



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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Issue 26-19

Date: 10/01/2026

POLICY AND FYI RELEASE UPDATE – THIRD QUARTER 2026

This policy release update provides staff with a summary of new/revised guides and FYIs posted on LA Kids during the third quarter of 2026.

Child Welfare Policy Guides:

[1000-501.30 Dependency Investigation \(DI\) Assignment Criteria | Revision Date: 7/30/2026](#)

The policy updates assignment rules for half-siblings, clarifies procedures for WIC 342/385/387 petitions, shortens the timeframe for disputing case assignments, and allows DI SCSWs to verify parent addresses when needed. The updates also clarify assignment situations involving transient parents. Overall, these changes support more consistent application of DI assignment procedures.

[0300-503.40 Probate Nonrelative Legal Guardianship | Revision Date: 7/31/2026](#)

This policy guide was updated to add information regarding the [Non-Related Legal Guardianship \(NRLG\) Portal](#). The information from FYI 16-16 and FYI 17-47 were also incorporated into the policy. The title of the policy has been changed from "Probate Legal Guardianship." Lastly, a new template for probate investigation report for youth 18-21 years of age seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) was created.

[0070-535.10 Assessment of Exploitation | Revision Date: 7/31/2026](#)

This policy guide was updated to incorporate a change requested by the Board of Supervisors' Five-Year Strategic Plan to Prevent and Address Human Trafficking. The revisions broaden definitions of child trafficking, labor trafficking, and forced criminality, replacing older CSEC-specific language with more comprehensive, trauma-informed terminology. New guidance strengthens procedures for CSWs, covering safety planning, interviews, law-enforcement coordination, medical exams, and services for LGBTQ+ and immigrant youth.

[0300-308.07 Time Frames for Submission of Court Reports | Revision Date: 8/6/2026](#)

This policy guide was updated to include definitions and submission time frames for court reports on detained and non-detained petitions, replace Juvenile Court Services (JCS) and courtroom delivery requirements with uploading reports into the Justice Partner Portal (JPP), clarify the use of calendar versus judicial days, reinforce checking minute orders for specific deadlines, and update procedures related to timelines and report submission.

FYIs:

[FYI 26-13, 2026 Back-To-School Clothing Allowance](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to announce the automatic issuance of the 2026 Back-to-School Clothing Allowance for children in foster care. Allowances are processed based on timely system updates and placement criteria. Staff are reminded to follow procedural guides to prevent overpayments.

[FYI 26-14, CFT Meeting Notes Included with Dependency Court Reports](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to inform case-carrying staff that Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting and Planning Notes (DCFS 6074) must be attached to dependency court reports, in accordance with All County Letters 22-73 and 25-54. Pages 3–6 of the notes should be included, detailing action steps, educational needs,



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family bonding, and barriers to implementation. Redactions are required when protected health or private information release forms are not signed, or when disclosure could pose a risk to the child's safety.

[FYI 24-13 \(REV\), Nitrous Oxide \(NOS\) Testing](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to update the costs for nitrous oxide (NOS) tests, setting the new rate at \$100 per test.

[FYI 26-15, Family Preservation / Family Reunification \(FP/FR\) Services-Now Offered for Up to Six Months Prior to Reunification](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to inform staff that Family Preservation and Family Reunification (FP/FR) services may now be offered up to six months before reunification. This change gives families earlier access to supportive services that can strengthen their progress on case plan goals. Staff should refer families to FP/FR services once reunification becomes a likely case direction so they can take full advantage of the expanded timeframe and begin receiving support as early as possible.

[FYI 26-16, Rates for Placement and Related Services](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to provide staff with the adjusted schedule of rates that reflect the California Necessities Index (CNI) increase of 3.59 percent for fiscal year (FY) 2026-27 effective July 1, 2026. The CNI rate increase is applicable to Out-of-Home placements and the Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care program and to the Adoption Assistance Program (AAP) rates.

[FYI 26-17 \(REV\), Policy Changes Related to the New Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response and Engagement System \(CWS-CARES\) Coming 12/07/2026](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to inform staff about policy changes related to the transition from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to the new CWS-CARES application, which will go live on December 7, 2026. It explains that departmental policies and guidance will be updated to reference CWS-CARES, and directs staff to current resources, training, and support for the new system. Staff are encouraged to complete self-paced training, monitor communications, and follow the most current CWS-CARES guidance as the transition progresses.

[FYI 26-18, Employee Educational Work Release Program \(EEWRP\) 2026 MSW and BA/BSW Informational Sessions](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to inform DCFS employees about upcoming virtual informational sessions for the Employee Educational Work Release Program (EEWRP), which supports eligible staff in pursuing part-time MSW and BA/BSW degrees in partnership with local universities. These sessions will cover program eligibility, application processes, university partners, and details about the CA Title IV-E Education Program, with multiple dates and representatives available for questions.

[FYI 17-42 \(REV\), Vehicle Accident/Incident Reporting and Claim for Vehicle Damage Reimbursement \(REV 09/21/2026\)](#)

The purpose of this FYI is to update the vehicle accident/incident reporting and claim reimbursement process by designating George Hills Company as the new claim administrator for third-party incidents, replacing Carl Warren and Company. The revised FYI clarifies that permittees must use updated forms and submit claims to HealthandSafety@dcfs.lacounty.gov, and it provides new links to digital resources for reporting, claim submission, and guidance. Additionally, the revised FYI aligns its processes with current County standards by refining timelines, documentation needs, and workflow responsibilities.



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[FYI 20-10 \(REV\), Changes to the Dcfs 5402, Notice To Child's/NMD's Attorney Re: Case Status](#)

This FYI was revised to inform staff that effective immediately, the DCFS 5402, Notice to Child's/NMD's Attorney Re: Case Status, is no longer available in CWS/CMS. Staff must now access the current version of the DCFS 5402 through the Forms section of LA Kids until the form is incorporated into CWS-CARES.

Management Directives (MD):

[MD 10-02, Dress Code Policy Professional Appearance in the Workplace: DCFS Guidelines | Revision Date: 07/31/2026](#)

This management directive was updated to clarify proper/suitable attire and professional appearance in the workplace.

[MD 17-02, Vehicle Damage Reimbursement, Third Party Liability Coverage and Reporting Responsibilities | Revision Date: 08/12/2026](#)

This Management Directive has been updated to reflect the County's new claims adjuster, George Hills Company (GHC), and to include revised forms.

[MD 26-02, Reporting Hotline \(211 LA\) for Child Sexual Abuse at a County Facility or by a County Workforce Member | Issue Date: 08/26/2026](#)

This is a new management directive that includes information on the required process for reporting allegations of child sexual abuse occurring at a county facility or involving a county workforce member. It outlines how staff must use the 211 LA hotline to ensure immediate notification, proper documentation, and timely forwarding of concerns to the appropriate investigative bodies. The directive further details responsibilities for staff, required timelines, and the specific steps for routing reports to internal and external partners to ensure consistent handling of all allegations.

If you have any questions regarding this release, please email your question to:

Policy@dcfs.lacounty.gov