



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: 22-369, Version: 1

Receive a presentation from the Department of Social Services on child welfare services provided in Monterey County.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Receive a presentation from the Department of Social Services on child welfare services provided in Monterey County.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Monterey County Family and Children's Services (FCS) offers child protective services, foster care services, and adoption services to children and young adults in Monterey County. The mission of FCS is to prevent the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. Service goals strive to keep children and youth safe and within protection of a permanent family.

In the past year, FCS received an average of 433 reports a month of suspected child abuse or neglect, and of those calls, an average of 165 referrals were assigned to social workers each month for investigation. Over the past year, FCS has substantiated child abuse or neglect on 3.3% of all reports made to the hotline.

When child safety threats and risk factors exist in a home, FCS provides child welfare services that are either voluntary or court ordered. In the past year, FCS opened 116 voluntary family maintenance cases through the Family Preservation Services (FPS) program. The FPS program offers services to prevent children from entering the foster care system by connecting families to community resources that can strengthen and stabilize families. These services are offered for 6-12 months and include monthly safety assessments and case management by social workers.

In the past year, 44 children entered the foster care system through Dependency Court in Monterey County and were offered family reunification services. Families can receive reunification services for up to 24 months, and in Monterey County the rate of reunification was 50% over the past year. The options for children who do not reunify are either adoption, legal guardianship, or another planned permanent living arrangement. In the past year, FCS finalized 47 adoptions, established 27 legal guardianships, and 6 children were ordered another planned permanent living arrangement. When youth are still in foster care on their 18th birthday, they can elect to participate in extended foster care services as non-minor dependents until they turn 21 years old. In the past year, there were 7 young adults who opted into extended foster care and only 3 young adults who elected not to participate when they turned 18 years old. Monterey County currently has 56 youth participating in extended foster care.

When young adults exit the foster care system, there are a variety of resources available to them such as transitional housing, emergency housing, independent living services, educational supports, and employment opportunities.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Monterey County Department of Social Services partners with Behavioral Health, the Probation Department, and various local non-profit organizations to ensure the safety and well-being of children, youth, and families in Monterey County.

FINANCING:

There are no costs associated with the receipt of this presentation/report.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

This action correlates to the following Strategic Initiatives adopted by the Board of Supervisors:

Economic Development: Through collaboration, strengthen economic development to ensure a diversified and healthy economy.

Administration: Promote an organization that practices efficient and effective resource management and is recognized for responsiveness, strong customer orientation, accountability, and transparency.

Health & Human Services: Improve health and quality of life through County supported policies, programs, and services; promoting access to equitable opportunities for healthy choices and health environments in collaboration with communities.

Infrastructure: Plan and develop a sustainable, physical infrastructure that improves the quality of life for County residents and supports economic development results.

Public Safety: Create a safe environment for people to achieve their potential, leading businesses, and communities to thrive and grow by reducing violent crimes as well as crimes in general.

Prepared by: Laura Neal, Deputy Director Family and Children Services, x4470

Approved by: Lori A. Medina, Director of Social Services x4430

Attachment:

Child Welfare Services Update Presentation