



# Child Abuse Prevention Month Webinar Series

*Moving from Mandated Reporting to  
Community Supporting: Introduction  
and Parent Perspectives*

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
11:00am-12:30pm

# Agenda



- Welcome & Opening Remarks
- Presentation by Safe & Sound
- Panel Discussion
- Closing

# Opening Remarks



Sheila Boxley, President & CEO  
The Child Abuse Prevention Center



Hillary Konrad, Chief  
Office of Child Abuse Prevention

# Rethinking the Child Welfare System: From Mandated Reporter to Community Supporter

Office of Child Abuse Prevention |  
Child Abuse Prevention Month | April 4, 2023

Katie Albright, Senior Advisor  
Jenny Pearlman, Chief Policy Officer

SAFE & SOUND



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**Creating a Child & Family Well-Being System:**  
A Paradigm Shift from Mandated Reporting  
to Community Supporting

(September 2022)

[https://economics.safeandsound.org/reporting\\_paradigm](https://economics.safeandsound.org/reporting_paradigm)



# Our Partners in Developing the Issue Brief

In addition to those quoted in this issue brief, the Safe & Sound team would like to acknowledge the following for providing data, perspectives, and review of this issue brief:

- Casey Family Program: Dana Blackwell, Justin Lee, Peter Pecora, Kim Ricketts, Toni Rozanski, and Jack Trope
- California Citizen Review Panel on Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- California Child Welfare Indicators Project: Daniel Webster

- California Department of Social Services/ Office of Child Abuse Prevention
- Child Welfare Council/Prevention and Early Intervention Co-Chairs: Kathy Icenhower and David Swanson Hollinger
- Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition

# Why Safe & Sound?

- Fifty years of experience supporting children, parents, caregivers, and families.
  - Lead/co-lead San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Council, San Francisco Children's Advocacy Center, San Francisco Family Resource Center Alliance, and San Francisco Family Support Network
  - Co-Chair of Marin County CAPC
  - Member of Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition
  - Co-Chair California Family Resource Association's Policy Committee. Member of Citizens Review Panel, CWC Prevention & Early Intervention Committee, Pre-Petition Representation Work Group
- **AND**, as a designated trainer for mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect, we acknowledge that we are complicit in participating in a system that is inequitable and often harmful to the children it is intending to protect.



# Why This Matters: Perspectives

“My daughter was born medically fragile. I had no support from my family. I didn’t know where to go for help. I didn’t know how to ask for help because I didn’t know what I needed. The domestic violence in our home got worse because of the stress of being parents of a child with significant needs. When the police called CPS, I had no idea that my child could be removed because I was a victim of domestic violence. How could they take her away? I believe my experience—and my daughter’s life—would have been different if we had support, if someone had explained the “failure to protect” laws. Even though my daughter was in foster care for less than a year, she continues to suffer from the experience.”

— Shelley Lopez, Parent and Advocate



# Why This Matters: Perspectives

“The child welfare system has historically been rooted in fear: fear of the rare tragic cases of severe abuse that are missed, and the consequences to the children and professionals involved. We must resolve the dilemma of keeping children safe and supported without magnifying the feeling of threat, fear, and surveillance often associated with mandated reporting.”

— Kimberly Giardina, DSW, MSW, Director Child Welfare Services, County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency



# Why This Matters: The Data



Almost **25% of White children** in the California birth cohort were investigated by CPS by age 18



This compares to roughly **50% of Black and Native American children**

Source: <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2021.306214>

# Why This Matters: The Data

**432,736** children were subject to a CPS investigation between April 2021-March 2022

**56,079** children were found to be maltreated

Bottom line: only **13%** of reports CPS reports are substantiated

# Why This Matters: Perspectives

“When we discuss the data, people are shocked. Black and Native American children and families are touched by the child welfare system at significantly higher rates than other groups. Understanding this disproportionality helps us examine our own biases and start to think about how we can be part of the change instead of part of the problem.”

— Jessica Mateu-Newsome, Program Director, Family and Children’s Services,  
San Francisco Human Services Agency

# Why Now: Federal, State & Local Momentum

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine the child welfare system:

- **New federal policy**—Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)
- **New state policy**—California’s 5-Year Prevention Plan (2022) focuses on policy and practice shifts necessary to create a **Community Pathway** that allows families to access services and support without fear of over-reporting to Child Protective Services
- **County Comprehensive Prevention Plans**—communities throughout California are developing their plans through cross-sector collaborations

# Why Now: Federal, State & Local Momentum

- **Legislative Analyst Office** provided analysis on mandated reporting and impact of racial disproportionality in [\*Racial Disproportionalities and Disparities in California's Child Welfare System,\*](#)” (Assembly Budget Subcommittee, March 2022 & 2023)
- **California Citizen Review Panel** submitted [recommendations](#) to CDSS to reimagine mandated reporting to a system of mandated supporting (September 2022)
- **Safe & Sound, commissioned by CDSS,** published [\*A Paradigm Shift from Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting\*](#) (September 2022)
- **Child Welfare Council. Prevention & Early Intervention Committee.** Approved recommendations of Prevention & Early Intervention Committee (March 2023)
- **County and local jurisdictions** are looking at reforms to mandated reporting as a lever to address racial disproportionality—Humboldt, Inglewood School District, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Ventura.

