



**BUILDING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY  
FOR OUR KIDS**  
Kern County's Children  
FY 2024-2025 Annual Report

### Strengthening Families and Communities For 33 Years

Established by the Kern County Board of Supervisors in 1992, the Kern County Network for Children (KCNC) proudly continues its mission to protect and enrich the lives of children in Kern County.

### KCNC is committed to the well-being of our children and families by:

- ◆ Using a collaborative approach to create and implement innovative services to benefit children and families.
- ◆ Assisting lead agencies in developing and implementing the Kern County Self Assessment and Kern Self Improvement Plan to ensure services meet critical needs, are well designed, and help improve Child Welfare Service outcomes.
- ◆ Ensuring current and former foster youth, up to age 24, have access to essential services and resources to help them transition to adulthood. The KCNC Dream Center is a one stop resource for housing, education, employment, transportation, and more.
- ◆ Engaging individuals with lived experience to improve the quality and impact of services, and ability to develop approaches to reach those in need effectively.
- ◆ Providing the platform for agencies to come together to share information, resources and collaborate to bridge services for families.
- ◆ Serving as Kern's Child Abuse Prevention Council and Coordinating Council for Child and Family Services.
- ◆ Continuing a legacy of leadership by offering future leaders the opportunity to learn from public service mentors.

### Supporting Families is Key: You Can Make the Difference!

Encouraging families to seek help can make the difference in keeping families safe and together. **The prevention of child abuse and neglect is a community responsibility.** To report suspected abuse or neglect, call the 24 hour, 7 days a week hotline at (661) 631-6011, (760) 375-6049 or dial 911. **It can be a matter of life and death.**



#### **Did You Know:**

- ◆ **13,512** Kern County children were suspected of being abused or neglected - an average of **37** children each day in 2024.
- ◆ **2,570** - an average of **7** Kern County children everyday, were found to be victims of abuse or neglect in 2024.
- ◆ In 2024, **3 child fatalities** were determined to be a result of abuse/neglect by law enforcement or the coroner; and **19 children sustained severe/serious injuries** due to abuse or neglect.
- ◆ In 2024, **8 children** were found to be victims of Abusive Head Trauma (Shaken Baby Syndrome) as determined by the Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect Team.



# 2024-2025 Achievements

By delivering child abuse prevention education and awareness programs, providing supportive services to families most at risk, and harnessing the power of community action to address the critical needs of Kern County’s children and families, the Kern County Network for Children is working to improve child safety outcomes in three key areas:

## AWARENESS:

We raise awareness of child abuse and methods to prevent it so communities take action.

- Bringing awareness to the community on critical issues around the safety and well-being of children is at the forefront of KCNC. Information reached **598,745** community members through print, television, and radio news outlets.
- An average of **137** service providers and community members attended **10** trainings aimed at providing knowledge and tools to successfully help strengthen families, increase child safety, and access ever changing resources.
- A total of **7** General Collaborative meetings were held to address critical issues affecting Kern families and promote networking amongst the **130** agencies throughout Kern County that attended. An average of **70** stakeholders attended each meeting.

## DIRECT SERVICES:

We work with community partners to offer effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services for families who are at-risk of or who have experienced child abuse/neglect.

- **5,173** families at-risk of experiencing child abuse and/or neglect received Differential Response services countywide. **96%** were satisfied with services.
- **245** parents received evidence-based and/or evidence-informed parenting education services. **121 (50%)** of parents successfully completed and graduated classes. **62 (25%)** dropped/did not complete their class, and **62 (25%)** remained enrolled.
- There are **17** Abusive Head Trauma (Shaken Baby Syndrome) simulator dolls actively being used to educate parents on the dangers of shaking a baby. Family resource centers and parenting programs provided this critical training to **2,157** individuals to promote healthy parenting.

## NETWORK DEVELOPMENT:

We strengthen the community’s response to child maltreatment and foster youth through knowledge, building collaborative partnerships, and leadership development.

- **19** Collaboratives and **24** Family Resource Centers across Kern County actively work to improve the safety and well-being of their communities and target populations, including veterans, individuals with special needs, American Indian communities, and LGBTQIA+ groups.
- All **13** Kern County Network for Children accredited community collaboratives continued to maintain their accreditation and receive ongoing technical assistance services.
- **13** Dream Center partner agencies and organizations worked hand in hand to support current and former foster youth.

## Evolving Prevention

### Parents As Teachers Services

Parents As Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based program that services are client driven, provide in-home support, teach coping and life skills, demonstrate parenting techniques, and assist with nurturing parent/child bonding/attachment, PAT has demonstrated effectiveness in improving child safety.



