



Dear Parent and/or Legal Guardian,

If you are receiving this letter, then most likely it has been a very hard time for your family. You are not alone. The goal of the agency is to keep your child/children safe, and to bring families back together.

We want to share with you a few things, so that you know what to expect today, and for the next few days. Family separation happens in many ways and for many reasons. Each situation is unique. Always know you can ask your social worker for specific information about your child. Here is some information to help get you through until you can have that conversation.

We want to ensure you are treated with fairness and dignity during this process. We have taken steps to be as transparent and honest as possible. If you feel there has been misconduct in anyway, you may file a grievance by contacting Nicolas Yanez at 707-565-1309.

All the best,

The Birth Parent-Foster Parent Alliance

# TODAY

## Where is my child/children going right now?

- After separation, the social worker will be transporting your child/children to their temporary home.
- In some cases, the social worker will take your child to the doctor for a check-up first.
- Some children go to the home of a relative immediately after the decision for separation is made, some children go to the home of a family friend, some children go to the home of a licensed resource family, and some children will go to an emergency children's shelter called Valley of the Moon Children's Center.

## What is a resource parent/ resource family?

We use the word "resource parent," generally, to mean the person who will be taking care of your child/children for the time being. Some people use the word "foster parent" in the same way.

## Getting through today—you are not alone

- Call a friend/family member you know has your back and you can trust. If this doesn't feel right to you, then here are some other numbers that might help you connect to a support person.
- Parent mentors: Parent Mentors are parents who have had their children separated from their care, and have successfully reunified with them. They might be able to help support you through this process. Talk to your Social Worker and ask for a referral. For more information: <https://calparents.org/what-we-do/parent-support-services/parent-mentor-orientation-program.html>
- YWCA: 24/7 hotline for those who have experienced domestic violence: **707-546-1234**
- Sonoma County AA meetings: Go to [aaHomegroup.org](http://aaHomegroup.org) to find meetings 24/7 online, or <https://www.sonomacountyaa.org/meetings/?tsml-day=any&tsml-region=santa-rosa/> to find local to Sonoma County in-person meetings.
- Sonoma County NA 24 hour hotline: **(707) 324-4062** [Meetings - Sonoma County Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous \(sonomacountyna.org\)](http://Meetings-SonomaCountyFellowshipofNarcoticsAnonymous.com)
- Sonoma County Mental Health Crisis Stabilization: Hotline for mental health crisis:  
**707-576-8181**
- 24-Hour Suicide Prevention Hotline: **1-855-587-6373**
- Basic needs: 211 <https://211sonoma.org> Call 211.
- Valley of the Moon Children's Center: Emergency Children's Shelter where some children may stay after separation. **707-565-6350**

## Comfort call

Once your child/children are settled in with their resource family or at Valley of the Moon Children's Center, you can expect a phone call from either the resource family, or a social worker to give you an update. This will be a quick phone call within 24 hours of family separation between the child's parents and their current caregiver. During the phone call, they will introduce themselves and talk to you about the most important things they need to know to care for your child/children until a more thorough conversation can happen. Some questions that may be asked:

**What is your child's sleep and bedtime like?**

NOTES:

**What soothes your child when they are sad or scared?**

NOTES:

**What does your child like to eat? Any special care needs you can quickly share with the resource family will help your child/children settle in and feel safe.**

NOTES:

You will be a part of continued conversations about where the best place is for your child to be, if not at home. The goal of our agency is first to, keep children with their parents, and second, to return children to their parents when safe. That remains the goal until or unless the Court says otherwise. You know your child best, and their current caregiver needs to hear from you.

# The Next Few Days

## How do I prepare for Court?

**IMPORTANT:** You have been left with a Court notice, which provides you with the necessary information about your first Court hearing.

Sometimes, Court is scary. However scary it may be, go to Court. The Judge needs you there to make good decisions about your family.

On your Court notice, there is a phone number for you to reach out to an attorney.

**Here is that number again: 707-526-7337.**

Give them a call. They can explain the next steps of the Court process in Legal terms.

### Tips:

- ✓ **Arrive early/plan for parking and finding the courtroom.**
- ✓ **Dress like you're going to a job interview.**
- ✓ **Bring supportive family (it's a closed court so friends may not be able to join you in the court room, but they can wait for you outside).**

NOTES:

## When will I be able to have parenting time with my child/children?

You will hear from a social worker or social worker assistant about parenting time visits with your child within the first several days.

- ***If you do not hear from anyone about visits, please call: 707-565-4300 and ask to be connected to the visitation supervisor.***

NOTES:

## Will I be able to meet the people caring for my child?

You will get to meet and talk to the resource family who will be caring for your child. This will happen in a meeting called the *Caregiver Conversation or Introduction* scheduled shortly after your first court hearing by the Family/Relative Coordinator. This meeting will allow you to ask questions and share any information about your child that you wish. It will be more in-depth than the comfort call.

NOTES:

## How do I understand what is happening moving forward?

Please access the booklet **“The Juvenile Dependency Court and You: A Guide for Parents”** using the QR code or website below. Should you not have access to a phone or internet connection, a hard copy of this booklet will be made available to you by your social worker.

This guide describes the dependency court process in California. It also includes the story of one parent who went through the dependency system and her advice on how to get your children back home. We hope it is helpful in navigating this process.

English

<https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/juvenile-dependency-court-and-you.pdf>

