

AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS LINDSEY P. HORVATH
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Enhancing Linkages for DCFS Impacted Families

Over the last several years, the Board of Supervisors (Board) has taken several steps towards focusing on prevention and promotion, having adopted several motions that expanded programs and services to support residents in their own communities and achieve holistic child and family wellbeing. On July 25 2023, the Board adopted a motion, [Building Los Angeles County’s Prevention Infrastructure](#) (Mitchell-Horvath), creating the Los Angeles County (Prevention & Promotion Systems Governing Committee (PPSCG) to improve cross-departmental and cross-sector collaboration, coordination, and strategic investments into the infrastructure, resources, supports, and opportunities that prevent negative outcomes and promote holistic well-being. The Board has also launched new initiatives to better support families’ capacity to meet their basic needs, including expanding home visiting services, the creation of BREATHE, the County’s guaranteed income program, and the new Los Angeles County Office of Food Equity.

As we continue the work to bolster the County’s child and family wellbeing system, there must be a targeted focus on the needs of the very youngest in foster care, children aged 0-5, who require special attention and support due to their vulnerability and system involvement. Food insecurity is one such area that requires a targeted focus. A recent [RAPID Survey](#) found that 56% of families with children under age 6 experienced food insecurity in Los Angeles County. This is unacceptable.

Young children are also particularly vulnerable to child abuse and neglect. The Child Welfare Indicators Project at UC Berkeley found that in the first quarter of 2022,

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children ages 0-5 made up 51% of all County foster care entries. Home visiting programs have been recognized as effective and evidence-based strategies for preventing maltreatment, strengthening families, and improving outcomes for children aged 0-5. Home visiting services are also a central component of Los Angeles County's [state-approved child abuse Comprehensive Prevention Plan](#), and serve as a cornerstone of our child safety net. The Department of Public Health has focused on building the County's home visiting systems, working with First 5 LA and a variety of partners. The most recent [data](#) from the Los Angeles Perinatal & Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium indicates that each year there nearly 488,393 children up to age 5 are eligible for home visiting services in Los Angeles County, but only 31,365 (mostly 0-3 years) receive those services. While this figure does include some families impacted by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), DCFS-involved families are not currently prioritized for home visiting programs.

While we continue to [reimagine](#) and realize a true Countywide child and family wellbeing system that is rooted in addressing systemic racism and poverty with the goal of ensuring child safety, we must acknowledge that strengthening families is not the purview of DCFS alone. It requires a "whole County approach" that is characterized by aligned priorities, true cross-departmental and cross-sector coordination and collaboration to effectively deliver services, supports, care, and promote opportunity. Families with young children must top the list of priorities.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct:

1. The Promotion & Prevention Systems Governing Committee, in collaboration with Los Angeles County Office of Food Equity, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Public Social Services, Department of Public Health, First 5 LA, and other relevant County departments and external stakeholders to report back in writing to the Board in 120 days on existing practices and collaborative efforts underway to facilitate food security for families with children aged 0-5. This report back should include but not be limited to information on how these entities currently work together, other stakeholders who should be partners in this work, strategies for improving the County's Linkages Program, and

for facilitating food security for families with young children via community pathways; and

2. The Office of Child Protection, in collaboration with Department of Public Health and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), report back to the Board in writing in 90 days on the feasibility of prioritizing DCFS impacted families for family supports and home visiting services. This should include identifying any additional funding needs and potential sources, current and needed capacity for different home visiting models throughout Los Angeles County and reporting on outcome measurement mechanisms to track the effectiveness of these services for DCFS clients.
3. The Office of Child Protection, in collaboration with Department of Public Health and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), in consultation with County Counsel, to produce a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the departments listed in Directives 2 and 3 for a data sharing agreement to streamline referrals and linkages, as well as measure program impact.

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