

## Major Milestones in the Evolution of Child Safety Practice in Los Angeles County

Reforming child safety work in Los Angeles County spans decades and involves a multitude of stakeholders driving change, including the Board of Supervisors, advocates, individuals with lived experience in foster care, and state and federal agencies. Milestone moments in the county's child safety work include:

- 1984: The Board of Supervisors creates the Department of Children Services (DCS), separating it from the Department of Social Services.
- 1994: The Board of Supervisors changes the name of the organization from DCS to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).
- 1999: Los Angeles County establishes an ombudsman for children and youth in congregate care.
- 2008: DCFS establishes Parents in Partnership (PIPs), a collaborative effort with parent partner paraprofessionals intended to bring about safe reunification and permanency through the education, support and mentoring of birth parents, while also promoting systems change.
- 2011: The landmark Katie A. settlement paves the way for significant state reforms that change foster care, including in-home intensive wraparound mental health support, the Core Practice Model and Child-Family Teaming, among others.
- 2012: DCFS begins implementing the [Core Practice Model](#) (now known as the Integrated Core Practice Model), a delivery that emphasizes working with families to improve safety and outcomes by addressing underlying needs over behaviors and instilling empowerment over helplessness.
- 2012: [Continuum of Care](#) (CCR) legislation passes in the California legislature, leading to major shifts and reductions in the use of congregate care facilities and increased family-centered living options for children and youth in foster care.
- 2013: DCFS adds Simulation Labs with experiential learning to strengthen its in-house training academy for new, incoming social workers to better prepare them for navigating child abuse and neglect investigations before sending them into the field.
- 2015: The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and Chief Executive Office create the [Office of Child Protection](#) to improve communication, coordination and accountability across agencies involved in the child protection network so that vulnerable children have a better chance of growing up safer and healthier.
- 2016: DCFS launches its first pilot for [Upfront Family Finding](#), a method that prioritizes finding relatives – before considering non-family members – to provide safe, temporary living arrangements for children or youth when it is unsafe to remain in the home.
- 2017: DCFS begins using [Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs](#) (STRTPs) for CCR

implementation, transitioning congregate care facilities to this model, which provides short-term, 24-hour care and supervision to children and non-minor dependents in a specialized and intensive treatment environment.

- 2018: Federal legislation known as the [Family First Prevention Services Act \(FFPSA\)](#) is signed into law. It reforms federal child welfare financing to support abuse prevention services and limits federal funding for congregate care placements, aiming to keep children safely with their families.
- 2020: Los Angeles County unveils its first [Foster Youth Bill of Rights](#) campaign to educate children and youth in foster care about their legal rights regarding housing placements, mental health resources, education and more.
- 2020: DCFS unveils its first-ever bilingual Spanish-language foster parent recruitment campaign, [Juntos con los Niños](#), to encourage Hispanic and Latino/a/x adults to become resource (foster) parents, helping children and youth in foster care remain connected to their family culture, language and background.
- 2021: Los Angeles County creates its first-ever [Youth Commission](#) to elevate the voices of young people with lived expertise in foster care to inform policies at the county level.
- 2023: DCFS expands its [Upfront Family Finding](#) program to be countywide following its success in several other offices, increasing the placements of children and youth in foster care with relatives or close family friends.