



HELP CHANGE THE FUNDING INEQUITY!



The Alliance's Step Up Campaign is comprised of advocates and caregivers who want to see all of California's foster children, whether they live with relatives or non-relatives, given equal supports and services so they can thrive. You can join Step Up and learn about opportunities to get involved and to share your story by visiting stepupforkin.org.

This brochure was developed with contributions from Bay Area Legal Aid.



FOSTER CHILDREN RAISED BY RELATIVES



"I am 57 years old and caring for my granddaughter, Abbie, and her half-sister, Layla. In 2012, their mother began using drugs and they entered foster care. They had nothing when I got them, and I dipped into my savings to buy them clothes and supplies, and a few toys. Because Layla was not my biological grandchild, she received a clothing allowance and more support than Abbie, which was confusing because I provide the same level of care for both girls.

It's been difficult on many levels. Our social worker treated me terribly and gave me very little information. If I had adequate support, I think I could provide more activities for the girls, but we scrape by."

—Sharon M.



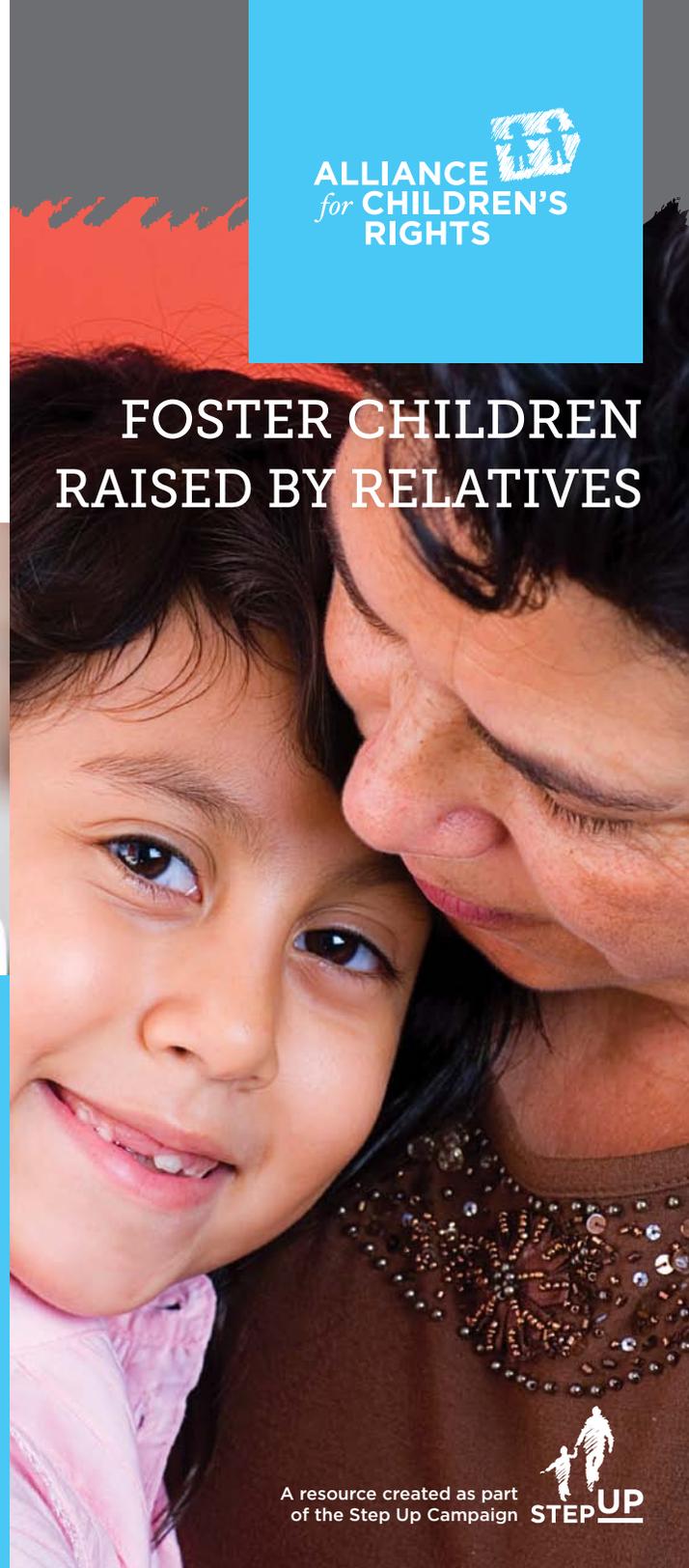
The Alliance is dedicated to protecting the rights of abused and neglected children and foster youth.

