

The Human Services Agency's Children & Family Services looks to relatives and other adults to become caregivers when an abused or neglected child needs a safe home.



The County of Ventura Human Services Agency provides public services that promote self-sufficiency, safety, health and well-being. Our programs and services help ensure the protection of children, the elderly and dependent adults. We also provide a safety net for individuals and families who need assistance with basic necessities, such as food, housing and health care. Additionally, we help people secure employment through education, training, job search skills, and job placement.

For more information about Relative & Extended Family Care, please call (805) 654-3405.

#### Children & Family Services Office Locations

##### Ventura

4245 Market Street, #204  
Ventura, CA 93003  
(805) 654-3409

##### Oxnard

1400 Vanguard Drive  
Oxnard, CA 93030  
(805) 240-2700

##### East County

970 Enchanted Way  
Simi Valley, CA 93065  
(805) 955-2290



COUNTY OF VENTURA

24-Hour Toll-Free Hotline (800) 754-7600

24-Hour Hotline (805) 654-3200

[www.vchsa.org](http://www.vchsa.org)

## Relative & Extended Family Care



Family members caring for children in need

## Role of a lifetime

Providing an abused or neglected child with a safe home and becoming his or her caregiver can be a rewarding experience.



## Relative & extended family caregivers

### *Helping out when the need arises*

When an abused or neglected child needs a safe home, the Human Services Agency's Children & Family Services looks to relatives and other adults who have significant relationships with the child to become caregivers.

## The role of caregiver

### *Is it right for my family?*

When considering how you may be able to help a child during this critical time, it is important to understand the child's needs and assess your family's ability to meet them. Questions that you may ask yourselves include:

- What is my relationship to the child?
- Do I understand the circumstances surrounding the child's removal from his or her parents?
- How do I feel about the circumstances?
- Will I be able to set boundaries with the parents?
- Will I support the child's return to his/her parents when it becomes safe?

- Will I be able to offer the child a permanent home through guardianship or adoption if the child is not able to return to his/her parents?
- Can I commit to the well-being of the child?
- Will I need financial assistance to care for the child?

## The application & approval process

### *How can I become a caregiver?*

Relatives and non-related extended family members can apply to be caregivers for children in need. The application and approval process requirements are defined in State law. While approvals may be expedited in emergency circumstances, all applicants must satisfy the following State requirements:

- Complete a Relative Approval Application. Call (805) 654-3405 to request an application.
- Agree to a law enforcement background check and fingerprinting. A background check is required for the applicant as well as any person in the household who is 18+ years old. An applicant's or household members' prior history with law enforcement or child protective services may require more extensive consideration. While the background check process can sometimes be lengthy, it is critical to ensure the safety of the child.

- Pass a home safety inspection.
- Complete the in-home training program provided by Kids & Families Together.
- Participate in an interview with a social worker to determine your ability to provide proper care and supervision of the child.

Once you have been approved, the child's social worker will determine whether the child will be placed in your home.

## What support can I expect?

### *Public and community assistance*

The Human Services Agency and community agencies are committed to assisting you in fulfilling your role as a caregiver.

### **Financial Assistance**

If eligible, you will receive monthly financial assistance to help pay for basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. You may be eligible for one of two types of assistance: Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Foster Care (AFDC-FC); or CalWORKs - "Non-Needy Relative Aid." If you are not eligible for AFDC-FC, your social worker will provide information about applying for CalWORKs. Financial assistance begins after all Relative Approval requirements are met.

### **Health Care Assistance**

Each child will be enrolled in the Medi-Cal program. Medi-Cal provides low-cost health insurance that covers regular doctor visits, hospitalization, immunizations, and vision and dental care.

### **Other Supports**

Other support services designed to assist you as a caregiver include:

- Monthly visits with the child's social worker
- Subsidized child care for working caregivers who qualify
- Short-term child care or "respite" care for up to 12 hours per month
- Support groups, mentoring, education, training, and referrals

provided by Kids & Families Together (805) 643-1446

- Funding support for medical services, education, and extra-curricular activities provided by the Children's Services Auxiliary (805) 654-3447

## How else can I help?

### *Other ways to lend a hand*

If you determine that a caregiver role is not right for you, you can still assist by:

- Supporting the child and his or her parents in a non-judgemental way
- Visiting the child through arrangements with the child's social worker
- Supervising the child's visitation with his/her parents through arrangements with the child's social worker