*I have developed better skills to be a better father and partner to my wife!*

- PAT Parent



- ◆ During FY 2024-2025, Parent As Teachers (PAT) services provided by Henrietta Weill Memorial Child Guidance Clinic (Central Kern) and Clinica Sierra Vista (East Kern) have been implemented for prevention and post-reunification families in all Kern County. Combined, these service providers received **285** referrals and served **171** families, including **275** children.
- ◆ Group Connections are part of Parents as Teachers essential requirements and they are needing to do **12** Group Connections through out the year. Central Kern PAT (**12** were done and **109** of attendees) and East Kern PAT (**16** were done and **10** of attendees). Highlights: During this fiscal year, the Easter Egg Hunt Group Connection had the highest attendance with **21** families in attendance. Parents expressed that they really enjoyed the fellowship, support and conversations with other parents. In the conversations they had, parents felt they were given the opportunity to learn from each other—hearing their perspectives and experiences, creating a sense of community.



# A Strategic Investment Kern County's Differential Response

Differential Response (DR) expands the ability of Child Protective Services (CPS) to respond differently to suspected reports of child abuse/neglect, by assisting families at the first signs of trouble. CPS Social Workers assess the referrals received and designate their safety risk level as either Path 1 (lowest), 2 or 3 (highest). Trained community-based organizations provide families with comprehensive supportive services.



*Thank you for all the help and guidance. You were a light in a dark tunnel. My case manager was awesome. If I can do it, anyone can.*

*- DR Parent*



## DR Improves Child Welfare Service Outcomes

- **5,173** families received direct services from DR programs.
- **1,600** families received comprehensive DR case management services, of these:
  - **60%** parents/caretakers receiving CalWORKs cash aid who were sanctioned cured their sanction, increased their income, and began fully participating in their Welfare To Work plan to become self sufficient.
  - **65%** of case managed families increased family functioning, as measured by the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale, an evidenced based assessment tool, and exited successfully with completed case plans.

### *The California Child Welfare Indicators Project's*

Child Maltreatment substantiation rate data for 2009-2024 shows a steady decrease of in the number of substantiated referrals in Kern County by 49%.

In 2024, there were 2,582 children with substantiations: 357 under age 1, 348 ages 1-2 years, 456 ages 3-5 years, 652 ages 6-10 years, 578 ages 11-15 years and 191 ages 16-17 years.

## FY 24-25 Referrals & Goods Provided by DR

Total Referrals Provided	5,003	Total Goods Provided	4,238
Childcare	139	Cleaning Supplies	90
Community Involvement	1,219	Clothing & Shoes for children/baby	145
Condition of Children	143	Community Info. (Housing list, jobs, etc.)	2,077
Drug/Alcohol	65	Diapers	242
Employment	241	Educational Material	906
Family Relations	187	Emergency Funds	169
Food/Nutrition	353	First 5 New Parent Kit	11
Health Care	300	Food	203
Housing	369	Gifts for Children	51
Income/Budget	127	Household Items	81
Mental Health	1,200	Hygiene Items	86
Other	564	Safe Sleep Survey	62
Transportation	96	Safety Equipment	23
		Other Items	92

# Together Creating Possibilities for Current & Former Foster Youth

## Our Partners...



Dream Center youth participate in April Child Abuse Prevention Month and Awareness activities by creating chalk art



## Dream Center Highlights

KCNC Dream Center provides comprehensive outreach and case management services to foster youth and emancipated youth up to age 24 who may be experiencing homelessness. During Fiscal Year 2024–2025, the Homeless Youth Outreach team served 91 youth, including 13 dependent children. Among participating adults, 29% achieved an increase or maintained stability in employment income. Of the 61 youth who exited services, 55 (90%) transitioned to positive housing outcomes, and 14 (15%) of the total 91 youth secured independent housing without subsidy. Homeless Case Management services were provided to 126 youth, including 31 dependent children. Within this group, 51% of adults demonstrated increased or sustained employment income. Of the 37 youth who exited services, 32 (86%) transitioned to positive housing destinations.

KCNC Dream Center partnered with several community agencies to provide youth with essential resources. These partnerships included Mercy and Memorial Hospitals CommonSpirit Health's Community Health Improvement Program, which supported a substance abuse support group, healthy and locally sourced food boxes, flexible housing supports, and vision care. Kaiser supported by helping address gaps in flexible housing supports, such as purchasing required appliances for Housing Authority inspections. The KCNC Dream Center acquired additional space through the support of the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office. This expansion allows us to house Kern County Probation Placement Unit staff on-site, enhancing opportunities to serve justice-involved youth in the same location. This collaboration optimizes our capacity and ensures an integrated, comprehensive approach to services.

## Dream Center Numbers

During FY 2024–2025, KCNC Dream Center served **948** unduplicated youth with a wide range of services. Youth accessed essential supports including KBHRS/TAY services (**348** visits), college enrollment and financial aid assistance (**210** times), CalFresh/Medi-Cal benefits (**947** applications), and meetings with probation officers or social workers (**818** instances).



*I feel cared for, I am not alone, and if ever in a crisis I know there's a team of people/workers willing and eager to help.*

- Dream Center Youth

### The following essential items were distributed:

- 9,608 Snack Bags
- 1,465 Hygiene Kits
- 5,335 Clothing Items
- 772 Emergency Food Bags

**Tom Corson**, Executive Director  
Mailing: 1300 17th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301  
Physical: 1801 19th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301  
661.636.4488 / www.kcnc.org

