California Dependency Online Guide

User Guide

The **California Dependency Online Guide** is a free, resource website for attorneys, judicial officers and other child welfare professionals in California. The website is run by staff at the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) at California's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

To access the website, go to:

www.courts.ca.gov/dependencyonlineguide

This user guide explains the features of the website and offers some tips about how to use it most effectively.

Please contact us with questions, suggestions, or to get assistance in subscribing, at:

415-865-8018 or

dependencyguide@jud.ca.gov

Homepage

This is the California Dependency Online Guide (CalDOG) homepage, located at www.courts.ca.gov/dependencyonlineguide. From here, you can subscribe or log in, and once logged in, you can access all resources on the website. The various parts of the homepage are explained below, and many are explained in more detail on the pages that follow.

1 - *Subscribe* button. New users click here to sign up. See page 3.

2 - *Subscriber Login* box. Once you are subscribed, use this box to type in your user-name and password each time you visit the website.

3 - *What's New* box. Child welfare news, updated weekly. See pages 4-5.

4 - *Browse Topics* button. Access an index of child welfare-related topics to search for information across the website. See pages 6-7.

5 - *Keyword Search* box. Type in a search term to find all documents on the website that contain that term. See page 8.

6 - *California Law*. Access case law, regulations, rules of court and other legal resources. See pages 9-13.

7 - *Conferences and Trainings/MCLE*. View the conferences and trainings calendar, take on-line courses for credit, and view handouts and materials from past trainings. See pages 14-15.

8 - *Briefs, Motions, and Writs*. View samples of these legal documents for ideas about content and formatting. See page 16.

9 - *Reunification / FM (Family Maintenance) Service Providers*. Access listing of agencies and individuals offering services in each county. See pages 17-22.

10 - *Experts*. Access listings of experts and expert witnesses in each county. See page 23.

11 - *Publications*. View and download articles, research reports, brochures, judicial bench guides and other publications. See pages 24-26.

12 - *Links*. View state and national child welfare-related links. See page 27.

13 - *Contact Us*. Use this link to send us suggestions or ask questions about the website or your subscription.

Subscribing

Subscriptions are free. Select *Attorney*, *Judicial Officer*, or *County Child Welfare Worker* if one of those three terms describes your profession. Please select *Other Child Welfare Professional* if you are a professional working in the California child welfare system not described by one of the other terms. This includes tribal representatives, CASA volunteers, law students, social work students and others. After you select your subscription type, fill out the subscription form. Your subscription will be processed within two business days.

Contact us at dependencyguide@jud.ca.gov or 415-865-8018 to find out if you qualify to subscribe or if you need other subscription assistance.

The *Subscribe* button will take you to the following page.

What's New

Clicking on any item in the *What's New* box on the homepage will take you to the *What's New* page.

Click on any headline to open and read the news item. New items are usually posted weekly. Items typically remain in the *What's New* box for about a month before being archived.

News Archives

When older news items are removed from the *What's New* box, they move to the *News Archives* page.

To access this page, click on the *View News Archives* button on the bottom of the *What's New* page. Click on any headline to open and read that item.

Browse Topics

Using the *Browse Topics* button, on the top, right corner of the screen, is the most accurate and efficient way to search the website for information on a particular topic. Clicking on *Browse Topics* accesses the index of all topics used on the website.

Individual items on the website, including each case summary, publication, sample motion, etc. are coded with one or more topics by attorneys and other trained staff. Topics are assigned to each item based on relevance. Searching for content using *Browse Topics* allows you to look for all information on a particular topic, regardless of where on the website it is located. See below and the next page for more information about how this works.

First, click on the *Browse Topics* button to open this topical index.

Then, click on the *WIC#* button to access materials organized by California Welfare and Institutions Code section numbers.

Or, click on any letter of the alphabet to access materials organized by alphabetical topics.

Some topics, when you click on them, will open a number of sub-topics.

Browse Topics (continued)

After you have selected a *WIC#* or a letter, you will see the listings of the topics that start with that number or letter.

Click on a topic or a subtopic to see all items across the website coded with that topic

For example, if you select the letter "L" and then the topic *Law Updates-Annual*, you will see a listing of the sections of the website that contain information on that topic. In this example, you can see that we currently have 2 Conferences & Trainings, 14 Other Training Materials items, etc.

