FCSOC 2024

Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors:

Continue to prioritize support for youth in the Fresno County Child Welfare System to achieve positive outcomes and prepare them for successful adulthood. It is recognized that more social workers are needed to be hired, more resource families are needed to safely place families, and as a community we must place the best interest of the child as a priority and communicate much needed resources to support them and to their caregivers. With 2,848 children in foster care as of August 2023, this is a community concern as we desire positive outcomes and trajectory for these children.

1. County-wide Campaign to Strengthen the CWS Infrastructure

The members of the Foster Care Oversight Committee recommend a county-wide campaign through commercials, billboards, social media and other opportunities to promote the following:

1. Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers

This may include partnerships with local high schools, higher education, elected officials, and community leaders.

1. Recruitment of Resource Families and Promotion of Kinship Care

This may include partnership with local agencies currently recruiting and training resource families; however, the community is to be aware of the dire need for more

Emergency Placements and long-term placements for the stability of the youth and to mitigate the prolonged trauma.

1. Support for the Local Child Welfare System

We support the leadership of the Child Welfare System and their recommendations in their work of the identified Critical Needs as document in 2022. Based on the September survey conducted by FCSOC to the social workers, we support the retention of current staff by increasing pay and benefits with a compensation study conducted, reducing the case load as recommended by CDSS, and providing more training to new social workers and ongoing training for existing staff.

1. Appoint Members to the FCSOC to fill Vacancies

This is a shared responsibility with FCSOC to identify and recruit interested community members to serve on this committee.

Goals for FCSOC

As established in 2002, our committee will continue to advise and make recommendations for continuous and lasting system improvement and provide a forum for community input related to the FCSOC purpose. A key responsibility is to improve communication through outreach and coordination with the work of other community groups including the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools Foster Care and Homeless Education Subcommittee and Fresno County Behavioral Health - Children’s Mental Health subcommittee.

1. Be a Resource to the BOS Initiatives to Improve the CWS

This also includes the creation of the county-wide campaign to address current shortages of social workers and resource homes.

1. Be proactive in the joint responsibility with Board of Supervisors to find passionate and qualified candidates to fill vacancies on the Foster Care Standards and Oversight Committee.
2. Continue to Focus on the Well-being of Children in the CWS including:

* Services and resources for families who are preparing to become resource parents.
* Services and resources being provided to the youth, resource parents and biological parents.
* Provide information to the youth and public. Ie. FURS: Family Urgent Response System for current and former foster youth.
* Education-stable placement of school when transitions occur. Educational support.
* Social/Emotional Support -Mental Health
* System of Care with social worker, resource parents and school personnel for LGBTQ+ youth
* Activities for youth
* Placement - Provide a system to support potential resource parents to ensure homes are prepared to receive youth in foster care.
* Focus group on the challenges of placing older youth.
* Long-term placements with older youth and youth with complex needs
* Medical home for services and records.