

- Talk with your attorney about your rights after services have ended.

- ▶ Stay in contact with your children as allowed by the court.

- ▶ Attend Administrative Reviews and other court hearings so you know what is happening with your children.

- ▶ Notify your attorney if you move so your attorney can notify the court.



If you want to arrange visits, report changes in your life and ask for a reassessment, or find out if you have an attorney and who it is, call the reception desk in the following CPS programs:

**Family Reunification**  
**875-5696**

**Long-Term Foster Care  
and Guardianship**  
**875-6357**

**Adoptions**  
**875-5967**

A receptionist will find the right social worker for you. The social worker will call you back.



**Department of Health and Human Services**  
Child Protective Services Division  
PO Box 269057  
Sacramento, CA 95826-9057

Sacramento County  
Department of Health and Human Services  
*Jim Hunt, Director*

CPS Division  
*Leland Tom, Deputy Director*  
*Laura Coulthard, Division Manager*  
*Geri Wilson, Division Manager*

Ombudsman  
*Sharon Saffold*  
(916) 875-2000

## Sacramento County Child Protective Services



# When Reunification Services Are Stopped or Not Offered

***What Parents  
Need To Know***

## ◆ What Parents And Families Need To Know When Reunification Services Are Stopped or Not Offered

*When children go into foster care, a juvenile court judge oversees decisions about what happens to them. Usually, the court orders services for parents so they can solve the problems that put their children in danger. These are called "reunification services" because the goal is to reunify children with the family.*

*Sometimes, such as in cases of severe abuse, the court may not offer services. Or, if the parent has not made enough progress in enough time, the court may stop services.*

*The end of services does not automatically end a parent's right to be a parent, but it's very serious. Read below to understand what happens next and what you can do.*

### ◆ What happens to my children?

The social worker will look for a permanent home for your children. The options are:

- Adoption, which is the first choice for a permanent home. It is the only choice that ends your legal right to be a parent. Adoption allows another adult to become the legal parent. Relatives, family friends or foster parents may be chosen as adoptive parents.
- Finding a legal guardian for your children is the next best choice. With guardianship, your parental rights are suspended but not ended. As long as guardianship is in place, the guardian makes decisions about your children's lives.
- Long-term foster care. If adoption or guardianship is not possible, your children could stay

in long-term foster care until they are 18. With this option your rights do not end, but CPS and the court make most of the decisions about your children's care. Unless a judge orders otherwise, you should be consulted about school and medical issues.

### ◆ What can I expect?

- If services are not ordered or when services end, the focus changes from you and your progress to finding permanent homes for your children.
- If your children stay in foster care:
  - ▶ You can visit them if allowed and as permitted by court order.
  - ▶ The social worker will look for an adoptive or guardianship home and make recommendations to the court.
  - ▶ You will be notified about future hearings that you can attend to learn about your children's progress and offer input on what you think they need.



### ◆ Can I ever get my children back?

Yes, it is possible, as long as your children have not been adopted. First, however, here's what you need to do:

- Change the conditions that led to your children being removed. This may include getting drug and alcohol treatment, finding a safe home where your children can live, ending a violent relationship, or completing parenting or anger management classes.
- Give the social worker written proof that you have completed these conditions, either on your own or through CPS.
- Ask the social worker to reassess your family for reunification services.

If you make the necessary changes, you may be offered services. If the court agrees that your children will be safe in your care, they may be returned to you.

### ◆ What are my responsibilities?

- Keep in contact with the social worker about:
  - ▶ Where you live, so you can receive hearing notices;
  - ▶ Names of family, extended family and other important people in your children's lives so they can stay in contact with them;
  - ▶ Which family or extended family members might be assessed as guardians or adoptive parents for your children.