



CONTINUUM OF CARE REFORM

CCR builds on California's current reform efforts

Approved Relative Caregivers Program (ARC)

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

Child and Family Teaming

Is 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, which serves as the foundation for STRTC.

Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program

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

INCREASING CAPACITY IN HOME-BASED FAMILY CARE

The Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) seeks to realize California's longstanding goal of ensuring that all children live as members of committed, nurturing, and permanent families. Assembly Bill (AB) 403 (Chapter 773, Statutes of 2015) provides the statutory and policy framework to ensure services and supports provided to the child or youth and his or her family are tailored toward the ultimate goal of returning the child home, whenever possible, or to a permanent family through adoption or guardianship. Reliance on group care should be limited to short-term, therapeutic interventions, which is just one part of a continuum of care available for children, youth, and young adults.

To realize the goal of reducing reliance on group care a mix of funding, policy and, practice changes are being made across California to increase the capacity of families to care for children and youth in foster care that have a wider range of needs.

- The Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option Program, commonly known as the ARC program, gives counties the ability to opt-in to a state-funded program allowing approved relative caregivers receiving CalWORKs to receive the same amount of funding as a basic foster care licensed non-related foster homes.
- In the Quality Parenting Initiative, counties work to develop closer partnerships with foster parents to improve care of children, as well as the retention and recruitment of foster families.
- A new process for approving families seeking to care for children in foster care provides additional screening and training in the [Resource Family Approval program](#).
- An additional \$21.5 million in the 2015-16 state fiscal year allocated to counties for innovative efforts to support, retain, and recruit foster parents and relative caregivers. This funding also includes a rate increase to support the retention of social workers in foster family agencies.
- AB 403 updated and increased training requirements for foster and resource families so they are better equipped to meet the needs of children in foster care.
- Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), that currently recruit, train, certify, and support foster families will change in several ways:
 - Implement the Resource Family Approval process.
 - Make available a range of core services that are trauma informed and culturally relevant, including assisting children in foster care complete adoptions.
 - Additionally, FFAs may provide more support services to county resource families so that children don't need to change families to get support.



These efforts serve as a foundational component for CCR. Findings show that quality foster families are often the best recruiters of other foster parents, an example that word of mouth is a powerful tool. Counties have found that quality foster families are valued partners in caring for children and youth and can be strong advocates for the children and youth in their care.

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 FFA under the existing rate structure.
- The California Department of Social Services will establish new licensure and rate systems for Short-term Residential Therapeutic Centers (STRTCs) and FFA settings that take effect January 1, 2017.
- For the next two years, group homes at a county placing agency's request can receive an extension to operate for an additional two years. Statute provides for extensions at the request of 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