Select one of these categories (*Conferences & Trainings*, for example) and the website will bring you to a list of each of the items in that category.

Keyword Search

In addition to the *Browse Topics* button, there is also a *Search* button near the top right corner of the screen. To use this feature, type a search term into the box labeled *Keyword Search* and then click the *Search* button. *Keyword Search* will look for all documents on the website that contain your search term. Typically, you will get more results than when you search with *Browse Topics*, but the results may be less relevant.
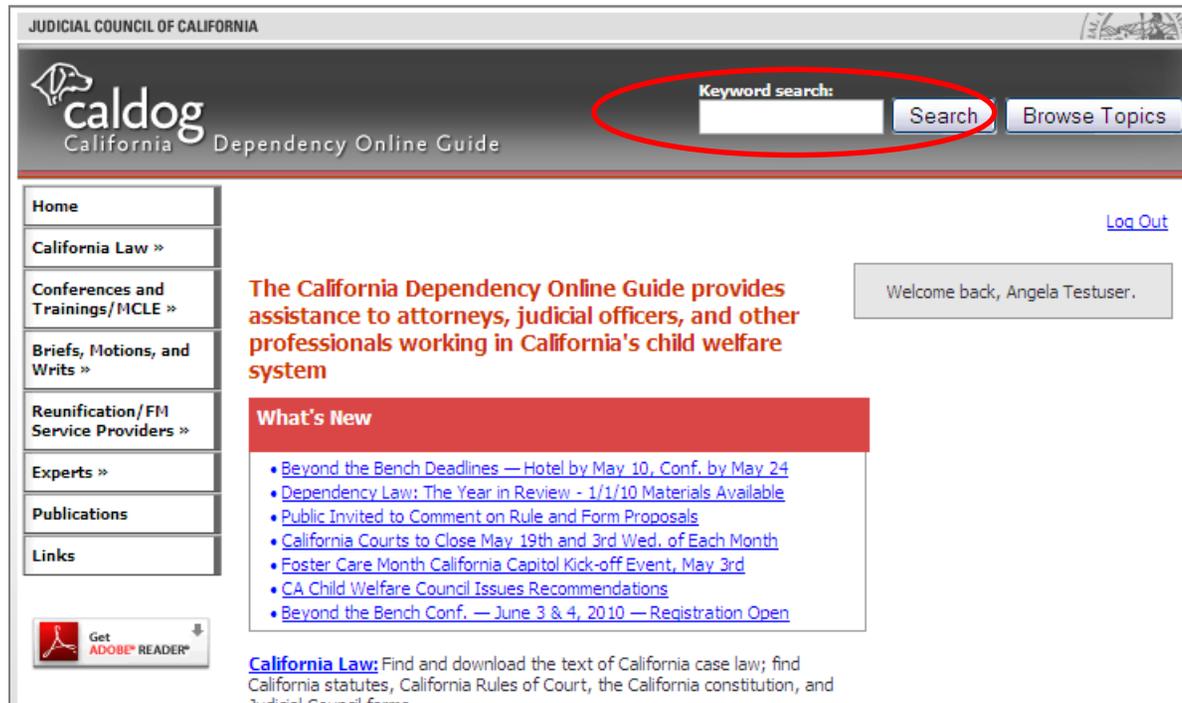
Tip: We recommend trying *Browse Topics* first, because the results from using *Search* are often less relevant than results using *Browse Topics*. For example, if you search in *Browse Topics* for "transition-age youth", the search results would yield information that is ABOUT transition-age youth. If you do the same search using the *Search* button, your search results would yield any items that contain the term, "transition-age youth", but are not necessarily about that topic. So your results may yield a case that has that term in a footnote, although the case is about a different issue.

California Law

The *California Law* button on the main page opens six additional buttons. These will allow you to access:

- *California Case Law*. See next few pages for discussion.

- *Regulations*. Links to California and Federal regulations.

- *Link to California Code*. Link to the California Law page operated by the Legislative Counsel of California. You can search for a statute by keyword within a code, or select a code (such as Welfare and Institutions Code) without entering a keyword and it will give you the table of contents for the entire code.

- *Link to California Rules of Court*. Link to the Rules index on the California Courts website. Family and Juvenile rules are in title five.

