



WHAT TO EXPECT: PARENT OF A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE

Having your child removed from your care, even temporarily, can be devastating. Whenever possible, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) will make every effort to keep families together by working with you to find prevention programs and support services that will help keep your children safe and healthy at home.

Emergency Removal

If DCFS determines your child must be immediately removed from your home, they may be placed with a responsible relative or non-related extended family member or they may also be placed in an approved foster home. If more than one child needs to be placed out of home, DCFS will work to keep siblings together.

Parental Rights

If your child is placed in foster care, legal custody is temporarily transferred to DCFS and your child will become a dependent of the court. Even while your child is under DCFS custody and your case is open, you are still their parent in the eyes of the law, and you maintain parental rights.

This means:

- Your child cannot transfer schools without your consent
- You will be contacted if they experience any major illness or injuries
- You are entitled to regular telephone contact with them

Family Bonding

Visitation between you and your child is essential for maintaining family bonding and achieving a positive outcome for you and your family. Within the first 72 hours of your child being placed out of your home, DCFS will work with you to establish a family bonding and visitation plan. This plan will determine the schedule, frequency, location, and attendees for these visits.

After your case is heard in Juvenile Dependency Court, the court will determine how often, and under what circumstances, you are able to visit your child while you are working toward reunification. These visits may be supervised, depending on the specifics of your case.



Your child's case worker is critical in making recommendations for these visitations, so it is important to work with the case worker to establish and adhere to the family visitation plan established early on in the process.

Path to Reunification

After your child is removed from your home, your case worker will help you identify needs and develop a case plan to take the necessary steps to ensure your child can safely live with you.

It is very important to follow the case plan developed for you and your family. Comply with all court orders, follow the advice of your attorney, attend all the programs and services and report your progress in the programs to your social worker and attorney.

Learn more about what to expect, and what your rights are, if your child is removed from your home by calling (213) 351-3235 or visit <http://dcfs.lacounty.gov>.