

MISSION STATEMENT

SHIELDS for families is a non-profit community-based organization dedicated to developing, delivering, and evaluating culturally sensitive, comprehensive service models that empower and advocate for high-risk families for over 20 years.



We believe that with education, access to appropriate services and caring guidance, families can rebuild their lives and become productive members of the community, nurturing parents and achieve all of their dreams.

HISTORY

SHIELDS was formed in 1987 in response to high incidence of infants born prenatally exposed to drugs at Martin Luther King Hospital in South Central Los Angeles.

SHIELDS began providing services to this unique population and has since grown to provide over 30 comprehensive, family-centered, wrap-around programs addressing issues facing high-risk families in South LA.



believing, building, becoming

11601 S. Western Ave
Los Angeles / CA 90047
ph 323.242.5000
fx 323.242.5011

TTD/TTY (English) 800.735.2922
TTD/TTY (Spanish) 800.855.3000

mat@shieldsforfamilies.org



SHIELDS for Families is an equal opportunity service provider that does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or participation in any WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

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Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT)



The SHIELDS Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) program is part of a collaborative effort to ensure the immediate and comprehensive assessment of children and youth under the jurisdiction of Child Welfare Services for the reunification of the family unit in SPA 6, specifically in South Los Angeles.





The MAT program provides services to families and children (0 -21) who are under the jurisdiction of Child Welfare Services by providing an in-depth **assessment of family strengths and psycho-social needs**, resulting in an intensive care plan including linkages to resources that will aid the family in working towards achieving family reunification. Clients may also receive ongoing **mental health services** dependent on staff availability and need of client.



The MAT is a court-ordered assessment process that is a collaboration between the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and community providers. The MAT concept is family centered and strength based. When a child is detained, he/she is eligible to receive a **MAT assessment**. The value of this assessment is that it presents a comprehensive understanding of the complicated issues that children and families face when they enter the foster care system. Therefore SHIELDS can more effectively plan with the family and practitioners to address specific needs, services and treatment, to assist in developing a plan to reunify the family unit when possible or assist in permanent placement that is safe and stable. We have



successfully provided linkages for children and adolescents to SHIELDS HUB Outpatient Mental Health Clinic as well as SHIELDS Revelation program. We have also provided linkages to parents/caregivers to SHIELDS programs that provide substance abuse treatment

including the Ark program as well as SHIELDS Achieving Change Together (ACT) program.

The MAT model is committed to providing services in the areas of **mental health, physical health, developmental milestones, hearing/language development, education and vocational needs** in a manner that is most conducive to achieving permanency and optimal stability for the child in the least restrictive setting. Thus services are intended to build on the strengths of the child and family. Our assessors have collaborated with Service Planning Areas (SPA) 3 and 7 as well as Orange County and Riverside County in order to complete assessments and provide linkages to clients and their families. Our cases are only closed after all recommendations and court requests are met.

Program Highlights

- In the first 9 months of 2010, the SHIELDS MAT program assessed over 100 children.
- Cases that SHIELDS assess early on, with concrete interventions, move through the system faster, therefore reducing the time to achieve permanency.
- SHIELDS MAT Assessors have been able to provide continuous mental health (individual and family psychotherapy) services to the child(ren)/family in order to facilitate reunification.
- Early assessment of appropriate placement options decreases the number of placement disruptions and increases the level of safety while in out-of-home care.