



Young Children in Care (YCIC) Birth to Five Program

Why Focus on Children Ages Birth to Five?



- In Quarter 4, 2023, Infants (0-1) make up more than 1 of every 4 removals (27%), Infants and toddlers (0-2) make up over 1 of every 3 removals (41%), Infants/Toddlers/Preschoolers (0-5) make over half of all removal (57%)
- Of the 9 child deaths with DCFS history in 2023, 5 (56%) were ages birth to 3. These fatalities were reported to the Los Angeles County Child Protection Hotline*, that met WIC §10850.4 (a) and (b) criteria, were determined to be a result of caregiver/parental abuse and or neglect
- In Quarter 4, 2023, African American babies birth to five were more than twice as likely to experience allegations, substantiations and entry into foster care than Latinos and White babies.

Data Sources:

Bullet 1, Child Welfare Indicator Project, UC Berkeley. CWS/CMS 2023 Quarter 4 Extract.
Bullet 2, <https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/category/demographics/> (public website). Data as of Dec. 31, 2023.
Bullet 3, UC Berkeley CCWIP, CWS/CMS 2023 Quarter 4 Extract.
Population data source: 2023-CA Department of Finance Population Projections. (Rate = number of children per 1,000 in population).

Children Aged Birth to Five

0070-527.10 | Revision Date: 2/28/2024

Approved
February 2024!!

Overview

This policy is designed to strengthen existing practice guidelines around engaging, assessing and servicing newborns, toddlers, preschoolers and their caregivers.

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Infants: Children Aged Birth to 1 Year Old

Toddlers: Children Aged 2 to 3

Preschoolers: Children Aged 4 to 5

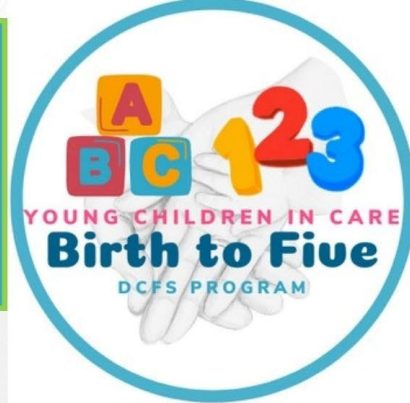
Supporting Child(ren) During Transitions: Removals/Replacements/Return Home/Adoption

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BACKGROUND

As of 2022, children aged birth to five make up 30% of the total child population in Los Angeles County; however, they make up 49% of all the new entries into foster care with 23% of those entries being Black children.* As of January 2024, per DCFS data, this age group makes up an average of 40% of all open cases in DCFS. Children in this age group are extremely vulnerable due to the critical period of physical and socio-emotional development. However, young children's brains are the most malleable, which means that the earlier we can intervene to strengthen nurturing supportive relationships between children and their caregivers, the more likely we can have a positive impact on their life trajectory.

YCIC BIRTH TO FIVE PROGRAM

The YCIC Birth to Five Program is designed to strengthen emerging practices and policy guidelines around engaging, assessing and servicing newborns, infants, toddlers and preschoolers (ages birth to five) and their caregiver(s). Staff within this program will be supporting countywide birth to five work, as well as supporting YCIC Birth to Five Program practices in DCFS regional offices. There is a Birth to Five policy coming soon to assist CSWs in better assessing and servicing children and families from birth to age five.

Currently, the YCIC Birth to Five Program has begun DCFS office-level support in four offices: Palmdale, Pasadena, Belvedere and Vermont Corridor. This support includes building an office-based birth to five program, resource gathering, case presentations, team building, training and more.

In addition, the YCIC Birth to Five Program now has a dedicated email inbox for anyone to contact for support countywide.

ASK THE YCIC BIRTH TO FIVE PROGRAM

birthto5program@dcfs.lacounty.gov

- Case Questions
- Resource Questions
- Data and Outcome Questions
- Training Related Questions
- Request for a Case Consultation
- Other Birth to Five Support Questions

Practice Tip: Assessing Social Connections

Everyone needs help in raising children. Who is there to help support the caregiver and child? What do others say about the child's experience with caregiver? Who knows about the safety worries and how can they help?

ABCs ALL BABIES NEED LOVING AND ATTUNED CAREGIVERS

123s

- 1 Observe, assess & document the relationship between the baby and each caregiver.
- 2 Find ways to strengthen the relationship between the baby and each caregiver.
- 3 When unsure about the relationship, CONSULT.

Practice Tip: Assessing Nurturing & Attachment

Take a closer look at interactions between children and all adults in the home. How does the caregiver show love and support to the child? How does the child respond? How does the parent describe the child?

WHAT'S TO COME

Each service area is uniquely individual. The YCIC Birth to Five office-level framework will be developed in areas where our program can support each office's specific needs. Further, the program will support a countywide transdiscipline model to bring all county programs and community stakeholders to support the needs of young children and their families. Some areas include, but are not limited to:

- Case Consultation
- Training Support
- Central and Regional Resource Building
- YCIC Birth to Five Office-Level Program Development
- Case Presentation Framework
- Data Collection
- And More!

Next Steps

- Using the policy to ground the work and develop next steps
- Staff Training on assessing and supporting the child/caregiver relationship
- Case Consultations / Case Presentations
- Resource Gathering / Development
- Racial Disproportionality & Birth to Five alignment
- Strengthening Prevention Work - Home Visiting Programs (FFPS), Mandated Supporting Initiative (MSI) among Others

