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EDMUND D. EDELMAN CHILDREN'S COURTHOUSE MARKS 30TH ANNIVERSARY WITH EXPANDED ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR FAMILIES

***Remote Hearings and a Recently Opened Dependency Courtroom in the Court's
East District Give Parents and Parties Convenient Appearance
Options, Saving Time and Money***

On the 30th anniversary of the opening of the first courthouse in the nation devoted entirely to juvenile dependency cases, the Court continues to build on its commitment to children and families by vastly expanding access to justice with remote courtroom appearance options and a pilot satellite dependency courtroom at the Pomona South Courthouse.

"The Edmund D. Edelman Courthouse has served our community resolutely by providing a safe and welcoming environment for children for three decades," Presiding Judge Eric C. Taylor said. "The courthouse reflects the commitment made to help children in need or in dire situations requiring intervention. From this courthouse, our dedicated and creative presiding judges of juvenile have been the architects of innovation and service to children through impactful programs such as the enduring National Adoption Day. It is an honor to acknowledge all of the judicial officers over the years who have worked to help families and children with these difficult cases."

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Priding itself on serving the community and its most vulnerable, remote appearance options give parents and parties flexibility and convenience when appearing for most dependency hearings. Additionally, the launch of a pilot satellite dependency courtroom at the Pomona South Courthouse in January 2022 provides families in eastern Los Angeles County in-person appearance options closer to home. The satellite dependency courtroom serves as a template for the Court's plans to build on the satellite dependency courtroom model to provide children and families in other outer regions of Los Angeles County dedicated dependency courtrooms closer to home.

"The pandemic presented unique challenges and barriers for everyone," Presiding Judge of Juvenile Akemi Arakaki said. "We deal with serious and sensitive issues related to children. The need to act quickly and efficiently was mitigated with the introduction of remote hearings and our recent expansion to the Pomona South Courthouse is an example of how the Court is continuously looking for efficient ways to expand justice in our communities and meet children and families where they are. It is an honor to join my former colleagues who led the Juvenile Division with distinction during these past 30 years."

Opened in July 1992, the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Courthouse was named in honor of Edmund D. Edelman who served on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors from 1975 to 1994. Dependency cases involve children who have been or are in immediate danger of abuse, neglect, injury or abandonment. The courthouse was created to make a friendlier court environment for children already dealing with abuse and neglect. Some of the courthouse's unique features include children's art in the lobby, an outdoor playground, smaller courtrooms and lower benches where judges sit at the same level as children.

The Edmund D. Edelman Children's Courthouse hears 16,000 to 20,000 juvenile dependency cases annually and, due to abuse, neglect, abandonment and exploitation, orders that more than 30,000 children be placed under the supervision of the LA County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). It handles a caseload that is larger than the entire caseload for most states.

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The courthouse also serves as the base for annual National Adoption Day celebrations held every November with the help of volunteer judicial officers from the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, pro bono attorneys with the Alliance for Children's Rights and Public Counsel, and staff from the DCFS. For the past two decades, the event, which originated in LA County and spread across the nation, has finalized over 41,000 adoptions in LA County.

The Edmund D. Edelman Children's Courthouse was the first of its kind and is a model for other dependency courts around the country.

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