**Myths vs. Facts about child welfare**

**Myth:** Child Protective Services always removes children from their homes after a report of abuse has been made.

**Fact:** Approximately 1% to 2% of reports result in removal of children.

**Myth:** CPS removes children because they are better off in foster care.

**Fact:** Keeping families together is a top priority, but so is the safety of children. It's only when children are at severe risk that removal and alternate care are necessary. If children are removed, then reunification is the desired outcome.

**Myth:** You cannot make a report about abuse that happened in the past.

**Fact:** It is never too late to report abuse. The information may still be relevant and it will be kept on file in case another report is made.

**Myth:** CPS social workers make all the decisions regarding the well-being of children.

**Fact:** Social workers evaluate the safety of the children involved based on certain risk factors. However, the majority of decisions will be made with input and direction from multiple people. The Child and Family Team (CFT) provides a process for families and those close to them to be an integral part in making decisions about what they need. The CFT works collaboratively on the accomplishment of individualized case plan goals with other service providers such as clinicians, foster parents, youth mentors, family preservation or reunification teams, parent partners, visitation supervisors, probation/parole officers, domestic violence treatment coordinators, clergy/spiritual leaders and other natural supports from the family’s community.

**Myth:** When working with children who have been removed, the primary concern will be finding them adoptive homes.

**Fact:** The majority of children who are removed from their homes are successfully reunified with their birth families within two years of their removal. The primary goal of social workers is permanency through reunification and when that cannot happen the secondary goal is permanency through other options like adoption and/or guardianship.

**Myth:** CPS investigates families but does not offer services to help them.

**Fact:** Social workers can connect families with a variety of services including child care, financial assistance, mental health counseling, substance use treatment, home-visiting, healthcare options, parenting classes and more.

**Myth:** At least one parent will be arrested when a report of abuse is made.

**Fact:** Not necessarily, the goal is to keep the family unit intact, unless the child is in danger.

**Myth:** People report every case of child abuse.

**Fact:** Child abuse and neglect often goes unreported which means that the true amount of abuse and neglect happening is underestimated. Professionals who work with children are encouraged to visit www.mandatedreporterca.com to educate themselves about the signs of child maltreatment. The goal is to intervene and provide families with the support services they need to help them through difficult times.