

CHAPTER 8
PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING
APPROPRIATE CASELOADS FOR
CHILDREN'S COUNSEL

Rule 6.8.1

Determining Appropriate Caseloads for Children's Counsel

The attorney for the child must have a caseload that allows the attorney to perform the full range of duties required by Welfare & Institutions Code section 317, subdivision (e), and California Rules of Court, rule 5.660, and to otherwise adequately counsel and represent each child.

The Dependency Legal Group of San Diego (DLGSD) is a nonprofit public benefit corporation formed for the sole purpose of providing legal representation to indigent families who come before the juvenile dependency court in San Diego County. There are four divisions of DLGSD – the Primary Parent Office, which represents the primary or offending parent, the Conflict Parent Office, which represents the second or noncustodial parent, the Minor's Counsel Office, which represents the child, and the Conflict Counsel Office, which represents additional parents and children, and accepts all conflict-of-interest appointments.

In each division of DLGSD, a supervising attorney and an assistant supervising attorney are responsible for managing their division and assisting their staff attorneys, investigators, and clerical employees. Each division has assigned, trained, and skilled investigators on staff. DLGSD investigators have education and/or experience in social work, child welfare, law enforcement, or paralegal skills.

DLGSD is a law firm dedicated to juvenile dependency law; staff attorneys at DLGSD are prohibited from accepting any outside legal work. All efforts are made to support the staff attorneys and keep caseloads manageable. Supervisors monitor caseloads to ensure that adjustments are made when needed to provide competent, responsive representation to all clients. Except in extraordinary circumstances, caseloads for DLGSD attorneys will not exceed 60% of the caseload standards suggested by the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care. In the event extraordinary circumstances require higher caseloads, immediate steps will be taken to reduce the caseload numbers within ninety days.

(Adopted 1/1/2002; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2008; Rev. 1/1/2012)