



## AB1688 – Notice of Abuse in Foster Care Placements

### PURPOSE

Assembly Bill 1688 strengthens safeguards for children in foster care by expanding notification requirements when there is a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect in a foster home. This bill ensures that all relevant parties—including parents, legal guardians (as appropriate), and attorneys representing other children in the same placement—receive timely notice. Increasing transparency and information-sharing is paramount to protecting vulnerable children and promoting accountability within the foster care system.

### BACKGROUND

Under current law, notification of suspected abuse or neglect in foster homes is limited, creating gaps that may leave other children at risk. At present, the attorney of the child directly involved is notified, but there is no requirement to notify the child’s parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or the attorneys of other children living in the same foster home when the allegations arise. This creates a reporting gap that limits the sharing of critical information, potentially leaving other youth in foster care vulnerable to the same abuse or neglect.

Every year, 68,000 children move through the California foster care system, with more than half located in Southern California<sup>1</sup>. In Los Angeles County, general neglect accounts for 39.2% of referrals to out-of-home placements, and 15.6% involve physical abuse allegations<sup>2</sup>.

There is a clear need for effective interventions to address the challenges youth in foster care face, including increased transparency in reporting and detailing allegations of child abuse in foster homes. Without timely notice, attorneys cannot take action to ensure their clients’ safety and protection. This reporting gap undermines the broader purpose of the child welfare system: ensuring the safety and well-being of youth in foster care.

[How Many Kids are in Foster Care? | Children's Bureau](#)<sup>1</sup>

### EXISTING LAW

Penal Code Section 11166 requires mandated reporters to report suspected child abuse or neglect within 36 hours.

Penal Code Section 11166.1 requires social service agencies to notify children’s attorneys when there is reasonable suspicion that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect.

### SOLUTION

AB 1688 closes the notification gap by requiring child welfare agencies to:

- Notify parents or legal guardians if their child is the subject of allegations of abuse or neglect in an out-of-home placement.
- Ensure that attorneys representing any other children in the same placement also receive notice of the report of abuse or neglect.
- Clarify that notice requirements do not apply to parents whose parental rights have been terminated.

By expanding who receives notice, AB 1688 enables faster protective action, strengthens oversight, and reduces the likelihood that abuse will go undetected or unaddressed for other children in the same placement.

### SUPPORT

Children’s Law Center of CA (Co-Sponsor)  
Children’s Advocacy Institute (Co-Sponsor)  
Dependency Legal Services (Co-Sponsor)

### CONTACT

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[DCFS Factsheet Summary-PDF](#)<sup>2</sup>