



WHAT “OUTCOMES” MEAN FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

California’s child welfare outcomes and accountability system specifies key “outcomes” or goals against which state and county child welfare officials must track and improve their performance in serving children and families. The following summarizes what these outcomes mean for children and families, and explains the framework against which data are collected and transmitted in quarterly data reports to state and local officials.

Safety Outcomes

We will know children are safer if:

- Fewer children are abused and/or neglected.
- Fewer children are re-abused and/or neglected after a report of abuse or neglect is substantiated.
- Fewer children must enter foster care.
- Fewer children are abused and/or neglected while in foster care.
- More children receive timely visits from their social worker.

Permanency and Stability Outcomes

We will know children have more permanent and stable homes if:

- More children are reunified and/or they are reunified more quickly with their families, while fewer children re-enter care following reunification.
- More children in foster care are adopted and/or they are adopted more quickly.
- Fewer children grow up in foster care, and more children exit to stable, permanent homes.
- Children have fewer placement moves while they are in foster care.

Well-Being Outcomes

We will know the well-being of children has improved if:

- More children are placed with some or all of their siblings.
- A higher percentage of children in care are placed in the least restrictive foster care setting possible (i.e., a relative care placement or foster family home rather than group care).
- Youth exiting foster care are more self-sufficient (i.e., more foster youth transitioning to adulthood have a diploma, independent living skills training and a means of support).
- Foster children receive more health and mental health services/support.*
- Foster children are making educational progress and increasing school attendance.*

** Data not tracked at this time*