

# Iron Deficiency in Children

Iron is a nutrient that is essential to your child's growth and development. However, an iron deficiency can affect your child's health, and may lead to anemia. This article provides information on common causes of iron deficiency in children, how to recognize it, and tips to increasing iron in your child's diet.

## Why is iron important for children?

Iron helps move oxygen in our red blood cells from the lungs to the rest of the body. It also helps muscles store and use oxygen. If your child lacks iron, he or she might develop a condition called iron deficiency. In severe cases, iron deficiency can lead to anemia, a condition in which the blood does not have enough healthy red blood cells. Untreated iron deficiency can affect a child's growth and development.

Iron deficiency in children is a common problem. It usually occurs for three main reasons:

1. Poor diet: Children who eat a diet without enough sources of iron can lead to iron deficiency.
2. Loss of blood: Causes of blood loss can range from a stomach ulcer (which is not common in children) to chronic bowel inflammation to a parasitic infestation like hook worm.
3. Inability to absorb adequate iron from food: This can occur with conditions such as celiac disease or Crohn's disease.

## Who is at risk of iron deficiency?

Infants and children at highest risk of iron deficiency include:



- Babies who are born prematurely or have a low birth weight
- Babies who drink cow's milk or goat's milk before age 1
- Breast-fed babies who aren't given complementary foods containing iron after age 6 months
- Babies who drink formula that isn't fortified with iron
- Children ages 1 to 5 who drink more than 24 ounces (710 milliliters) of cow's milk, goat's milk or soy milk a day
- Children who have certain health conditions, such as chronic infections or restricted diets
- Children who have been exposed to lead
- Children who don't eat enough iron-rich foods
- Children who are overweight or obese

Adolescent girls also are at higher risk of iron deficiency because their bodies lose iron during menstruation.

## What are the signs and symptoms of iron deficiency in children?

Too little iron can impair your child's ability to function well. However, most signs and symptoms of iron deficiency in children do not appear until iron deficiency anemia occurs. If your child has risk factors for iron deficiency, talk to his or her primary care provider. Signs and symptoms of iron deficiency anemia might include:

- Pale skin
- Fatigue
- Cold hands and feet
- Slowed growth and development
- Poor appetite
- Abnormally rapid breathing
- Behavioral problems

- Frequent infections
- Unusual cravings for non-nutritive substances, such as ice, dirt, paint or starch

**Should I have my child screened for iron deficiency?**

Diagnosing an iron deficiency requires an assessment of your child by his or her pediatrician and are typically diagnosed through blood tests. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants be tested for iron deficiency anemia starting between ages 9 months and 12 months and, for those who have risk factors for iron deficiency, again at later ages. Depending on the screening results, your child’s doctor might recommend an oral iron supplement, a daily multivitamin, or further testing.

**How can parents help?**

If you are feeding your baby iron-fortified formula, he or she is likely getting the recommended amount of iron. If your child has iron deficiency, make sure your child takes the iron supplements exactly as prescribed and include iron-rich foods in your family’s diet.

When you begin serving your baby solids, typically between ages 4 months and 6 months, provide foods with added iron, such as iron-fortified baby cereal, pureed meats and pureed beans. For older children, good sources of iron include red meat, chicken, fish, beans and spinach.

Do not overdo it on the milk. Between ages 1 and 5, limit your child’s milk consumption to less than 2 cups of milk a day. Giving them more can make them feel full and lower the amount of iron-rich foods they eat.

Serve fruits and vegetables high in vitamin C or a glass of orange juice at mealtimes. Vitamin C helps promote the absorption of iron. You can help your child absorb iron by offering foods rich in vitamin C, such as citrus fruits, cantaloupe, mango strawberries, bell pepper, tomatoes and dark green vegetables.

# Understanding the Complaint Investigations Process

RFA Social Workers are responsible for monitoring, investigation and oversight of Resource Families. Those responsibilities include investigating complaints against a Resource Family, developing corrective action plans to correct identified deficiencies, and requiring a Resource Family to comply with those plans.

The RFA Written Directives define a complaint as one or more allegations of violations concerning a Resource Family. This could include an allegation of non-compliance with the RFA Written Directives, Health and Safety Codes, Welfare and Institution Codes, or others. Anyone can make a complaint, and complaints can come to the County in any form (for example, telephone, in person, mail/ email). The County is required to keep the identity of every complainant confidential and does not disclose the identity of any complainant, unless explicitly authorized to do so by the complainant, or as required by law.

The RFA Social Worker is responsible for evaluating and investigating any information presented by any person that asserts or indicates that a Resource Family may not have or may not be meeting, the requirements of one or more of the Written Directives or any applicable laws. As part of the investigation process, RFW Social Workers may assess the home environment, conduct interviews, and review records, among others steps. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the RFA Social Worker may develop a corrective action plan for the Resource Family to follow.