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A resource created as part of the Step Up Campaign 

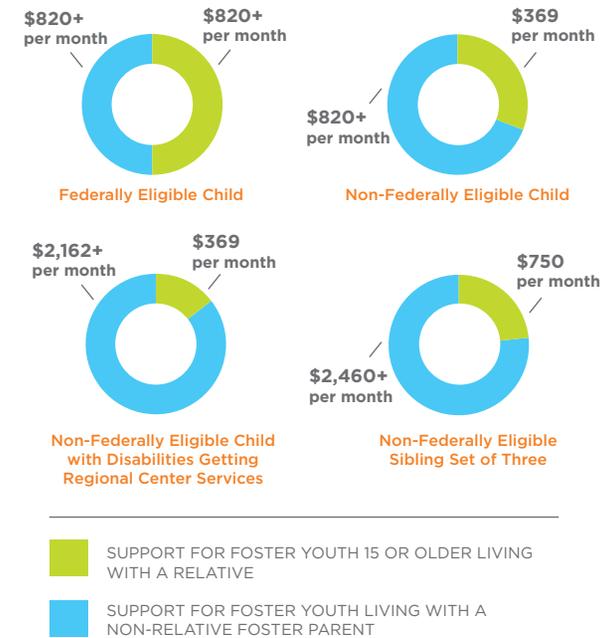
Names and photos have been changed to protect client privacy.



"I'm a single mom caring for my daughter, Mia, and niece, Nika, who I took in last year after she lived in three foster homes. I quickly had to give up school because Nika's emotional needs are so severe. Nika received \$1,000/month in her old foster home and only \$351/month with me. This barely covers her food and I can't afford the counseling she needs. Without additional support, I'm worried about our future."

—Aimee B.

Here's how foster care funding works in California:



If you are a relative caring for a foster child, you know that:

- The circumstances that led to you becoming a caregiver were difficult.
- You stepped up to help give these children a better life.
- Keeping children with family members gives them a familiar and comfortable home where their connections to community and loved ones reduces the trauma of being removed from their parents.

You have made enormous sacrifices for the children placed in your care. For instance:

- You might have retired after a lifetime of hard work, believing that you would now have more time for yourself.
- You might have children of your own, still at home and in need of your care.
- You might be just starting your career and trying to make ends meet.

You might not know that:

- Often a foster child in the care of a relative does not receive the same level of funding as if the same child were with a non-relative. This is the case despite the fact that relatives must meet the same standards for home approval as non-relatives.
- 56% of foster children are not eligible for federal foster care funding because of outdated and arbitrary eligibility rules.
- If a federally ineligible foster child is placed with a relative, California denies state foster care benefits, but would provide benefits to that same child if they were placed with a non-relative.

California is the only state in the country that refuses to provide state foster care benefits to children placed with relatives, even if they meet the same approval standards as non-relatives.

- Many children are not eligible for federal foster care funding because the household the child was removed from makes more money than federal guidelines allow. These income guidelines haven't been updated in nearly 20 years, so a family of three earning more than \$8,676/year will not qualify as federally eligible.
- If a foster child is not federally eligible and placed with a non-relative, they would receive state foster care benefits between \$657 and \$3,162/month, depending on the age and special needs of the youth. A relative caring for that same child can only receive CalWORKs at no more than \$369/month.
- Foster children with special needs who are not federally eligible and are placed with a relative do not receive additional funding for clothing, transportation to and from school, or the supplement that other foster parents receive for children with special needs.