

# Caring for Infants' Eyes

## *Blocked Tear Duct*

**B**locked tear ducts, also called nasolacrimal duct obstruction, are relatively common in newborns. Around 10 percent of babies have a blocked tear duct when born, though they may occur at any age. Most of the time, blocked tear ducts clear up on their own during the baby's first year. They usually have no effect on the baby's vision and do not cause long-lasting eye problems.

### What is a blocked tear duct?

Tears normally drain from the eye through small tubes called tear ducts, which stretch from the eye into the nose. If a tear duct becomes blocked or fails to open, tears cannot drain from the eye properly. The duct may fill with fluid and become swollen, inflamed, or sometimes infected.

### What causes a blocked tear duct?

Most children who have blocked tear ducts are born without a fully developed tear duct. For instance, the tear duct may be too narrow or have a web of thin tissue blocking the duct. This causes it to become easily blocked or not drain properly.

Blocked tear ducts are rare in older children, but in some cases nasal polyps can



cause blockage. These polyps are cysts or growths of extra tissue in the nose near the end of the tear duct.

### What are the symptoms?

A baby with a blocked tear duct usually shows the following symptoms:

- Excessive tearing or a continuously watery eye.
- Tears fill the eye and sometimes run

down the face, even without crying.

- A yellow or white buildup in the corner of the eye.
- The eyelids may stick together.

Symptoms typically affect only one eye. The symptoms of a blocked tear duct may get worse after an upper respiratory infection, such as a cold or sinus infection. Wind, cold, and sunlight also may make symptoms worse. Babies with blocked tear ducts usually show symptoms between birth and 12 weeks of age. But sometimes the problem doesn't show up until the tear duct gets infected. An infection can happen when germs grow inside the blocked duct. Signs of an infected tear duct include yellow or green mucus draining from the eye, eye redness, and a swollen eyelid. If signs of infection develop, talk to your child's primary care provider because your child may need antibiotics. If the eye is red and swollen without continual watering, your child may have conjunctivitis (inflammation known as "pink eye") instead of a blocked tear duct.

### How is it treated?

The majority of blocked tear ducts require no medical action and most babies with

the condition can easily be treated at home. Doctors recommend massaging the tear duct area two to three times a day with freshly washed hands. Using your index finger, apply medium pressure to the part of your baby's eye closest to the nose and massage downward, toward the nose. During the massage, you might see some fluid come out of your baby's nose or you may see nothing at all.

In 90 percent of babies, the condition will resolve itself in the first six months. This resolution comes when the ducts naturally open up on their own, a process that shouldn't involve any discomfort. If the problem still persists at six months, your child's primary care provider may recommend your child to see a pediatric ophthalmologist. A surgical procedure known as "probing" may be done in order to open up the tubes. In more severe cases, surgery under general anesthesia may be needed.

### How can caregivers help?

It is important to keep your child's eye clean. Moisten a clean cotton ball or face cloth with warm (not hot) water, and gently wipe from the inner (near the nose) to the outer part of the eye. With each wipe, use a new or clean part of the cotton ball or face cloth. If your child's eyelashes are crusty with mucus, clean them with a moist cotton ball using a gentle, downward motion. If the eyelids get stuck together, place a clean, warm, wet cotton ball over that eye for a few minutes to help loosen the crust.

To help prevent infection and other problems until the blockage goes away:

- Keep the eye clean.
- Limit your child's time in the wind, cold, and sunlight.
- Always wash your hands before and after you touch the eye area.

### When to call the doctor?

If your baby's eye is producing pus, they may have developed an eye infection from the blocked tear duct. Call your child's primary care provider if your child has any of these symptoms:

- Looking or acting very sick
- Pus in the eye
- Red or swollen eyelid
- Cloudy cornea
- Red lump in the inner corner of the eyelid
- Difficulty moving one or both eyes
- Eye pain or discomfort

An infection may spread to other parts of the face or it may lead to an abscess if not treated immediately. If you think your child's eye could be infected, call your child's primary care provider.

# Reporting Requirements

Communication is key to any relationship, and the same is true for communicating with program staff (such as a child's social worker) and the placement agency. Communication and collaboration isn't just important, it is a crucial element of sound decision making.

The RFA Written Directives require that resource parents report to RFA program staff and the placement agency incidents that impacts a child's care and supervision. A report must be made to a RFA program staff by telephone, e-mail, or fax as soon as possible and no later than the agency's next working day, during its normal business hours.

