

CALIFORNIA CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL

Prevention and Early Intervention Committee

FEDERAL CHILD WELFARE FINANCE REFORM: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

In the United States, the majority of federal child welfare funding is utilized to pay for children placed in foster care, with very limited funds available to support services that could keep children safely at home with their families. Nationally, stakeholders have been working to change that system by enacting federal child welfare finance reform so that the goals of maintaining safety, well-being and permanency for children can be better realized across the country. While there is still a need for consensus in certain areas, there are three things that everyone agrees federal finance reform should do:

1. **Broaden Eligibility and Availability to Include More Families Without Restrictions.**
2. **Increase Flexibility to Ensure Services Meet Community and Family Needs.**
3. **Provide Incentives to Keep Children at Home Safely.**

For every \$6 spent to maintain a child in foster care, only \$1 is available to be invested in a broader array of services and supports that prevent the need for foster care.

Taking Action: What you can do

If you want to make your voice heard in support of comprehensive child welfare reform, consider one of the action steps outlined below – acting decisively will make a difference in the lives of California’s children, youth and families.

1. **Partner with others who are involved in this important effort.** Join with the California Child Welfare Council, an advisory body that looks at child and family policy and financing issues, to help educate and advocate for improvement. The California Child Welfare Council was established by the Child Welfare Leadership and Accountability Act of 2006 (Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 16540 – 16545) and serves as an advisory body. More information may be found at: <http://www.chhs.ca.gov/Pages/CACChildWelfareCouncil.aspx>
2. **Support the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth.** Contact the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth Co-Chairs, composed of U.S. Reps. Karen Bass (D-Calif.), Tom Marino (R-Penn.), Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) and Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) and indicate your support of their work to better serve children and youth in the foster care system. More information may be found at: <http://fosteryouthcaucus-karenbass.house.gov/>
3. **Contact your congressional representative to provide your feedback and input on this issue.** Take action to educate and inform California’s congressional representatives and others who are in a position to act decisively to reform federal child welfare financing. You will find contact information for your representatives at: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/CA>

