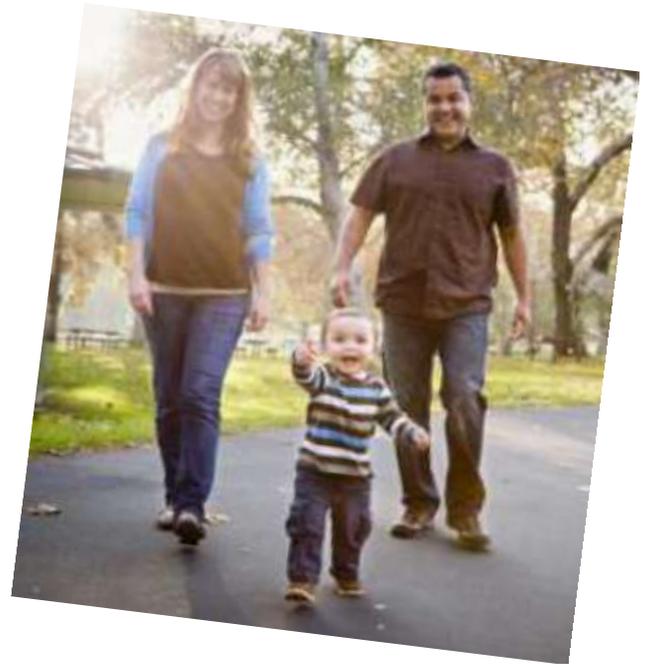




**Santa Barbara
County Department
of Social Services**

**Resource Family
Approval:
Pre-Service Training**



Welcome to Santa Barbara County Resource Family Pre-service Training!

Welcome – we are glad you are joining us!

Welcome to the Santa Barbara County Resource Family Approval pre-service training series. This new unified process for approving Resource Families, whether relative or foster caregivers, has replaced the existing multiple processes for licensing foster family homes and approving relative and Non-Relative Extended Family Member (NREFM) homes and also approving families for legal guardianship or adoption, should efforts to reunify be unsuccessful.

Purpose and desired outcomes

The overall goal of this process is **permanency for children**, which means that children have assurance of a stable and permanent home and family as quickly and safely as possible.

The purpose of this pre-service training is to help realistically prepare all caregivers for meeting the care, nurturing and permanency needs of children in out-of-home care.

Caring for children who are part of the Child Welfare system is very different from other types of parenting and care giving because these children have special behavioral, developmental and emotional needs as a result of trauma and neglect. These classes will give you a brief overview of the Child Welfare Services system of care and help you to understand your roles and responsibilities as a Resource Family.

Resource Family caregivers will be assessed on the basis of their ability to:

- Support a child or youth’s connection to their birth family and natural support system;
- Provide care, nurturing and support for development to a child or youth in a family setting;
- Provide a safe, nurturing and stable home and family life;
- Provide legal permanence for a child or youth or prepare a child or youth for permanence by being reunified with their parents or placed with a family who can provide legal permanence.

Some participants in this training program may have children (relatives) placed with them on an emergency basis. These participants are required to complete the training and assessment processes within 90 days of this emergency arrangement. Care will be given to assure the privacy of these children and youth by limiting conversation about specific children and their circumstances during the training series.

Details of the training series

This pre-service training includes a two-hour orientation to the Resource Family Approval process and 16 hours of training over a two- to three-week period of time. During this training, you will also complete required fingerprinting and background checks through Live Scan and child and infant CPR and First Aid certification.

Topics we will be covering during this training series include:

- Explanation of the Resource Family Approval process and requirements;
- An overview of the Child Welfare system and Juvenile Court processes and what it means to be a Resource Family;
- The different types of legal relationships that Resource Family caregivers may be considered to provide;
- How Resource Family caregivers work as part of the child or youth's professional team in making a good decision about placement, supporting visitation with birth family members, working with the caseworker to assure the safety and wellbeing of the child or youth and the rights and responsibilities of a Resource Family in making decisions about the child's care and safety;
- The special health, behavioral, mental health and educational needs of children and youth in care;
- Supporting a child's sense of safety in the caregiver home;
- Personal rights of children and youth in out of home care and rights and responsibilities of caregivers;
- The impact of trauma, neglect and loss on a child or youth's development
- Building self-esteem and safety through positive discipline.

In addition to this training, you may be required to attend additional training from time to time on various topic areas to help to build your knowledge and skills as a caregiver.

Background and history of care giving

Here's a bit of background about the new Resource Family Approval Program:

- For many years, foster family homes were licensed according to a set of state and federal standards while relative caregivers were approved based upon more informal assessment processes. Relatives have been given priority for placement of children because of research that has found that children do better in relative homes while in out-of-home care.

Any caregiver, whether relative or foster, were also evaluated for their appropriateness as a legal guardian or adoptive parents in a separate process called an adoptions or legal guardianship home study.

That meant that foster family caregivers who proceeded to adopt or be appointed as legal guardianship had to go through two separate but very similar assessment processes.