The incidents that require reporting include but are not limited to:

- Death of a child or other individual residing in the home.
- Any injury or illness to a child which requires medical treatment.
- Any suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a child.
- Any unusual incident or child absence which threatens the physical or emotional health or safety of a child.
- Child runs away.
- Child has been away for a prolonged period that is unplanned and that lasts more than 72 hours.
- Communicable disease outbreak as reported to a resource family by a health professional or by the local health authority.
- Poisonings.
- Fires or explosions which occur in or on the premises.
- Child is taken into custody by law enforcement officials or stopped by police.
- Changes in the composition of a resource family household.

## SECTION 11-06: Reporting Requirements

(a) A Resource Family shall make a report to a RFA program staff and the placement agency for a child or a nonminor dependent when any of the following events occur:...

(b) A Resource Family shall make the report specified in subsection (a) to a RFA program staff by telephone, e-mail, or fax within 24 hours or by the next business day following the event and to the placement agency for a child or nonminor dependent by the next business day following the event.

# Champion for Children

## Ms. Gina Jackson-Morning

Congratulations to Ms. Gina Jackson, our January Champion for Children.

The job of a resource parent is not easy. This is something that Ms. Jackson is very familiar with but she approaches her role with dedication, humbleness, and full of love. Ms. Jackson first completed her training to become a resource parent when her daughter's friend needed a home. She was initially hesitant to become a resource parent until she knew that she could fully commit herself to the role. Fifteen years later, she is a beacon of light to numerous children struggling with internal turmoil in addition to being a parent to her own four children.



In a recent placement, a teen came to Ms. Jackson's home with behavioral and emotional challenges. This teen also experienced multiple placement changes, sadly not uncommon for other youth who have ended up in Ms. Jackson's home. Knowing that the teen had multiple challenges did not scare her off as Ms. Jackson was not apprehensive about accepting the teen in her home. Even when she felt that the teen had not displayed a change in behavior at first, she did not give up on him. She provided consistent support, love, and discipline for the youth and helped the teen see the need to approach situations differently. This teen has come a long way, including showing a willingness to engage in school and ready for having difficult conversations about his past.

"There are certainly moments when I think I could pull my hair out, but then I say to myself that I need to get off my pity horse and get back to work with the kids," explains Ms. Jackson. She is the type of person who doesn't like to lose, but she sees winning as encouraging

children in her care to become better people and develop coping mechanisms to deal with the hurt in their past. "It's so good to see them make progress, and see their trust in me. It's a good feeling to be accepted by them," Ms. Jackson adds.

Ms. Jackson learned not to take what children say and do personally. She recalls another teen placed in her home who was defiant to her and wouldn't listen. "It took me a while to learn that the child was feeling rejected from her last placement, but I had to dig deep inside myself to understand that and not take it personally," says Ms. Jackson.

She encourages other parents to not take their actions personally, too. "We get into this to help children and their families get through what just may be the worst thing that may ever happen to them, separation from love ones. Expect loving and caring for them to be a hard job at first but it does get easier and it's so rewarding. Children will test your loyalty to them, in many cases they have been let down so many times in their short life here on this earth. They have so many things in their hearts that weigh heavy on them, and they may lash out at you until you have earned their trust."

Ms. Jackson appreciates the support she has received from her family throughout her whole experience as a resource parent. Her family and extended family have all helped and she sees her job as a group effort. "I can provide the children food and shelter by myself but that is not enough. I really need the help of my family to see them succeed," declares Ms. Jackson. She also appreciates the agency helping her, and rooting her on within her role.

San Francisco Family and Children's Services along with the Parenting for Permanency College commend Ms. Jackson for her dedication and loving spirit. She has made it her priority to work with children and provide a nurturing home for them, no matter what the child has gone through. Congratulations to Ms. Jackson, our Champion for Children!

