

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND  
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AGN. NO.  
June 30, 2026

**Improving How We Protect Los Angeles County’s Infants and Children, Birth to 5**

Los Angeles County’s (County) children, from birth to age 5, are statistically the most vulnerable demographic to harm, abuse, and death at the hands of their parents or caretaker.

According to data:

- Infants under 1 year old make up more than half of all child homicides committed by caregivers, with nearly all remaining victims under age 3.
- Between 1989 and 2018, 524 children in LA County died due to trauma inflicted by a parent or primary caregiver. These fatalities were often associated with excessive discipline related to crying, toilet training, or feeding.

As it relates specifically to children who have involvement with the Department of Children and Families (DCFS), data show that as of late 2023, infants and toddlers (0-2) made up one-third of all child welfare removals, and the number rises to half of all removals (51%) when the age is expanded to 5-years old (birth to 5). In 2021, 51% of child fatalities in families with child welfare history in LA County were children birth to 5

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years old. The most recent data for 2025 shows the number has decreased to 25%<sup>1</sup>. DCFS took the initiative to prioritize children birth to 5 in updates to its structure, policies, and practices. DCFS has engaged in:

- Preventative support like increasing investment in community-based services, mental health care, substance use dependency treatment, and in-home parenting skills;
- Targeted outreach in high-need and high fatality areas by ensuring there are more social workers with lower caseloads;
- Practice enhancements such as utilizing the Integrated Core Practice Module (ICPM) to focus on family strengths and safety;
- Adoption of policy number 0070-527.10 “Children Aged Birth to Five<sup>2</sup>”;
- Participation in safety programs that partner with organizations to support initiatives like the “Welcome Baby” program, home visitation for at-risk families, and car seat safety training; and
- Data transparency to release information on fatalities to improve public awareness.

In October 2023, DCFS established its Young Children in Care (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). Initially, the YCIC Birth to Five Program offered support in four offices: Palmdale, Pasadena, Belvedere and

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<sup>1</sup> A child is defined as having DCFS history if they or their siblings, were previously referred to DCFS as a potential victim of abuse or neglect, even if that referral was closed prior to the death and even if the facts of the previous referral are unrelated to the circumstances that led to the death and even if the only history is that a call was made to the Child Protection Hotline and DCFS did not open an investigation.

<sup>2</sup> [Children Aged Birth to Five - 0070-527.10 - DCFS Policy Institute Website](#)

Vermont Corridor. Given the need throughout the Department for their expertise, the Board recently passed a motion to expand the YCIC team and DCFS is in the process of implementing that expansion.

The Board is committed to amplifying these vulnerable children through a continued focus on this population. We must take additional steps to ensure that our policy and practices are consistent, realistic, and effective to better protect those birth to 5 and their families. We must explore additional supports and strategies that could be beneficial to this population. And we must continue to ask ourselves what more we can and should do to better support our youngest Angelenos.

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

1. Direct the Department of Children and Families (DCFS) to review its existing written policies and practice guidance to explore opportunities to make updates and changes that reflect what the department has learned about young children in care through the work of its YCIC Birth to Five Program. DCFS is to report back to the Board, in writing, in 120 days, on the results of this review and, in doing so, address the following:
  - a. Smooth transitions between the Emergency Response, Dependency Investigations, and Continuing Services stages of a case;
  - b. Review of cases with a history of frequent open and closed cases;
  - c. Improving case closure processes;
  - d. Levels of review in cases involving allegations of domestic violence; and
  - e. Improvements to the Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings process to ensure CFTs are held per best practices including consideration of attendance by the staff involved in the current stage of the case, Parents in Partnership (PIP), and members of the YCIC Birth to Five Program.

2. Direct DCFS, in consultation with County Counsel and Office of Child, Family, and Youth Well-Being, to conduct random case reviews in every regional office to assess whether emergency response investigations closed on the 29<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> day of the 30-day mandated timeline were, in fact, fully investigated and ready to be closed.
3. Direct DCFS, in consultation with DPH, DMH, and other relevant departments or stakeholders to develop a plan to provide immediate connection to home visiting and childcare services for families who identify a need for those services during the DCFS Emergency Response or Dependency Investigation phase, especially if DCFS intends to close the case without prolonged intervention.

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