If there is an adverse action taken as a result of a complaint investigation, the Resource Family has the right to appeal any action they disagree with. The investigating RFA Social Worker will ensure that the Resource Family is aware of their rights and responsibilities during the complaint investigation process.

To dispute the findings of the complaint or a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) provided by the County, the Resource Family must provide a written request to the County first level RFA manager (listed on the CAP Form RFA809C or Complaint Investigation Report Form RFA9099) within ten (10) calendar days from the date of receipt of the findings or CAP. Upon receipt, the County will review these forms at the Supervisor, Manager, and if necessary, Program Director level.

**SECTION 9-06A: Response to a Complaint Allegation**

*(a) A County shall review any information presented by any person concerning a Resource Family to determine whether the Resource Family may not have met or may not be meeting the requirement of one or more of the Written Directives or any applicable law, regardless of whether or not the information is presented in the form of an allegation.*

...

*(q) If a Resource Family disagrees with any finding related to a complaint allegation, the Resource Family has a right to request a County review of the finding(s).*

# Congratulations Frank Delgado

Congratulations to Frank Delgado, our May Champion for Children.

As many of our readers may know, we typically feature a resource parent in this section whose actions go above and beyond the normal call of duty for children in their care. For this issue though, we wanted to highlight the incredible work of Frank Delgado, Program Manager at Unity Care Transitional Housing. Frank provides exceptional support to young people and works tirelessly to help them succeed. Many across the County note that it is an honor to work with and learn from Frank in this field.

Over the past two years, Frank has worked with young men and women, ages 16-20, who have come through his program. Frank treats these young people with the dignity and respect, going above and beyond his job duties to ensure they have support to find employment, graduate from high school, or enroll in college for the first time. He also supports young people transitioning out of his program and into their new homes. To these kids, Frank has been a tutor, a counselor, a mediator, a driver, a father figure, but



most of all, a fierce advocate for them to ensure that they thrive.

Frank works closely with youth to unlock resources that may be difficult to them to navigate. "For example, going to the DMV may be easier for you and me but may be stressors for them." Frank explains that he loves getting the chance to work with this age group as they are an overlooked population. "They don't get the attention they deserve," he said. "Our government institutions aren't built for accommodating youth. This population is pushed out without much priority placed on them or visibility for their needs during this age."

"Getting them caught up on learning basic life skills is a big driving force for me," he said. "I know that we're just a blip on their radar, but I want to give them as much as I can before they transition to independent living."

Frank demonstrates that the key to successfully working with young men and women is by being patient and unconditionally non-judgmental. "They are so used to people looking at them and being afraid or passing glances their way. These kids are very intelligent and they pick up on these nuances. So if they feel judged by you, they will not work with you."

The San Francisco Family and Children's Services along with the Parenting for Permanency College thank Frank for all of his work in the community. He is a fierce advocate for foster youth and a tireless community booster. He does so much for transitional youth to succeed and enriches the lives of others. We appreciate all that Frank does to create opportunities for young people this age who often don't get the attention they deserve. Thank you, Frank, for all that you do!

## K.I.D.S.

Published bimonthly for San Francisco County foster parents, resource families, NREFMs and kin care providers. To suggest a topic, submit an article, promote an event, or provide feedback, email [diana.venegas@sfdph.org](mailto:diana.venegas@sfdph.org).

### Editorial Staff

Editors: Agnes Balla and Diana Venegas  
Amabel Baxley, Kimberlee Pitters, Casey Schutte

City and County of San Francisco/Family & Children Services  
PO Box 7988 • 170 Otis Street, San Francisco, CA 94120

Newsletter Website: <https://foster-sf.org/kids-newsletter/>

### Helpful Phone Numbers

HSA Operator	(415) 557-5000
CPS Child Abuse Hotline	(800) 856-5553 or (415) 558-2650
Foster Care Ombudsman	(415) 558-2828
Transportation Duty Line	(415) 557-5376
Licensing/RFA/Recruitment Hotline	(415) 558-2200
Free Foster Parenting Respite Service	(415) 861-4060 x 3035
Community Services	211
Non-emergency Government Services	311

FCS Agency Directory: [www.sfhsa.org/174.htm](http://www.sfhsa.org/174.htm)

## Alternative Family Services-PPC Training

San Francisco Family and Children Services will not be holding an in-person May Appreciation event this year. We will send out a mass mailing and hope you will join us for zoom training: "Bringing in the Fun"-A training filled with fun, self-care, prizes and learning. To register for training contact Alternative Family Services (AFS)-PPC Training @ [ppc@afs4kids.org](mailto:ppc@afs4kids.org) or contact your RFA Worker. All training is through Zoom until further notice.

