

# Promoting Placement Stability for Foster Youth Through Immediate Crisis Response

## SUMMARY

Foster children and youth should live in stable family homes with nurturing caregivers to help them recover from the trauma they have experienced.

Unfortunately, as caregivers and children seek to develop a strong relationship, they are often left alone to navigate misunderstandings and frustrations which can escalate and have detrimental results.

Crisis response can play an important role in assisting both caregiver and child to help families build strong relationships, work through difficult moments, and stabilize.

## ISSUE

Misunderstandings and challenging situations in the home can lead to placement instability and placement disruptions. A 2015 report by the American Academy of Pediatrics, *Helping Foster and Adoptive Families Cope with Trauma*, observes that, “children who have experienced maltreatment often have developed different ways of perceiving and reacting to their world.... Foster and adoptive parents who do not understand these differences risk frustration and may feel resentment as they struggle to understand and raise their children. The resulting stress can disrupt placement and eventually lead to unfavorable outcomes for the children.”

Caregivers may feel their only options are to contact law enforcement, which can result in the inappropriate criminalization of foster youth.

Immediate crisis response can play an important role in assisting both caregivers and children, and stabilize placements during moments of crisis.

Specialists will be trained to provide trauma-informed support, defuse challenging situations, and maintain foster youth in their current living situations.

Additionally, immediate crisis response can help families avoid escalation, such as inappropriate involvement of law enforcement and/or removal of the youth from the caregiver’s home.

## PROPOSAL

The proposal supports foster youth and the families who step up in moments of crisis to stabilize quality homes for our most vulnerable population. Specifically, this bill:

- Requires the California Department of Social Services to establish a statewide hotline, to be available 24-hours per day, seven days per week to respond to caregiver or youth calls when a crisis arises; and
- Requires county child welfare and behavioral health agencies to establish county-based mobile crisis-response units to respond should it be determined that current or former foster youth and their caregivers could benefit from an in-home response.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Susanna Kniffen, Senior Director,  
Child Welfare Policy  
Children Now  
(916) 379-5256 ext. 124  
skniffen@childrennow.org