

## **California Program Emphasizes Parental Training and Keeping Families Together Over Foster Homes**

**By David A Wolf**

<http://www.childinjurylawyerblog.com>

In an effort to keep kids out of foster care, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services is giving abusive parents accused or suspected of abusing their children a second chance to be good parents to their children. Experts call the experiment, run by the nation's largest county-run child welfare program, one of the most promising experiments for child welfare. However, it is not without risks; it does place children back into homes that have been deemed unfit.

The program was developed in response to the fact that children in foster care often end up homeless, jobless, and incarcerated as adults. The theory is that the money spent on foster programs would be better spent educating the child's biological parents to improve their parenting skills.

Los Angeles County is taking advantage of a new federal program which allows them to accept a set amount from the government, rather than an amount determined by how many children are in foster care. Under the program, the county can use any excess funds as they see fit. In some cases, the county may pay for furniture for the child's room, child care, parenting and anger management classes, and even a bus pass to get to job training classes. If the child moves back in the parent may also be eligible for more housing, food stamp and welfare benefits.

The program seems to be working; in the last decade the county has reduced the number of children in foster care by more than half. And the savings in monthly foster care costs has allowed the county to hire more case workers. Find out more about this foster care avoidance program in California by visiting [With time and help, a mom may learn to conquer anger.](#)