# Recommendations for Reforming Mandated Reporting to Allow for Community Supporting

**Embrace a New Frame:** In a reframing that prioritizes the best outcomes for a child, we first ask whether there is truly a substantial risk of harm. If not, then ask questions about the caregiving system:

*“Does this family have the resources to provide the care and protection they want to provide?”*

*“What strengths exist within this caregiving system?”*

*“What are this family’s priorities for their child, and how can we support them in a culturally appropriate and humble way?”*

# Recommendations for Reforming Mandated Reporting to Allow for Community Supporting

## Build a Community Pathway and increase access to supports and services

- A. Create trauma-informed linkages and a Community Pathway - Family Helplines and Family Navigators are key to developing an integrated system of care that centers on family experience and incorporates a family's strengths. Close linkages between different family-serving entities (e.g., pediatric clinics and FRCs) can be effective pathways for families to seek support, even if they are not FFPSA-eligible.
- B. Invest in basic supports - for example researchers found that for every \$1 increase in the minimum wage, there was a nearly 10% reduction in neglect reports.



# Recommendations for Reforming Mandated Reporting to Allow for Community Supporting

## Advance legal and legislative reforms

- A. Narrow the legal definition of neglect, (AB 2085) - Remove poverty-based neglect.
- B. Develop guidance on reportable neglect
- C. Revise current liability for failure to report - including numerous categories of reporters, *i*
- D. Raise the legal threshold for reporting and family separation - *i.e.*, mandating a report when there is a substantial or imminent risk of harm, particularly related to neglect
- E. Require greater information and disaggregation of data related to neglect
- F. Utilize comprehensive prevention planning as outlined by AB153, supported by the State Block grant as well as FFPSA
- G. State and local funding for entities supporting families, *i.e.*, FRCs, FQHCs, School-Based Health Centers

# Recommendations for Reforming Mandated Reporting to Allow for Community Supporting

## Implement policy and practice reforms

- A. Incorporate group decision making models in organizations to reduce bias and risk - examples are Plan of Safe Care and CPS Time-Out
- B. Use peer advocates and partners to build relationships that increase the likelihood that parents in emerging crises safely get support without unnecessary state intervention
- C. Invest in technology solutions - especially those that allow for “closed loop” referrals for services and support

# Recommendations for Reforming Mandated Reporting to Allow for Community Supporting

## Mandated Reporter Training Recommendations:

- A. Augment mandated reporter training to include strategies to build a system that supports families first.
- B. Include a list of local family support organizations in mandated reporter trainings.
- C. Include local and State disproportionality statistics, cultural considerations for each form of abuse, information about implicit bias in reporting and how to mitigate bias in reporting in all mandated reporter trainings.

# Perspectives: From San Francisco Mandated Reporter Trainings

**What was missing from this training that you would like to receive?**

Most Common Themes:

- “Resources that may be helpful to youth and their families outside of Child Welfare.”
- “Information about how to support a family’s own agency in keeping their children safe.”
- “This is the only mandated reporter training I have taken that talks about disproportionality within the Child Welfare system.”
- “I appreciated the inclusion of cultural considerations for each type of abuse and the discussion we had about how to mitigate bias in reporting.”

# Recommendations for Reforming Mandated Reporting to Allow for Community Supporting

**Engage communities, tribes, and other stakeholders to guide reform**

- A. Ensure that planning is informed by those with lived expertise - Broad representation of stakeholders, including tribes, educators, pediatricians, public health and family and parent advocates drawn from community members who have experienced the consequences of involvement with the child welfare system

# Resource/Reference List

- [Addressing Economic Hardship Key to Preventing Child Welfare System Involvement](#), Chapin Hall (2021)
- [Do No Harm, Rebuilding Trust & Keeping Families Together](#), H. Briscoe et al. (2021)
- [Family Integrity & Justice Quarterly](#), Multiple Authors (Spring 2022)
- [Racial Disproportionality and Disparities in California's Child Welfare System](#)," Assembly Budget Subcommittee (2022)
- [California Citizen Review Panel, Annual Report \(2021-2022\)](#), (September 2022)
- [What Does Child Protective Services Investigate as Neglect? A Population-Based Study](#), L. Palmer et al. (2021)

# GET INVOLVED

LEARN AND SHARE:

[economics.safeandsound.org](http://economics.safeandsound.org)

CONTACT:

[CommunityAction@safeandsound.org](mailto:CommunityAction@safeandsound.org)



# Thank you!

Be sure not to miss the upcoming webinars throughout April by registering in advance.

Next Webinar:

***"Getting Real with Data and Disproportionality"***

Presented by UC Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project &  
Chapin Hall

**April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**11:00am-12:30pm PST**

Link to register and webinar series flyer is in the chat!

Please contact us at [KidsDay@dss.ca.gov](mailto:KidsDay@dss.ca.gov) with any questions.