



**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

Board of Supervisors

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Contact: Nick Bhatt
DCFS Office of Public Affairs
(213) 351-5779

PRESS RELEASE

**THREE LANDMARK BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW WILL BENEFIT L.A.
COUNTY'S CHILDREN**

*AB 2322 and 2229 Improve Information Sharing, Improve Child Safety;
AB 12 Extends Transitional Support to Foster Youth Up to Age 21*

(LOS ANGELES, Sept. 30) – The Governor today signed County-sponsored AB 2322, AB 2229 and AB 12, three bills that will improve dramatically the lives of many of the most vulnerable children in Los Angeles County.

Assembly Bill (AB) 2322: Legislation by Assembly member Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles) and Assembly Speaker Emeritus Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles), that will help ensure the safety of children who are the subject of child abuse investigations. The bill will help county employees better identify instances of child abuse and neglect, help social workers fashion plans of action for potentially abused children, and provide strict protection for the privacy of children and their families.

“AB 2322 will provide our social workers with critical information to help make informed decisions about child safety,” said Trish Ploehn, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. “Having immediate and shared access to this information will help identify the status of all persons within a household, especially those with convictions for crimes against children.”

AB 2322 allows Los Angeles County to add critical information to its child welfare database, the Family Child Index (FCI), which social workers use during abuse investigations. The bill authorizes LA County to include in FCI conviction information regarding crimes against a child by any persons living in a child’s home. Social workers currently access convictions data by contacting county law enforcement and waiting for days or even weeks for the information.

In addition, the bill will ensure that county employees clearly understand when they can share information about a child with one another in a multidisciplinary team (MDT) context.

“To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service”

Assembly Bill (AB) 2229: Legislation that reduces the number of persons necessary to share confidential information via a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) from three persons to only two persons.

“This bill will help our social workers gain access to vital information that will make our investigations more thorough and effective, and this will help us keep our children safe,” said Ploehn.

Assembly Bill (AB) 12: Legislation that will extend transitional support to foster youth up to age 21. Last year in Los Angeles County, approximately 1,400 foster youth “aged out” of the foster care system when they turned 18. Data shows these youth typically have lower educational achievement, are more likely to experience homelessness, unemployment, unplanned pregnancies, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

“Any parent knows that a child’s needs for support and guidance don’t just magically end when they turn 18,” Ploehn said. “This legislation allows us to provide critical, ongoing support to foster children at a very important time in their life – the transition to adulthood. I am so grateful to our staff, our community partners, and to all the people who worked so hard across the state to get this vital legislation passed. It will have a powerful positive impact on so many young adults’ lives.”

AB 12 puts California at the forefront of states taking full advantage of the opportunities under the federal Fostering Connections to Success Act, signed by President George W. Bush in 2008.

Youth who receive support after age 18 are two times more likely to be working toward completion of a high school diploma, three times more likely to be enrolled in college, and much less likely to have been arrested, according to a five-year longitudinal study from the University of Washington. For every \$1 invested by a state, there is an estimated \$2.41 return on investment.

“The signing of these three bills is an important day for L.A. County’s children,” said Ploehn. “I want to thank the L.A. County Chief Executive Office and the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, along with our partners in the community, for supporting this critical legislation to benefit those who cannot help themselves.”

About DCFS

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services is the nation’s largest public child welfare agency also encompassing the largest public adoption agency in the country. The department serves over 32,000 children on any given day, and each year receives over 160,000 calls to its child abuse and neglect hotline. Report child abuse in L.A. County by calling 1-800-540-4000.