



EXPANDING ACCESS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles (CCALA) and its partner agencies are excited to launch the new Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program). This is a new State funded program administered through the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

The new Bridge Program is a time-limited program designed to increase the number of foster children successfully placed in home-based family care settings, increase capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care, and maximize funding to support the child care needs of eligible families.

There are three components to the Bridge Program:

NAVIGATOR



Resource & Referral agencies throughout Los Angeles County will house child care navigators to assist eligible foster care resource families with:

- Finding a child care provider,
- Securing a subsidized child care placement,
- Completing child care program applications, and
- Developing a plan for long-term child care appropriate to the child's age and needs

VOUCHER



Eligible families may receive a time-limited child care voucher to help pay for child care costs for foster children birth through age 5 and their siblings. This also includes foster children with exceptional needs and severely disabled children up to age 21.

- Referrals to the Child Care Bridge Program must be made through the resource family's Children's Social Worker (CSW) at DCFS
- Vouchers will be approved for an initial period of up-to six months, with a possible six-month extension
- The Resource parent will work a Navigator to locate an appropriate child care placement for the child

TRAUMA-INFORMED



Child care programs engaged in the Bridge Program will receive access to trauma-informed care training and coaching. Topics of the training include, but are not limited to:

- Infant and toddler development
- Research-based, trauma-informed best care practices

Child care providers will also receive access to coaching to assist them in applying training curriculum and learn strategies for working with children in foster care

REFERRAL PROCESS

The Bridge Program will ensure that emergency child care services are made available to the following out-of-home caregivers with DCFS-placed children, ages birth to 5 and their siblings:

- a. Resource Parents, pending RFA approval who already have a child placement;
- b. Existing Resource Parents, who already have a child placement or are considering a placement; and
- c. Parenting teens/non-minor dependents under DCFS supervision

The Bridge Program referral process will be collaboratively administered between DCFS, CCALA and the local Resource & Referral (R&R) agency serving the DCFS Regional Office.

DCFS will refer families to the Bridge Program:

- a. As a condition of accepting a new placement; OR
- b. In order to accept placement of siblings together in the same home; OR
- c. In order to preserve an existing placement

The goal of the program is to provide immediate access to child care while assisting the resource families in obtaining long-term child care, within eligibility guidelines. The Bridge Program is separate and apart from, and not to be confused with the DCFS Child Care Program.

Working together to strengthen families and ensure high-quality child care and early learning across Los Angeles County

