

September 21, 2009



The CPS Connection

News from Sacramento County Child Protective Services

Challenges lie ahead for CPS

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Thank you for reading the debut edition of the bi-monthly *CPS Connection*, the e-delivery version of the newsletter which we used to print. Electronic newsletters allow us to communicate faster and at less expense than paper versions. We hope you find it useful.

We launched this newsletter to keep you informed of news and activities within the agency responsible for protecting children and strengthening families in your community.

The timing is significant because CPS is facing challenging issues which will impact our ability to provide these services.

CPS is likely to have budget reductions of between \$16 to \$19 million, which could result in the elimination of up to 199 jobs. Combined with layoffs made in June, this amounts to a 23 percent reduction in workforce.

These cuts will affect every program and every job classification, and take CPS back to staffing levels in effect in 1998.

The cuts were made necessary because of less-than-projected county sales and property taxes revenues and higher-than-anticipated county costs.

The final blow came when the Governor vetoed \$124 million in child welfare funding when he signed the 2009-2010 state budget on July 28. According to the California Welfare Director's Association, this amounts to about a 10 percent across-the-board cut to every child welfare agency in the state.

It is difficult to predict the consequences of these events, and we are re-allocating the resources we have to ensure child safety. We'll know more after Sept. 22, when the Board of Supervisors is expected to make the final decisions.

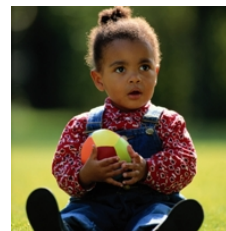
Here are some likely impacts:

- Up to 199 employees could be laid off. Many of the remaining employees,

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- A day in the life of CPS
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Birth & Beyond gets First 5 funding



Birth & Beyond gets a reprieve from the Sacramento First 5 Commission. Read more [here](#).

Outcomes data available

See how CPS is doing on [key performance measures](#).

A day, a month, and a year in the life of CPS

because of civil service regulations regarding seniority, will transfer into unfamiliar programs, requiring intensive training and support.

- We are looking at referring calls about sexual abuse or severe physical abuse directly to law enforcement. We used to assist law enforcement by screening these cases and referring them to law enforcement as needed.
- Calls that do not meet the exact definition of abuse or neglect will be evaluated out (no action taken). Past county practice has been to err on the side of caution and follow-up on borderline referrals.
- Caseloads which already state-recommended maximums will go up in every program. We will have fewer staff to respond to reports, fewer staff to work with children and families, and fewer services to offer them.
- It's likely that the Family Maintenance staff will be reduced significantly. Families of as many as 600 children will be left without essential services (such as parenting skills and drug treatment) which keep children safe at home while preventing removal into the foster care system at far greater cost to the taxpayers.
- The SAFE Center and the UC Davis CAARE Center are at risk of closing. The SAFE Center is a kid-friendly environment where trained forensic interviewers gently but objectively question suspected victims of sexual or physical abuse. The UC Davis CAARE Center gives medical clearance exams to children entering foster care, alerting CPS to underlying medical issues and often uncovering additional signs of abuse in the process.
- In the Adoptions program, workers will go from having 32 children on their caseloads (as of May) to as many as 60-65 children per worker. About 1500 children need adoptive homes in Sacramento County.

Crisis does lend itself to new ways of thinking, and we are looking at how we can operate more efficiently while maintaining good outcomes.

We will continue to emphasize Team Decision Making, a process by which we bring together relatives, foster parents, and service providers to come up with safety plans for children at risk of being removed from the home.

Nevertheless, we are entering a new landscape. We need the community now more than ever, and in ways which will become clearer as these changes take effect.

I expect that we will have more news to report in the next issue scheduled for Nov. 2, 2009. Stay tuned.



We invite your input. What would you like to read in future editions? Make your thoughts known by writing the [editor](#).



Read how CPS impacts the community [here](#).

A note to our partners

We at CPS value community collaborations. Nevertheless, for at least the next 60 days, we will not be able to participate in meetings and outreach activities as we focus on adjusting to budget cuts. We ask for your patience during this difficult time.

CPS is tops in use of risk & safety tool



Among the seven largest counties who use Structured Decision Making (SDM), Sacramento is first in a [four key categories](#).

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