

Who are Parent Partners?

If you're reading this, then you're most likely involved with the child welfare system. You may be feeling scared and confused. Maybe you're angry. But you are definitely wondering, "What next?" "Who can help me?" "Who understands what I'm going through?"

We know what it's like because it happened to us, too. We are parents whose children were removed from our care due to allegations of abuse or neglect. We are parents who have worked hard to regain the custody of our children. We are parents who understand what it takes to get through these difficult times. We are Parent Partners.

We've been where you are right now-looking at a dependency petition with allegations that put you in the worst light. We've appeared in front of a judge and found out that our children were not coming home.



Here's what we can do for you ...



- Help you understand the juvenile court system and attend court hearings with you
- Help you learn how to have good meetings with your social worker and attend meetings with you and your social worker
- Share “success” tips that have helped other parents
- Inform you of your rights as a parent in the child welfare system
- Help you problem solve difficult situations
- Be a listening ear, a shoulder to lean on
- Encourage you when you are feeling discouraged

How we can help

We have successfully worked our way through the child welfare system.

We now serve as parent advocates for people just like you who are entering the child welfare system. As advocates, we can mentor you and provide you with information, support and guidance as you chart your course through the system.

We also serve as parent leaders by participating in various internal child welfare workgroups, meetings and committees, to act as the “parents’ voice” for all families involved with the child welfare system and advocate for their experiences on a larger scale. We’ve worked diligently to understand the child welfare system and to improve how its social workers and staff serve families like yours.

Our Parent Partner Program serves families whose children are placed out of their homes (or in Family Reunification). Our program provides information to families through orientation meetings called “Navigating the System” and via our family developed Parent Handbook.

We meet eligible families at the courthouse and introduce them to our program. Families decide if they are interested in having a mentor or not. Your participation is completely voluntary. Families are also invited to attend one of the upcoming “Navigating the System” sessions in the community.

The Parent Partner Program is sponsored by Contra Costa County Children & Family Services in partnership with the Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa County, and is supervised by a Parent Partner Coordinator.

For more information about the Parent Partner Program and eligibility for services, please call (925) 602-6956 and ask to speak to the Parent Partner Program Supervisor.

Suggestions for success

- Keep a folder or briefcase where you can store all the important papers concerning your case
- Keep appointments with your caseworker, service provider, court, and if ever you cannot keep an appointment call to cancel
- Talk about ways you can be more involved in your child's life, ask if you and the foster parent can build a working relationship
- Know what your strengths are as well as your limitations
- Always keep your child's best interest at heart, and remember to look at this situation from your child's point of view

