



CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM

CCR builds on California's current reforms

Approved Relative Caregivers Program (ARC)

Participating counties support relative caregivers with a payment equal to the basic foster care rate.

Child and Family Teaming

An effective approach to coordinated care and case planning for all children and youth in the child welfare system.

Pathways to Mental Health

Originating from the Katie A. lawsuit settlement, Pathways is intended to improve the coordination between child welfare and mental health systems so that children in foster care receive timely, and effective individualized mental health services.

Quality Parenting Initiative

Will create new strategies and practices within child welfare for the recruitment and retention of quality caregivers, and support biological parents with reunification efforts.

Residentially-Based Services Reform (RBS)

A demonstration project begun in 2008 that tested a short-term residential program model with ongoing community-based services and support, and which serves as the foundation for STRTC.

Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program

A pilot program which provides upfront training and assessment of families seeking to parent children in foster care will expand statewide.

SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC CENTERS

The Continuum of Care Reform seeks to realize California's longstanding goal of ensuring that all children live as members of committed, nurturing, and permanent families. Research indicates that children remaining in group care for long periods of time have poorer outcomes than those living in a family setting, including a higher likelihood of arrest, homelessness, and reentry to foster care. The current policy framework for group care has not kept pace with child welfare, mental health practice, and desired outcomes. However, this type of care – often group homes characterized by large campus facilities and staff who care for children in shifts – remains a high cost placement option for children in foster care.

Based on broad stakeholder input, the Continuum of Care Reform effort will phase out traditional group homes as a foster care placement and target the use of group care to Short-term Residential Therapeutic Centers (STRTCs) intended to provide short-term, high quality, intensive interventions, which is just one part of a continuum of care available for children in foster care. Services will be designed to transition them back home or to another permanent family as soon as possible.

Assembly Bill 403, the legislation implementing the Continuum of Care Reform, recognizes that achieving this goal requires significant changes to the way that group care is paid for, their performance, and outcomes are monitored. Some key efforts are:

- Facilities seeking licensure as a STRTC must demonstrate the capacity to meet the treatment level needs of children and make available an array of "core services" including mental health services, in order to transition quickly back to a home based family placement.
- Requires STRTCs to directly, or through organizational relationships, approve resource families in order to ensure that all children residing in the facility have a plan in place for their return to a home based family setting.
- The STRTC will be required to develop new plans of operation, training plans, and program statements that reflect the changed practices and services to be provided allowing for improved transparency and accountability.
- The STRTC must be certified by the county mental health plan or have a relationship with a certified provider and directly deliver or arrange for the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) specialty mental health services that children and youth in their care need.



- A new rate structure is being developed for STRTC programs to reflect these changes.
- Development of a standardized assessment process to promote better coordination of services and to ensure that the individual needs of each child are considered and met.
- The STRTC will be required to obtain and maintain national accreditation from approved accrediting bodies as a condition of licensure.
- Requires the development of a coordinated monitoring and oversight system between the California Department of Social Services and the Department of Health Care Services

STATUTORY TIMELINES

- The current licensure and rate structures for group homes and foster family agencies will sunset January 1, 2017, unless an extension is granted permitting a facility to continue operation as a group home or Foster Family Agency (FFA) under the existing rate structure.
- The California Department of Social Services will establish new licensure and rate systems for STRTCs and FFAs beginning January 1, 2017.
- For the next two years, group homes at a county placing agency request can receive an extension to operate for an additional two years. Statute provides for extensions beyond two years at the request of providers with supporting documentation from county probation agencies.
- The accreditation of STRTCs and FFAs will start in 2016 and is expected to take two to three years.
- Provision licensure as a STRTC or FFA is permitted for up to two years in order to secure accreditation.

MORE INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

- [CCR: A Report to the Legislature](#)
- [Assembly Bill 403 \(Chapter 773, Statutes of 2015\)](#)
- For additional information or questions, please contact: CCR@dss.ca.gov.