that can be used as a "match" to draw down federal funds to improve child welfare outcomes. The fund enhances the state's ability to provide a comprehensive system of supports for children and families.
- 2003 The Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group publishes its final report on overhauling California's child welfare system and shifts efforts toward implementation. The final report becomes known as the Child Welfare Services Redesign.
- 2002 The federal government conducts a Child and Family Services Review of California's child welfare system. California, like every other state, is found to be out of conformity with many measures and prepares a Program Improvement Plan that details the actions that the state and counties will take to improve child welfare outcomes.
- 2001 Assembly Bill 636
California state law enacts the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001 to measure and improve outcomes for children in California's child welfare system.
- 2000 The California Department of Social Services releases a Child Welfare Workload Study as required by state law (Senate Bill 2030). The study reveals that child welfare social worker workloads are, on average, double what they should be to provide the minimum required services.



- 2000 Assembly Bill 1740
California state law establishes the Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group to examine current child welfare programs and propose a redesigned system by June 2003.
- 1999 Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act)
Federal Public Law 106-169 doubles the funding for Independent Living Skills programs, allowing states to use some funding for transitional living programs for emancipated youth and to extend Medicaid coverage to age 21, and permits all youth in out-of-home care to participate in Independent Living Program Services.
- 1998 Senate Bill 2030
California state law requires the California Department of Social Services to evaluate workload and budgeting methodologies to determine funding required for the provision of sufficient child welfare services.
- 1998 Assembly Bill 2773
California state law implements the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act and shortens timeframes for reunification.
- 1998 Senate Bill 933
California state law enacts numerous reforms to the group home system and creates the Foster Care Ombudsperson program to provide an outlet for foster youth and advocates to report and resolve problems and concerns.
- 1998 Senate Bill 1901
California state law establishes the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program to provide a subsidy for children placed in legal guardianship with a relative.
- 1998 Senate Bill 163
California state law allows counties to participate in a pilot program providing intensive wrap-around services to families and children in or at risk of high-level group care to reduce the need for placement.
- 1997 Assembly Bill 1193
California state law establishes the Kinship Support Services Program to provide community-based support for relatives caring for children placed in their homes by the juvenile court or children who are at risk of abuse, neglect or delinquency.



- 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act
Federal Public Law 105-89 emphasizes child safety over keeping families together and provides financial incentives to states to promote permanency planning and adoption. It also extends and expands the Family Preservation and Family Support Services Program and renames it the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act.
- 1996 The California Department of Social Services and County Welfare Directors Association sponsor the Kinship Care in California Policy Summit. The event results in the development of a multi-agency work plan including policy and practice reforms to improve services and supports for children in foster care placed with relatives.
- 1994 Assembly Bill 3364
California state law establishes the California Family Preservation and Family Support Program consistent with federal requirements.
- 1993 Family Preservation and Family Support Services Program
Federal Public Law 103-66 provides time-limited, flexible funds to states for family preservation and community-based family support services.
- 1991 Assembly Bill 948
As part of a realignment of state-local authority in numerous health and human services programs, California state law increases the county share of cost for foster care and child welfare services to increase fiscal incentives to avoid or limit expensive foster care placements.
- 1986 Independent Living Program Act
Federal Public Law 99-272 provides for services for foster youth who are age 16 and older to promote self-sufficiency and to help them transition out of the system at age 18.
- 1982 Senate Bill 14
California state law requires the state, through the Department of Social Services and county welfare departments, to establish and support a public system of statewide Child Welfare Services. Each county welfare department is required to maintain four specialized components: Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification and Permanent Placement.



- 1980 Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act
Federal Public Law 96-272 creates a categorical funding stream for out-of-home (foster) care and establishes a preference to maintain and reunify families. The Act requires reasonable efforts to prevent unnecessary out-of-home placements, requires consideration of relatives as the placement of preference, establishes a process to safely reunify children with their families when possible and authorizes assistance payments to families who adopt children with special needs.
- 1974 Child Abuse Prevent and Treatment Act (CAPTA)
Federal Public Law 92-247 mandates states to establish child abuse reporting laws, define child abuse and neglect, and determine when juvenile/family courts can take custody of a child.
- 1971 The National Foster Parents Association is established.
- 1960's Mandatory child abuse reporting laws are passed in most states.
- 1961 Social Security Act, Title IV-A, establishes foster care payment under the Aid to Dependent Children Program providing funds to help states make maintenance payments for children who live in foster care.
- 1953 The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare is established, replacing the Federal Security Agency.
- 1935 Social Security Act, Title IV-B, establishes the Child Welfare Services Program, which provides grants to states to support preventive and protective services to vulnerable children and their families.
- 1925 First national child welfare standards of practice are developed.
- 1912 The federal government establishes the U.S. Children's Bureau, its first venture into the field of social services other than public health and education.
- 1909 The White House holds the first national Conference on the Care of Dependent Children.
- 1875 The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is formed, modeled after the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which is already in existence.