- Beginning in 1997, federal laws were passed that required all caregivers of children in out-home home care, whether foster parents or relatives, to maintain consistent standards of safety in the home and quality of care giving.

- Beginning in 1998 in California, relative caregivers and non-related caregivers with a pre-existing relationship to a child in care were required to undergo an approval process that included many, but not all the requirements of foster family homes.

Some of the relatives who were already caring for children under the supervision of the Juvenile Court could not be approved through this new process, because the standards used by different Child Welfare agencies to place a child in a relative's home varied and were generally more liberal than the foster family requirements.

As a result, relative caregivers of some children were no longer able to care for the child and were not able to meet the requirements of the legal guardianship and adoptive home study processes.

- In 2007, the California Legislature passes a new law, requiring that the Department of Social Services develop and implement a new unified, family-friendly and child-centered resource family approval process to replace these multiple processes for approving caregiver homes for placement and adoption/legal guardianship.
- In 2013, Santa Barbara County joined four other counties (San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, Santa Clara and Kings) in working with the California Department of Social Services in the early implementation phase of this program. These counties have been selected to develop and test the new Resource Family Approval Program for a period of three years.
- Once these programs have been evaluated for their effectiveness, California Department of Social Services expects that this process will become a statewide standard in July 2017.

**Resource Family Approval Program
Pre-service Training Agenda**

RFA Orientation (3 hours)

- Orientation to Resource Family Approval Process
- Orientation to Child Welfare Services and the Juvenile Court Process
- Overview of the Child Welfare agency
- Pathways for a child and family through the Child Welfare system
- Understanding the Juvenile Court process

Module One (3 hours)

Working as a Member of the CWS Team to Support Safety and Permanence

Case Plans

- What is the case plan
- Visits with parents
- Concurrent Planning
- Being a member of the CWS Team

Working collaboratively with the child's case manager and other members of the CWS team

- Advocating for your child and yourself
- Creating Safety and Personal Rights

Module Two (2 hours)

Impact of trauma, neglect and loss on development

- Understanding attachment and role in development
- How trauma and neglect impacts attachment
- Loss and the impact on children's well being

Module Three (3 hours)

Meeting the complex needs of children in out of home care

- Typical health needs of children in care and your role in supporting getting them healthy – and associated record keeping.
- Helping children in care get their educational needs met.
- How positive discipline affects self-esteem and identity.
- Discipline styles and negative impacts of physical discipline – discipline policy.
- Building a healthy self-esteem and identity through cultural connections.

Infant and Child CPR/First Aid (number of hours vary)

Pre-Service Resource Family Approval Training

Learning Objectives

Licensing orientation and introductions:

The prospective foster and relative caregiver will:

- Understand and be able to describe the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process and the steps for becoming a relative or non-relative caregiver.
- Understand the components of the pre-service training process.
- Understand and be able to describe the requirements for becoming approved as a foster/relative resource family, including pre-service and continuing education requirements, Live Scan, health screening, caregiver home study and home safety inspection.
- Understand and be able to describe how the agency responds to complaints and need for corrective action involving a resource family.
- Understand the agency's policy regarding foster and relative caregiver abuse and neglect allegations.
- Understand and be able to describe the appeals process for a resource family.
- Understand the agency's policy regarding confidentiality and mandates of caregivers to report child abuse and neglect concerns.
- Understand the laws that define the forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, emotional maltreatment, physical and sexual abuse and the legal processes related to child placement and permanency planning.
- Understand the various pathways for a child or youth and family through the child welfare system.
- Explain the agency's responsibility and mandate to protect children, and to strengthen and support families.
- Describe how child protection reunification and preservation services are delivered to families.
- Describe how the Child Welfare Services agency is organized.
- Describe the Juvenile Court process and timelines and how the court protects the Constitutional rights of birth parents, non-custodial parents, relatives and tribes.

Module One

Working as a Member of the CWS Team to Support Safety and Permanence

Competencies:

The prospective foster and relative caregivers will:

- Know how the professional team can support the reunification process.
- Identify the types of questions to ask regarding possible placement of a child, youth or sibling group.
- Describe the importance of teamwork to plan and manage changes in routines, traditions, and patterns of behavior as a foster/relative family.
- Identify how providing out-of-home care and adoption impact family relationships.
- Understand the rights, responsibilities and liabilities of caregiver decision-making associated with the Prudent Parent Act.