### 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 Sharon.Walchak@sfgov.org.

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Newsletter Website: <https://sfcaresforkids.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)

## AFS PPC Training Program

RFA Pre-Service Approval Training	
English RFA Pre-Service Training	January 19-28, 2021 (Tues/Thurs) 5:15-9 p.m.
English RFA Pre-Service Training	February 20-27, 2021 (Saturdays) 8:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Spanish RFA Pre-Service Training</b>	<b>January 9-16, 2021 (Saturdays) 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m.</b>
SA/HIV Training	
<b>English SA/HIV Training</b>	<b>Jan. 9 - Feb. 6, 2021 (Saturdays) 8:45 a.m. - 5 p.m.</b>
<b>English ABCs of Baby Care</b>	<b>Feb. 10, 2021 (Wednesday) 5:15-9 p.m.</b>
Ongoing Training	
<b>Multicultural Hair</b>	<b>Jan. 23, 30, &amp; Feb. 6, 2021 (Saturdays) 3:45-7 p.m.</b>
<b>Educational Monthly Training (5 Part) Series (English with Spanish Translation Available)</b>	<b>Jan. 6, Feb. 3, March 3, April 7, and May 5, 2021 (Wednesdays) 5:15-7 p.m.</b>
<b>All training is held on Zoom. To register for training please contact: Alternative Family Services (AFS) <a href="mailto:PPC@afs4kids.org">PPC@afs4kids.org</a> or through your RFA Worker</b>	

## Education Corner

It's TK-12 enrollment season for the 2021-22 school year! Now is the time to check the enrollment timeline and deadlines for your children's school district. San Francisco Unified's deadline is February 5, 2021. For more information go to the SFUSD website <https://www.sfusd.edu/> or do an internet search for "Enroll in SFUSD schools."

If you have any questions about enrollment for foster youth, or any other questions related to foster youth education, you can reach out to San Francisco's Foster Youth Services Coordinator, Shira Andron, at [androns@sfusd.edu](mailto:androns@sfusd.edu) or 628-900-3427.

Also, for young adults headed to college next year, now is the time to apply for financial aid, including to completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It's important to do this as soon as possible! John Burton Advocates for Youth have a comprehensive guide to financial aid "Financial Aid Guide for California Foster Youth Nov. 2020". The guide includes information on Chafee Grants, another important source of financial aid. <https://www.jbaforyouth.org/ca-fy-financial-aid-guide/> or do an internet search for "Financial Aid Guide for California Foster Youth Nov. 2020."

For young adults planning to attend college out of state, it is especially important to be in touch with their social worker and independent living services provider as soon as possible about applying for financial aid.

## Other RFA Ongoing Training, Meetings and Resources

Approved Resource Families are required to complete 8 hours of training yearly.

**Foster Parent College:** <http://www.fosterparentcollege.com/>

**QPI California** Just In Time Training: <http://www.qpicalifornia.org>

**Mandated Reporter Training:** <https://mandatedreporterca.com>

### Resource Family Meetings

For more information about Resource Family, meetings please reach out to your RFA Worker or contact Arlene Hylton at [Arlene.hylton@sfgov.org](mailto:Arlene.hylton@sfgov.org) or 451-557-5067.

### Quarterly Caregiver Meeting

1st Tuesday of each quarter  
Tuesday, January 5, 2021 from 6-8 p.m.

### Resource Family Convening - Bi-monthly

3rd Wednesday of EVERY OTHER month  
January 20, 2021 (5-7 p.m.)

### Quality Parenting Initiative Meetings

4th Thursday of each month  
Thursday, January 21, 2021 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Thursday, February 25, 2021 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

### Resource Family Support Groups (SA/HIV)

2nd Tuesday (English) and 2nd Thursday (Spanish) of each month, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. unless otherwise announced. To attend SA/HIV Support Group, please contact Sharon Walchak at (510) 282-4658.

English: January 19 & February 16, 2021  
Spanish: January 21 & February 18, 2021

### COFFEE WITH CAREGIVERS VIRTUAL CONNECTION, SUPPORT & TRAINING

Grab your favorite drink and snack and join us during the following virtual meetings:

Friday, January 8, 2021 1:30-2:30 PM  
Friday, January 15, 2021 1:30-2:30 PM  
Friday, January 22, 2021 1:30-2:30 PM  
Friday, January 29, 2021 1:30-2:30 PM  
Friday, February 5, 2021 1:30 - 2:30 PM  
Friday, February 12, 2021 1:30 - 2:30 PM  
Friday, February 26, 2021 1:30 - 2:30 PM

Coffee with Caregivers Supports Relative, Non-Relative, Adoptive and Guardianship Caregivers. Grab your favorite drink and snack and join us during the following virtual meetings. To register please Email Nichole at [narnold@cacaregivers.org](mailto:narnold@cacaregivers.org).