- *Link to California Constitution*. Link to the California Constitution online.

- *Link to Judicial Council Forms*. Links to the forms page on the California Courts website. To view juvenile forms, go to the "select a form group" box, and scroll down and select "juvenile".

California Case Law

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Keyword search: [ ] [Search] [Browse Topics]

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California Law: All Cases   Log Out

California Case Law

Download the text of California dependency-related case law. To find out whether a California case is still good law, check it on LexisNexis. "!" denotes seminal cases.

>> All Cases by Citation
>> All Cases by Topic
>> All Seminal Cases

A.H. v. Superior Court, (2010) 182 Cal.App.4th 1050
! Abraham L. v. Superior Court, (2003) 112 Cal.App.4th 9
Aceves v. Superior Court, (1996) 51 Cal.App.4th 584
Adoption of Aaron H., (2000) 84 Cal.App.4th 786
Adoption of Alexander S., (1988) 44 Cal.3d 857
Adoption of Allison C., (2008) 164 Cal.App.4th 1004
Adoption of Arthur M., (2007) 149 Cal.App.4th 704
Adoption of Daniele G., (2001) 87 Cal.App.4th 1392
Adoption of Hannah S., (2006) 142 Cal.App.4th 988
Adoption of Jacob C., (1994) 25 Cal.App.4th 617
! Adoption of Kelsey S., (1992) 1 Cal.4th 816
Adoption of O.M., (2008) 169 Cal.App.4th 672
Akkiko M. v. Superior Court, (1985) 163 Cal.App.3d 525
Alicia B. v. Superior Court, (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th 856
Allen M. v. Superior Court, (1992) 6 Cal.App.4th 1069
Alliance for Children's Rights v. Los Angeles County Dept. of Children, (2002) 95 Cal.App.4th 1129
Amanda H. v. Superior Court (LA Co. DCFS), (2008) 166 Cal.App.4th 1340
Amber K. v. Superior Court, (2006) 146 Cal.App.4th 553
Amber R. v. Superior Court, (2006) 139 Cal.App.4th 897

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Related Links
California Code
California Rules of Court
California Constitution
Judicial Council Forms
Regulations

Case Law Included in This Database

This database includes:
- California decisions that arose from a dependency petition and were published on or after January 1, 1997 (When the most recent, major legislative revisions of the Welf. and Insti. Code were adopted). Cases included may have subsequently been overturned or modified on appeal. New cases are added monthly.
- Most California decisions of any date that are still cited in either Seiser & Kumli, *California Juvenile Courts Practice and Procedure* (LexisNexis) or *California Juvenile Dependency Practice* (CEB).
- Seminal cases (denoted by "!"): A case is designated as seminal on the basis of its impact on daily practice and the frequency of its citation in the appellate courts.
- California cases from other fields of law, and federal court cases, that significantly affect or provide guidance to dependency practitioners.

The California Case Law section of the website contains nearly all published California dependency cases since 1997, and some pre-1997 cases. New cases are added monthly, usually within the month after the decision is published.

This section also contains a few family law, juvenile delinquency and probate cases, as well as federal cases from the U.S. Supreme Court and 9th Circuit Court of Appeal that are relevant to a California child welfare audience.

Important Tip: Before relying on any case found on CalDOG, be sure to S*hepardize* it to make sure it is still good law! CalDOG does not have the staff resources to routinely update cases once they have been posted. So a case may remain on the website for some time after its holding has been modified or even overturned.

The *All Cases by Name* list appears first, in which the cases are sorted alphabetically by case name.

Tip: In *All Cases by Name*, many cases are found under the letter "I" for "In re".

California Case Law (continued) –
Sorting by Citation and Seminal Cases

Clicking on *All Cases by Citation* sorts cases by citation with the current year's cases first. See the example on the left.

Tip: *All Cases by Citation* sorts by citation, not by date, so some cases will display slightly out of chronological order. For example, Federal 9th Circuit cases will display at the top of the list for each year, while California Supreme Court cases will display at the bottom.

Clicking on *All Seminal Cases* will display only those cases that are considered seminal on the basis of their impact on daily practice and the frequency of their citation in the appellate courts. These cases are denoted with an "**!**".

