

December 2025 Child Welfare Council Meeting

Key Topics and Highlights

Key Updates from Secretary Johnson

- **Federal Shutdown Impact:** SNAP benefits were temporarily withheld; California quickly restored CalFresh benefits to 5.5 million recipients.
 - **Executive Order:** President's new order "Fostering the Future for American Children and Families" was highlighted.
 - **Predictive Analytics:** Federal interest in predictive analytics in child welfare is being tracked.
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Mandated Reporting Advisory Committee (MRAC) Presentation

- **Purpose:** Transition from mandated reporting to community supporting.
- **Vision:** Reduce unnecessary child welfare involvement, address disproportionality, and promote prevention.
- **Progress:**
 - MRAC now codified in law via SB119.
 - Three recommendations from the original task force are already in law.
 - Semiannual report presented with implementation strategies.
- **Workgroups:**

- **Training:** Improve mandated reporter training and discernment.
 - **Data & Accountability:** Measure impact and outcomes.
 - **Community Pathways:** Strengthen local supports and visibility.
 - **Policy & Law:** Focus on AB2085 implementation.
 - **Narrative Shift:** Change public perception and professional mindset.
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Public Comment & Discussion

- Questions raised about chat visibility for virtual participants.
 - Concerns discussed regarding cross-reporting mandates to law enforcement, potentially undermining prevention efforts.
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Beyond the Bench Conference Debrief

- First in-person conference since 2019.
 - Over 1,000 attendees including judges, attorneys, child welfare professionals, and lived experts.
 - Key themes: Kin First culture, collaboration, restorative justice, and education.
 - Feedback: Desire for more cross-training between judges and attorneys, more lived experience presenters, and tiered tracks for experience levels.
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Committee & Task Force Updates

MRAC & PEI Committee

- Strong momentum and legislative success.

- Continued focus on implementation and community engagement.

Permanency Committee

- Emphasis on family-driven decision-making and transition-age youth support.

Data Linkage & Information Sharing

- Updates on CARES system transition.
- Evaluation of statewide pilots like Guaranteed Income and Crisis Continuum.

Youth Justice Committee

- Juvenile crime rates remain low.
- Expansion of less restrictive programs (LRPs).
- Focus on diversion, education, and community-based support.

Behavioral Health Committee

- Focus on outcomes tracking using CANS and other tools.
- Collaboration with DHCS and county providers.

CSEC Action Team

- Emphasis on harm reduction, peer-to-peer recruitment, and LGBTQ+ youth support.
- Advisory Board provided over 200 hours of consultation.
- New website launched with resources and training materials.

Empowerment Committee

- Focus on indemnification and bold action for system-impacted youth.
 - New co-chair introduced.
 - Continued advocacy for youth homelessness and empowerment.
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Closing Remarks

- Meeting dates for 2026 announced.
- Strong appreciation expressed for the collaborative work across agencies and disciplines.
- Emphasis on youth voice, prevention, and continued momentum into the new year.