

Typical Ombuds Concerns

- Child Safety, Abuse, or Neglect
- Understanding Juvenile Dependency
- Communication Breakdowns & Conflict
- Delays, Disrespect, Unprofessionalism
- Child Removal
- Placement
- Case Plans & Legal Processes
- Visitation
- Foster Youth Issues
- System Resources
- Culture and Language Barriers
- Family Reunification Issues
- Guardianship & Adoption
- Identification of Systemic Issues

Role of Ombuds

The Ombuds strives for the impartial and objective treatment of people and review of their issues, and advocates for fair and equitably administered processes.

The Ombuds Does Not:

- Make decisions for you
- Act as your legal counsel
- Advocate on your personal behalf
- Involve itself in matters set for trial
- Serve as an office of legal notice
- Impose its own policies and beliefs about best practices

Concerned? Frustrated? Need Help?

Contact the Juvenile Welfare Office of the Ombuds!



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www.sccgov.org/sites/ohr/ombudsman

**Call Us &
Let's Work Together!**

Se Habla Español
Có Nói Tiếng Việt

Juvenile Welfare Office of the Ombuds



Neutral • Informal
Confidential • Independent

Building Bridges

Within The Santa Clara County
Juvenile Welfare System

(408) 993-4114

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The Ombuds Can Help ...

Listen and Validate

Generate Options

Address Complaints

Conflict Coach

Improve Communication

Enrich Social Worker-Client Relations

Manage & Mediate Disputes

Educate on Juvenile Welfare Process

Address Agency Accountability

Redress Retaliation

Improve the Juvenile Welfare System

Anyone with questions or concerns related

Who The Ombuds Serves ...

to a current or past case with the Santa Clara County Juvenile Dependency Court or Department of Family & Children's Services (DFCS / CPS), including:

- Birth Parents
- Guardians
- Foster Youth
- Relatives
- Foster Parents
- Caregivers
- Social Workers
- System Partners
- Community Members
- Other Government Agencies

Tips for Working with the Department of Family & Children's Services

- Get clear on the DFCS / Court's concerns about "harm & danger" to your child
- Understand "behavioral changes" you need to show, so as to "create safety" for your child
- Address concerns and questions early with your social worker (and supervisor as needed)
- Be organized to show you're on track for reunification and advancement
- Keep phone and email communications concise and to the point
- Set up voicemail – don't let it fill up; update your address (of record) if you move
- Make all scheduled appointments; they are critical to establish trust and rapport
- If you are a relative seeking placement of the child, tell the social worker right away
- Families should understand and maintain the boundaries set by the social workers
- Treat people the way you want to be treated

Tips for Professionals Working with Clients

- Actively utilize Child and Family Practice Model behaviors and SOP tools
- Focus on promoting behavioral "actions" to remedy harm & danger; help clients identify what needs to change, how safety is measured, and what constitutes success
- Understand as soon as possible who is in the client's "circle of support"
- Encourage and support parties to speak out, find solutions, and make plans and decisions
- Engage in routine, face-to-face dialogues with your clients
- Be courageous and have those difficult conversations!
- Frontload communication and resolution efforts while issues and conflicts are manageable
- Utilize coaching from supervisors, managers, and consultants as needed

Contact the Juvenile Welfare Ombuds When...

You're stuck! You have already talked about your concerns and feelings with the other party and tried to reduce tensions and/or conflict surrounding your issues. If you feel your communication could be even *more* effective, contact the Ombuds to discuss any remaining concerns. Your work with the Ombuds will focus on issue identification, understanding conflict dynamics, communication coaching, increasing understanding, and developing options so you can move forward with more informed decision-making.