California Case Law (continued) –

Sorting by Topic, and by Citation Within a Topic

Clicking on *All Cases by Topic* sorts the cases by topic, so you can see only those cases that are relevant to the topic you are researching. Note that the topics used here are the same topics that are in the *Browse Topics* index.

Tip: To research case law related to a particular Welfare and Institutions Code section, select *All Cases by Topic*, then select the numeric WIC# topic. In the example below, the topic *317: Appointment of Counsel* was selected, and the results appear in alphabetical order by case name.

Sorting Cases within a Topic:
Once you select a topic, you can sort your results by citation within that topic or you can view only seminal cases within that topic.

In the example on the left, to view the same results by citation, you would click on *317: Appointment of Counsel: Sort by Citation*. The cases would then be sorted by citation, with the most recent cases first.

Similarly, to view only the seminal cases under this topic, you would click on *317: Appointment of Counsel: Seminal Cases Only*. This would display cases that are "seminal", or most significant, within that topic.

Please note that to use these sorting features, you must access the cases through the *California Case Law* button, not through *Browse Topics*.

California Case Law (continued) – Viewing Cases and Case Summaries

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Keyword search:
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In re M.B.

To find out whether a case is still good law, check it on LexisNexis (California cases only). "!" denotes seminal cases.

All citations are to the California Welfare and Institutions Code unless otherwise indicated.

>> All Cases
>> All Cases by Citation
>> All Cases by Topic
>> All Seminal Cases

Download   Summary

View Case   Topic(s): ICWA Indian Expert Requirement — Interviewing Parents
In re M.B., (2010) 182 Cal.App.4th 1496
Indian expert's failure to interview parents was not cause for reversal of termination of parental rights.

The children in this case were found by the juvenile court to fall under ICWA. At the 366.26 hearing, the juvenile court applied ICWA, which requires the expert opinion of an Indian expert that continued custody of the child by the parent or Indian custodian would result in serious emotional or physical damage to the child. The expert concluded that continued custody of the child would cause serious damage and that active efforts were made by the social worker to prevent the breakup of the Indian family. Parental rights were terminated.

Both parents appealed, arguing that the order terminating parental rights must be reversed because the investigation conducted by the Indian expert was substantively deficient.

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Related Links
California Code
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Case Law Included in This Database

This database includes:
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- Most California decisions of any date that are still cited in either Seiser & Kumli, *California Juvenile Courts Practice and Procedure* (LexisNexis) or *California Juvenile Dependency Practice* (CEB).
- Seminal cases (denoted by "!"): A case is designated as seminal on the basis of its impact on daily practice and the frequency of its citation in the appellate courts.
- California cases from other fields of law, and federal court cases, that significantly affect or provide guidance to dependency practitioners.

When you click on a case name, it will open up the case summary, which includes topic words, the case name and citation, a brief summary, and a link to the .pdf file of the opinion.

All summaries are written, edited and topically coded by attorneys at the Center for Families, Children & the Courts.

Click on *View Case,* to the left of the summary, to view or download the court opinion.

Click on the *LexisNexis* link near the top of the screen to look up and view the case on *Lexis* and to access limited case history (full *Shepard's* service is not available through this free link). No *Lexis* password is required.

Conferences and Trainings/MCLE – Conference Calendar

To view the Conferences and Trainings Calendar, click on *Conferences and Trainings/MCLE*, and then select *Upcoming Conferences and Trainings*.

The calendar includes local, California, and out-of-state events, and also includes trainings that are offered via teleconference, webinar or other distance learning method. Some of the trainings are offered by the Administrative Office of the Courts, but the majority are sponsored by other organizations and agencies.

Use the search features at the top to search by date or location. Or simply scroll through the pages to learn about a variety of upcoming events.

Tip: Some conferences and trainings are for a limited audience (usually limited by geographic area, or by profession). These requirements are indicated in the *Topics* column.

Conferences and Trainings/MCLE – Distance Learning

Distance Learning Courses are courses that you can take on the internet or in some other way that does not involve attending an in-person training event. Many distance learning courses offer continuing education credits to attorneys, judicial officers, and other professionals.

