

Legal Services for Children's THEORY OF CHANGE

WHEN LSC provides quality legal advocacy and social work services for children & young people and actively involves them in decisions, **THEN** they access their legal rights, advance their goals, begin to heal from trauma, and thrive.

▶ CRITICAL NEED

ALL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE DESERVE a safe and stable home with loving caregivers, access to legal immigration status, freedom from detention, and access to education. Additionally, children & young people deserve the opportunity to play a meaningful role in important decisions about their lives and are often not afforded this opportunity. Many children & young people experience abuse from adults, systemic oppression, and institutional abuse. To address these challenges, **YOUTH-DIRECTED LEGAL AND SOCIAL WORK SERVICES** are often required to exercise their rights. More resources are needed to support this work.

▶ WHOM WE SERVE

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED CRISIS OR TRAUMA and have needs that are not being met by the adults and/or systems responsible for their care, have low or no income, and are located in or connected to San Francisco or the greater SF Bay Area. We accept clients regardless of complex needs, delinquency or criminal history, or language translation needs.

▶ LEVERAGE POINTS

- **HOLISTIC** social work-legal partnership service **MODEL**
- Culture of empathy, flexibility, relationship-building, and **DEEP COMMITMENT** to our clients and each other
- Staying with children & young people for as long as they need it and/or providing referrals with support
- **CREATIVITY** for finding solutions
- Reputation for expertise
- Strong **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS** and knowledge of local resources
- Advocating from a **CHILD-DRIVEN, HEALING-CENTERED**, and trauma-informed approach, and grounded in children & young people's stated interest
- **YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED** to be meaningful partners

▶ OUR WORK

CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES including:

- Psycho-social assessments
- Clinical case management
- Linkage and referrals
- Client advocacy

LEGAL ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION, including for:

- Immigration
- Guardianship and emancipation
- Child welfare
- School discipline

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE and information, referrals, and warmline

POLICY ADVOCACY based on client-serving experience

TRAINING, teaching, and mentoring for students, advocates, and social workers

▶ OUTPUTS

Examples:

- **ACCURATE INFORMATION** given to children & young people
- Benefits applications submitted
- Caregivers identified
- **LEGAL SUPPORT** provided
- School expulsion avoided or alternative placements explored
- **APPROPRIATE REFERRALS** made
- Trainings for practitioners
- Workshops, classes, and events for children & young people
- **RELATIONSHIPS BUILT** with clients, families, and the community
- Children & young people have been directly involved in **LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** and meaningfully participate in program and policy improvements
- Policy workgroups and movement building participated in; impact litigation and policymakers supported

▶ INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Children & young people understand their options, how to navigate systems, and **BUILD INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-WORTH**
- Children & young people's immediate circumstances are **STABILIZED**
- Children & young people have guardians, **LEGAL REPRESENTATION** in dependency, immigration status, employment authorization, and meaningful access to education
- **PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE PARTICIPATE** in guiding LSC's work
- Increased **AWARENESS & SUPPORT** from policymakers
- More children & young people are aware of LSC's services
- Growth in the population of dedicated child advocates who recognize the joy of doing this work and connecting with young people
- **POSITIVE MOVEMENT IN SYSTEMS** due to increased knowledge about this work and feedback from children & young people

▶ INTENDED IMPACT

- **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTED** to make informed choices, have their stated interests honored, achieve their goals, and have tools to advocate for themselves and their peers
- Children & young people have a **SAFE AND STABLE HOME** with loving caregivers
- Children & young people **BEGIN TO HEAL** from trauma and adverse experiences and feel listened to and validated
- Children & young people obtain tools to overcome life challenges and **MAINTAIN STABILITY**
- Skilled attorneys, advocates, and social workers are available to assist children & young people
- Policies and practices of agencies and **SYSTEMS ARE EQUITABLE, HELPFUL, EMPOWERING, AND HEALING** for children & young people
- LSC's work has been improved by the **LEADERSHIP OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**