RFA Pre-Service Approval Training	
English RFA Pre-Service Training	May 17-26, 2022 (Tues/Thurs) 5:30-9:15 p.m.
English RFA Pre-Service Training	June 18-25, 2022 (Saturdays) 9 a.m.-4:45 p.m.
<b>Spanish RFA Pre-Service Training</b>	<b>June 18 -25, 2022 (Saturdays) 9 a.m.-4:45 p.m.</b>
SA/HIV Training	
SA/HIV Series (English)	May 17 - June 14, 2022 ( Tues/Thurs) 5:30-9:15 p.m.
ABCs of Baby Care (English)	June 22, 2022 (Wednesday) 5:30-8:45 p.m.

Ongoing Training	
Bringing in the Fun- A training filled with fun, self-care, prizes and learning.	Mid May TBD –look out for Save the date
<b>Promoción del rendimiento académico</b>	<b>May 3, 2022 (Tuesday) 5-7:15 p.m.</b>
WPW Reparative Parenting Training and Coaching Approach: WPW Reparative Approach is a culturally inclusive parent-child coaching model for resource, adoptive, and biological parents who are raising children with trauma-exposed, childhood experiences that result in emotional and behavioral disturbances.	14 hours of training plus optional 12 hours of monthly coaching all via Zoom.  Training Tuesday, May 3-12, 2022 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  Coaching dates to be determined by cohort: 12 hours monthly coaching.

## Education Corner

If you need any help related to K-12 education, you can always reach out to your social worker or to San Francisco's foster youth education liaisons:

- Shira Andron, FYS Coordinator, [andrns@sfusd.edu](mailto:andrns@sfusd.edu)
- Nelson Cabrera, FYS Education Liaison (Child Welfare and Attendance), [cabreran@sfusd.edu](mailto:cabreran@sfusd.edu)
- Susana Diaz, FYS Education Liaison (Head Counselor), [diazs1@sfusd.edu](mailto:diazs1@sfusd.edu)
- Alicia Rodriguez, FYS Education Liaison (School Social Worker), [rodriguez@sfusd.edu](mailto:rodriguez@sfusd.edu)

## Resource Parent Meetings and Support Groups

### Resource Family Meetings:

For more information about Resource Family meetings/training and events visit <https://foster-sf.org/information/training-schedule/> or contact Arlene Hylton at [Arlene.hylton@sfgov.org](mailto:Arlene.hylton@sfgov.org) or 451-557-5067.

### Resource Family Convening -Quarterly (5-7 p.m.)

2nd Wednesday of EVERY OTHER month — May 11, 2022

### Quality Parenting Initiative Meeting (QPI) - Monthly

4th Thursday of Month (11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)

May 26 & June 23, 2022

### Support Groups:

Resource Family Support Groups (SA/HIV) (6 to 8 p.m.) 3rd Tuesday (English) and 3rd Thursday (Spanish) of each month, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise announced. To attend SA/HIV Support Group, please contact Diana Venegas at (510) 469-0128. English: May 17, 2022 & June 21, 2022 Spanish: March 19, 2022 & June 16, 2022

### COFFEE WITH CAREGIVERS

Coffee with Caregivers Supports Relative, Non-Relative, Adoptive and Guardianship Caregivers Grab your favorite drink, snack, and join us during the following virtual meetings occur Friday's from 1:30 -2:30 p.m. Please email Nichole at [narnold@cacaregivers.org](mailto:narnold@cacaregivers.org) to register.

## Other RFA Ongoing Training Resources:

Reminder: Approved Resource Families are required to complete 8 hours of training yearly. Please make sure to submit completed training certificates to your RFA worker for the following training

**Foster Parent College:** <http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>  
**QPI California-Just In Time Training:** <http://www.qpicalifornia.org>  
 Mandated Reporter Training: <https://mandatedreporterca.com/>  
**California Foster Care Ombudsperson:** Foster Youth Bill of Rights and Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Training — <https://fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/trainings/>  
**WestCoast Children's Clinic:** [CSEctraining@westcoastcc.org](mailto:CSEctraining@westcoastcc.org) (contact for current offering)

### Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Training

All resource families caring for a child age 10 or older must complete Commercial Sexual Exploitation training. Training must be completed in the first 12 months of initial approval of a resource family.

### City College of San Francisco - Education and Extension Programs:

<https://bit.ly/3qLRmIG>

### City College of San Francisco • Child Development & Family Studies Department

Talk Time Tuesdays - All trainings are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. via Zoom. To register go to <https://ccsf.edu> or for the latest Foster and Kinship Care Education Schedule of Classes, contact Brenda Wemiz at 415-452-5605.