

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- At the hearing you will have an opportunity to address the issues pertaining to the grievance. The Administrative Hearing Officer will preside over these proceedings. The Hearing Officer will make a recommendation to the Director of The Department of Public Social Services as to the appropriate resolution of the grievance. You will receive written correspondence regarding the final decision.
- If you are still not satisfied with the decision made as to the grievance, you may pursue the matter using legal representation.

NOTES

- Spoke to social worker on:

and the worker said:

- Spoke to the social worker's supervisor on:

and the supervisor said:

- Spoke to the Regional Manager on:

and he/she said:

- Requested a Grievance Hearing on:
- _____

EXAMPLES OF A GRIEVANCE

"My children were removed from my care and placed with their father's sister. I don't think it is in their best interest to stay with her; they barely know her. I want them placed with my mother."

.....

"I am a foster parent and recently a foster child who was placed with me for nearly a year was removed from my home. The social worker placed him in another home that she said is an adoptive home. I do not feel that the removal of this child from my care was justified."

.....

"I want my granddaughter placed with me but she was placed with a distant relative instead because of my past criminal history. I have been part of this child's life since birth and I know I am the best person to care for her until she returns back to her mother. I requested a criminal exemption for my past record but it was denied."

.....

"I was told that my niece cannot be placed with us because the social worker said my home does not meet standards and cannot be approved. This means my niece has to live with strangers. I do not think this is in the best interest of my niece."

.....

"We are a couple who got licensed by the county so that we could adopt. We have had two children in our home for over a year. Our adoption home study was denied for reasons we do not agree with. We were told by the social worker the children will have to be removed from our care."

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RESOLVING GRIEVANCES

FOR PARENTS, CAREGIVERS,
GUARDIANS AND CHILDREN WHO
WANT TO RESOLVE A PLACEMENT
DISPUTE AS IT AFFECTS THEIR
RELATIVE OR NON-RELATED
EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBER

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A grievance is when a parent, potential caregiver, current caregiver or child disagrees with a decision made by the social worker regarding placement or removal of a child from a home. Grievances involve children under the supervision of the Juvenile Court.

The grievance process is authorized by Division 31-020 of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual. CDSS regulations state that all grievance issues shall be resolved in the best interest of the child.

Any of the following individuals may have a grievable matter:

- Children
- Foster Parents
- Legal Guardians
- Legal Parents
- Relative/ Non-related extended family member caregivers.

Any of these individuals may request a grievance; this does not guarantee under the laws and regulations that govern grievance procedures that a hearing will be granted. This is explained further in the section entitled “What Happens Next?”



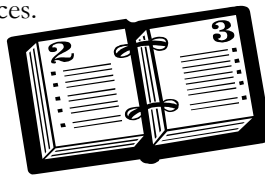
HOW DO I RESOLVE A GRIEVANCE?

First, let's clarify what you are disputing or grieving. A grievance involves placement issues regarding a child when you believe that the social worker:

- Failed to follow departmental policy, or
- Misinterpreted state laws and regulations.

It is in the best interest of the child if such a dispute can be resolved without utilizing a formal grievance process.

The following are the steps to take as you attempt to resolve your grievance with the Department of Public Social Services.



STEP ONE

- Discuss your dispute with the social worker. Explain what the problem is and ask what can be done to remedy the situation. If you cannot resolve the issue with the worker, write down the date and time you spoke with him or her.
- Contact the social worker's supervisor and discuss the matter with the supervisor. Let the supervisor know when you had your conversation with the social worker and what was said. Convey your concerns and ask when you can expect a decision from the supervisor.
- Contact the supervisor's regional manager and request that the regional manager review the situation. If after the regional manager makes a decision as to your circumstances, and you are not satisfied, it is time to consider Step Two.

STEP TWO

Request a Formal Grievance Hearing in writing:

- Explain in the letter what you were told, by whom, and on what day (s)
- State your objection (s) to the decision. Set forth the facts which you believe provide a basis for reversal of the county action.
- Describe how you believe the Department did not follow correct procedures
- Mail your request for a grievance hearing within ten (10) days of your conversation with the Regional Manager to:

Riverside County DPSS
Attn: Grievance Coordinator
10281 Kidd Street, 2nd Floor
Riverside, CA 92503

The 10-day time limit is established by the state of California in order to ensure that the best interests of the child are maintained and the dispute is resolved in a timely manner.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

1. The Grievance Hearing staff will review your written request for a grievance hearing. A decision based on the CDSS regulations will be made as to whether you are entitled to receive a grievance hearing.
2. If you are entitled to a grievance hearing, a review hearing will be set within ten (10) days of receipt of your request. If your request is denied you will receive a written response within ten (10) days explaining the legal reasons for denial of the grievance hearing.
3. Once a hearing date is set, an Administrative Hearing Officer will be assigned to review all relevant documentation. You may provide to the Grievance Coordinator any paperwork that you feel supports your position. This process will be fully explained to you when you are notified of your hearing date.