by the woman's words, Tama discounted baby away. "Although she was haunted "Be careful," she warned. "Watch out for neighbor at the trailer park came to her. kitchen, shower/bath, electricity, and heat, a modest one-bedroom trailer with a to CPS. But Tama was able to find hous-
inging, it is all the more reason why the child should have been offered the breast early on. It is so typical of hospitals to completely disregard the wishes of the parent regarding his or her expressed desire to nurse their child. Early nursing is critical for the mother and the baby for both physical and emotional reasons."

As a woman using Medi-Cal, Tama's choices were even more limited. As all the later events revealed, Tama's daughter had suffered an allergic reaction to the soy formula, which Dominican personnel, Dr. Lenz, and CPS dubbed "symptoms of withdrawal." When the formula was changed, the symptoms went away.

CPS placed the baby into custody of Tama's father. On February 7, Tama and Gideon had their baby returned, and the case was closed. Tama had agreed to a service plan with home visits by the county health-nurse and counseling at The Parents Center. While these seem very reasonable measures, there are reports of information obtained at these sessions turning into more charges by CPS against the women receiving the counseling.

Tama and Gideon knew that if they were still homeless when the baby was born, they greatly risked losing their child to CPS. But Tama was able to find housing, a modest one-bedroom trailer with a kitchen, shower/bath, electricity, and heat in a legal park connected to the sewer system. She thought she was home free.

But a week before Tama delivered, a neighbor at the trailer park came to her. "Be careful," she warned. "Watch out for CPS. They come here a lot. They took my baby away." Although she was haunted by the woman's words, Tama discounted the danger. "I thought there must have been some mistake."

A SHIELD OF SECRECY

Child Protective Services works behind a shield of secrecy. Families are not allowed to see their files; court proceedings allow no witnesses and are not public. No tape recordings of the proceedings are allowed. In most cases, the mothers are not even accused of a crime, hence, have no right to a public defender, to a jury trial, or even to face their accusers.

According to Dan Brennan, a father who is fighting to regain custody of his daughter in the Santa Cruz Family Law System, CPS has no motivation to find these mothers to be adequate. "It creates a conflict of interest for them," Brennan said. "As long as the child is placed, that agency receives funding for that child, $122 a day. They pay a typical foster mother $500 a month. The rest of the money can go to pay their salaries, office furniture, phones, or to hire new employees to go and ferret out more "abuse." I believe it is now $47,000 per child CPS gets if they can declare a baby adoptable."

The Bill of Rights guarantees a quick and speedy trial, the right to cross-examine our accusers, that the punishment must fit the crime, and that one is innocent until proven guilty. I believe that in the last 10 years, we have seen all of these rights seriously eroded. CPS operates under a veil of secrecy. I believe all their records should become public.

Lisa Ann boldly asserts, "They conduct their proceedings in secret because illegal things are being done. If the public knew what they were doing, they would be outraged." Melissa Berenge, PhD, a CPS-approved psychologist, wrote an extensive psychological evaluation of Lisa Ann. She