- Identify what foster and relative caregivers and prospective adoptive parents are expected to know and do as members of the child or youth's professional team whose goal is to protect children and strengthen families.
- Understand their role in participating in teaming strategies such as Team Decision Meetings and Safety Organized Practice mapping and decision-making.
- Know their shared responsibility for open communication with other members of the child welfare team.
- Know the importance of being non-judgmental in caring for children, working with their families and collaborating with other members of the team.
- Describe how the agency uses assessment and service planning to help support and strengthen families and the caregiver's role in assessment of a child's needs.
- Describe the caregiver's role in monthly caseworker visits.
- Identify the value of helping children and youth stay part of their families and culture and recognize that strengthening families is the first goal of Child Welfare Services.
- Explain how the agency uses relative and foster care and adoption services to carry out its mission to protect children and strengthen families.
- Describe the meaning of permanence, permanency planning and concurrent planning.
- Describe the differing roles of birth parents, foster and relative caregivers and adoptive parenting in promoting permanence.
- Know the relationship between child welfare laws, the agency mandate and how the agencies carry out its mandate through the Juvenile Court.
- Understand that reunification and family preservation is a primary child welfare goal and know the circumstances that would contribute to the selection of each permanency goal.
- Know the purpose of assessment and service planning for reunification and permanency.
- Understand the concept of permanence for children and why children in out of home care are at risk for not being connected to lifetime relationships.
- Know how adoption is a legal and social process that transfers parental rights to adoptive parents.
- Knows the roles, rights and responsibilities of being a foster or relative caregiver and an adoptive parent.
- Explain the three roles of caregivers: foster/relative caregiver, concurrent planning and adoptions and how foster and relative care and adoption fit into the larger Child Welfare process.
- Identify how the indicators of:
 - Substance exposed infants
 - Developmental disabilities
 - Emotional maltreatment
 - Deprivation from neglect
 - Trauma of physical and sexual abuse
- Impact the placement decision for a foster/relative caregiver.
- Know the key components for making a successful placement decision and key questions to ask the social worker prior to placement.
- Know the importance of advocating for children to obtain needed services.
- Know their own strengths and needs in fulfilling the foster/relative caregiver or adoptive role.
- Identify issues affecting their ability and willingness to work effectively with birth parents.
- Understand the importance of respecting children's connections to their birth families and previous foster/relative families and/or adoptive families.

- Explain the importance of being fully informed to assess how substitute care giving or adoption can affect one's family.
- Know that regular visits and other types of contact can strengthen relationships between children and their birth families.
- Know the importance of respecting and supporting children's connections to their siblings appropriate to each sibling situation.
- Know how to prepare children for visits with family and understand how visits with their family may affect a child's feelings and behaviors.

Module Two: Impact of trauma, neglect and loss on development

Prospective foster and relative caregivers will be able to:

- Know the conditions and experiences that may cause developmental delays and affect healthy attachment.
- Know the physical, medical, emotional and behavioral indicators of neglect.
- Know the physical, medical, emotional and behavioral indicators of physical and sexual abuse.
- Know the emotional and behavioral indicators of emotional maltreatment.
- Know the effects of separation and loss on children's feelings and behaviors.
- Know how physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional maltreatment affect attachment, behaviors and child development.
- Can recognize developmental delays and respond appropriately.
- Knows that development occurs in stages and across three primary domains, and that successfully achieving one developmental milestone impacts the next stage.
- Understands how relative and foster caregivers and adoptive parents can continue the challenging process of building attachments with children.
- Understand the losses that birth families, foster and relative caregivers and adoptive families experience because they are involved with the child welfare system.
- Knows the importance of providing unconditional positive support.
- Know the importance of promoting a child's positive sense of identity, history, culture and values to help develop self-esteem.

Module Three– Meeting the complex needs of children in out of home care.

Prospective foster and relative caregivers will be able to:

- Knows the importance of creating a supportive and accepting family environment.
- Knows the goals of effective discipline and how these goals relate to the agency's policy on discipline.
- Knows developmentally appropriate, non-physical disciplinary techniques used to meet goals of effective discipline.
- Know how to use discipline strategies with children who have experienced trauma.
- Describe strategies to prevent behavioral crises, strategies to de-escalate a crisis situation and to know when to call for help for a crisis situation.

- Be able to describe the needs that families meet for children, including physical, emotional, social, cultural and educational.
- Recognize that specific knowledge and skills are needed to help a child of another culture to feel at home upon placement.
- Know the value of maintaining records regarding a child's history.
- Understand the typical health care issues of children in care.
- Understand the typical behavioral and mental health needs of children in out of home care.
- Understand the typical educational needs of children in care.
- Know the importance of advocating for children to obtain needed services.
- Understand the provisions of the Katie A. settlement as it relates to assessing and treating the mental health and behavioral needs of children in care.
- Describe the responsibilities of the caregiver in accessing timely medical and dental well-child examinations and needed care according to provisions of the California Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) requirements.
- Understand the Medi-Cal insurance coverage provided for a child in out of home care and how physicians are assigned through the CenCal
- Understand the responsibility for maintaining health and dental care records for a child in care.
- Describe the caregiver's responsibilities for working with the social worker to assess and obtain treatment for a child's mental health and behavioral needs.
- Identify indicators of a medical emergency for a child or youth.
- Describe behaviors that indicate a need for professional attention.
- Know the special educational rights and services for children in out of home care and the caregiver's responsibility to ensure the child's educational needs are met.
- Know how to maintain a home environment that promotes a sense of safety and wellbeing and prevents and reduces injuries.
- Describe ways that a healing home can provide private space, boundaries and respectful nurturing.
- List the components of universal precautions in the care of children.
- Understand the personal rights of foster children, the role of the foster care Ombudsman.
- Understand the rights and responsibilities of caregivers.