

Public Comment - Health & Human Services - CALM

Katherine Douglas

From: Alana Walczak <awalczak@calm4kids.org>
Sent: Monday, May 18, 2026 6:06 PM
To: Bob Nelson; Steve Lavagnino; Joan Hartmann; Laura Capps; Roy Lee; sbcob
Cc: Glenn Morris (Glenn@WACEMail.com); wageneck66
Subject: Preservation of Funding for KIDS Network and DSS Child Abuse Prevention Services
Attachments: CALM Advocacy Letter - KIDS Network and Child Abuse Neglect Prevention Contract.pdf

Categories: Public Comment

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Dear Chair Nelson & Members of the Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of CALM, please see the attached letter regarding the County of Santa Barbara's budget for FY 26-27, specifically related to the KIDS Network and DSS-funded child abuse & neglect prevention services. As outlined in the attached, I urge the Board to take action to ensure continued funding for critical safety net services, especially the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CANP) contract.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to serving the most vulnerable in our community. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,
Alana

Alana Walczak
President & CEO
1236 Chapala Street | Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.965.2376 phone | 805.253.1659 fax
awalczak@calm4kids.org

I invite you to explore our website: <https://calm4kids.org/>



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May 19, 2026

Members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: Preservation of Funding for KIDS Network and Child Abuse Prevention – FY 2025–26
DSS Budget**

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I am writing on behalf of CALM whose mission is to prevent childhood trauma, heal children and families, and build resilient communities throughout Santa Barbara County. We recognize the significant fiscal challenges facing the County and appreciate the difficult decisions the Board must make during this budget cycle. At the same time, I want to respectfully express concern about the proposed cuts to KIDS Network and to the prevention funding that supports the work of community-based organizations across the county.

What KIDS Network Does — and Why It Matters

KIDS Network is Santa Barbara County’s cross-sector collaborative for child and family wellbeing. It convenes leaders from nonprofits, healthcare, education, government, and faith communities to share information, align resources, coordinate services, and strengthen the safety net for our most vulnerable families. It is one of the only structures in our county that brings these diverse sectors together consistently and deliberately — and the results show in the depth of collaboration across our region. The annual cost of convening KIDS Network is about \$30,000, which is a remarkably modest investment relative to the coordination, partnership-building, and systems alignment it makes possible across Santa Barbara County.

Prevention Funding at Stake

The proposed budget cuts would eliminate approximately \$400,000 in PSSF (Promoting Safe and Stable Families) and CAPIT (Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment) funding that has historically been braided with CBCAP and Children’s Trust Fund dollars to support the county’s prevention contracts. This funding directly supports services provided by Family Resource Centers and community-based organizations across Santa Barbara County, including:

- Concrete support for basic needs
- Information and referrals
- Case management
- Parent leadership development and peer support
- Evidence-based home visitation and parenting education programs
- Behavioral health services for at-risk families

These are not duplicative or administrative services; they are the front-line supports that help families stabilize before a difficult situation becomes a crisis. Cutting this funding does not make the need disappear. It shifts cost downstream, to Child Welfare Services, emergency intervention, and the courts — at far greater expense to the county and to families.

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Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (CANP) Funding at Stake

Most important to CALM is the downstream impact on CANP funding. The CANP contract is a collaborative partnership among Family Service Agency, People Helping People, Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center, LEAP, and CALM. Without restoration of the \$400,000 in prevention dollars, available CANP funding for Santa Barbara County would be reduced from \$546,667 to \$153,303 – which represents only the allocations available through the Children’s Trust Fund and CBCAP. This represents a 72% reduction in available CANP funding and would significantly diminish the county’s capacity to provide child abuse and neglect prevention services at a time when families continue to experience substantial economic and mental health stressors.

For CALM, CANP funding **provides a critical safety net** for child abuse prevention and early intervention services, connecting families to basic needs support, parent skill-building, and therapy. has been critical in sustaining prevention and early intervention services for children and families. It has served as an essential safety net that allows families to access support before challenges escalate into abuse, neglect, or more intensive behavioral health needs. Our own data underscores the importance of these services, with consistently high utilization rates, particularly for therapy services. These are not optional or ancillary programs for families in crisis; they are often the services that help stabilize a child or caregiver before circumstances worsen.

Importantly, prevention funding allows organizations like CALM to intervene earlier, more effectively, and at significantly lower cost than downstream systems involvement. Maintaining prevention funding is one of the most effective ways to reduce future strain on child welfare, behavioral health, and emergency response systems.

Our Request

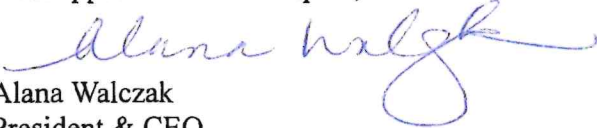
As the Board finalizes the FY 2026–27 budget, we respectfully urge you to:

- **Preserve KIDS Network** and the county’s cross-sector infrastructure for child and family wellbeing collaboration.
- **Restore the \$400,000 in PSSF and CAPIT funding** that supports Family Resource Centers and community-based prevention services across Santa Barbara County.
- **Protect CANP funding** to ensure child abuse prevention services can continue to reach the families who need them most.

We fully understand that this year’s budget decisions require difficult tradeoffs. However, I ask the Board to preserve investments that are already demonstrating value for children, families, and the broader community. **Given the importance of this work, I respectfully ask that you do all you can to ensure continued funding for these essential services.**

Thank you for your leadership, your service, and continued commitment to the families of Santa Barbara County. Feel free to contact me at awalczak@calm4kids.org or 805-965-2376.

With appreciation and respect,


Alana Walczak
President & CEO