On CalDOG, click on *Conferences and Trainings/MCLE*, and then select *Distance Learning* to find courses that are offered for-credit. Select *8 Hours of Initial Training* to access a group of courses that meet the 8-hour training requirement for attorneys who would like to be court appointed to represent parents and children. These courses are also relevant for judicial officers and other professionals who are new to dependency. Select *Other For-Credit Courses* to see additional distance learning courses that are not part of the 8 hours of course work.

Tip: These courses are all free, so they are a great way to meet continuing education requirements.

Briefs, Motions and Writs

The *Briefs*, *Motions*, and *Writs* button on the main menu opens separate buttons for these three types of documents. Click one to view sample documents of that type. These redacted documents have been generously donated by practitioners throughout California and are provided for reference and ideas about content, organization and formatting.

Tip: These documents may not be legally accurate. Before relying on any cases or legal arguments found within these donated documents, be sure to *Shepardize* and do any other necessary legal research.

The *Briefs, Motions,* and *Writs* pages are organized by topic, as seen in the example to the left.

The *Motions* section gives you an additional option to view documents by motion type, such as 388 motions, a motion for the appointment of an expert, or a motion for a blood test.

Service Providers

The *Reunification and Family Maintenance (FM) Service Providers* button opens four other buttons to allow you to:

- Search by county;
- Search by type of provider (such as therapists, or substance abuse treatment programs);
- Search by name, for an individual, agency or organization; or
- Browse a list of names.

Service Providers - Search by County

If you select *Reunification and Family Maintenance (FM) Service Providers* and then select *Search by County*, this checklist of all California Counties will appear.

Select one or more counties, then click S*earch* and you will get a list of all service providers listed on the website for that county or counties.

Service Providers – County Listings

This is a sample of service provider listings in one county.

If you click on any item in this list, it will open to show more complete contact information and other notes about the services offered.

Service Providers by Type, Within a County

After searching by county, you have the option to select *Narrow Search by Type* to find just one kind of service provider in that county.

In the following example, we searched for all services in Tuolumne County, then narrowed our search by type to view agencies under *Substance Abuse: Treatment* within Tuolumne County, which yielded this list of substance abuse treatment agencies within the county.

Service Providers by Type, Statewide

To search statewide for service providers of a certain type, click on *Reunification/FM Service Providers* in the main menu, and then select *Search by Type*. This will yield a list of types seen below.

Service Providers by Type, Statewide (continued)

Once you select a type, you will see all the listings in the state for that type of provider.

Here, we have selected the type *Services: Online Directories*, which has yielded a list of county services directories. These listings include links to the online directories for each county.

Tip: These online directories, often called *211* or *Network of Care* websites, frequently contain additional information not listed on CalDOG. They are particularly helpful in very large counties such as Los Angeles.

Experts

The *Experts* section*,* which provides listings for experts and expert witnesses on a variety of topics, functions exactly the same way as the *Reunification and Family Maintenance (FM) Service Providers* section.

Tip: You must verify the qualifications of any expert you use. Expert listings are collected from attorneys, child welfare practitioners and court administrators. Experts are screened for basic qualifications, but not evaluated. The AOC does not endorse these experts. Please let us know if you are aware of an expert that should be included in these listings.

Publications

The *Publications* section of the website contains articles, books, brochures, charts, newsletters, reports, and other kinds of published materials.

Clicking on the *Publications* button on the main menu opens to a list of topics.

Clicking on any topic will reveal all of the publications on the website related to that topic.

From this page, you can also choose to view publications by title or by type.

Publications by Type

Select *Publications by Type*, to sort by the type of publication, rather than by the topic. This is helpful if you are looking for specific types of materials, such as a judicial bench guide, an article, a brochure to give to an adult or child client, or a research report.

The current list of publication types can be seen at left.

Items can also be sorted alphabetically by title or topic.

Publications – Viewing Publications

The image at left shows how listings for individual articles or other publications look on the website.

Each listing begins with topic words, and then includes the title of the publication, description, author, date, number of pages and the source or publisher.

Each listing also contains buttons on the left to view or download the item, or a link to view the item on the internet.

Links

Select the *Links* on the main menu to access California and national child welfare-related links.

These links can be sorted:

- By Title - alphabetically by the name of the organization or agency;
- By Type - this groups the links by the type of agency, or type of website, such as advocacy organizations, California government agencies, and foster youth resources; or
- By Topic