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CALM Opens New Office in Santa Maria

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By Jennifer Guess

Agency aims to respond to rising needs in North Santa Barbara County

North Santa Barbara County struggles with rising incidents of child abuse and neglect, and has been identified as a region of critical need, with high unemployment rates and the greatest concentration of poverty in children younger than age 6 in Santa Barbara County. In addition, nearly 80 percent of [Child Welfare Services](#) cases are located north of the Gaviota Tunnel.



In an effort to respond to critical community needs in North Santa Barbara County, [Child Abuse Listening & Mediation \(CALM\)](#) has opened a new office in Santa Maria, at 218 W. Carmen Lane.

CALM recently acquired two contracts from [Santa Barbara County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services](#) to provide prevention and early intervention services to children and families throughout North Santa Barbara County. The contracts have made it possible for CALM to open a treatment office in Santa Maria, as well as provide home visitation services throughout North County, including Santa Maria, Lompoc, Buellton, Solvang, Santa Ynez, Guadalupe and New Cuyama.

“When CALM learned that a local service provider had to close its doors, we knew it was our duty to step in and fill the gap and do our part to serve this area in critical need of our services,” said Cecilia Rodriguez, executive director of CALM. “It has long been part of CALM’s Strategic Plan to bring our proven, effective services to this underserved area in desperate need. With time and continuing support, we hope to be able to provide a full array of Early Childhood Mental Health Services to families in need in North County.”

Compounding the existing problems in North County is the shortage of service availability in the area, especially bilingual/bicultural services. Every child-serving social service agency in North County has a wait list, meaning that families in critical need are not able to receive prevention or trauma treatment, thereby exacerbating their struggle with these issues.

— *Jennifer Guess is a publicist.*

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