# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
## DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3873
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

WENDY L. WATANABE
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS
JOHN NAIMO
JUDI E. THOMAS


May 17, 2011

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **MCKINLEY CHILDREN'S CENTER FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY – A DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTRACT SERVICE PROVIDER - CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

We have completed a contract compliance review of McKinley Children's Center Foster Family Agency (McKinley or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) provider. The purpose of our review was to determine whether McKinley was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and their County contract.

DCFS contracts with McKinley, a private, non-profit, community-based organization, to recruit, train and certify foster parents to supervise children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child in a foster home, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from foster care. McKinley oversees 177 certified foster homes in which 265 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. McKinley is located in the Fifth Supervisorial District and the County of Riverside. DCFS paid McKinley approximately $4.9 million during Fiscal Year 2009-10.

## Results of Review

The foster children we interviewed indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents, and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from McKinley met their expectations. In addition, the toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and healthy. The Agency also ensured that their social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22

regulations, and that their staff possessed the required education and work experience. However, we noted that McKinley did not always ensure that the foster homes complied with all of the requirements of their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example:

- Two (10%) of the 20 foster parents reviewed did not complete the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training. This issue was also noted in our October 9, 2007 report on McKinley.

  *McKinley's attached response indicates that the foster parents completed their training before their certificates expired, and that the foster parents were decertified in June 2010 (for other reasons). However, as we discussed with the Agency, the foster parents' training had to be completed by January 2010, and the documentation McKinley provided indicated that the training was not completed until March 2010.*

- Nineteen (31%) of the 62 Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed were completed late. Specifically, 13 (42%) of the 31 initial NSPs reviewed were completed an average of 12 days late, and six (19%) of the 31 current NSPs reviewed were completed an average of 38 days late.

  *McKinley's attached response indicates that their staff will ensure NSPs are submitted timely.*

- Four (13%) of the 31 current NSPs reviewed did not include the required discussion of modifying the services the children needed. One of these NSPs indicated the child had the same goals for four consecutive quarters.

  *McKinley's attached response indicates that their supervisors will review the NSPs to ensure they include the proper documentation.*

- Three (10%) of the 31 current NSPs reviewed did not include details of any progress the children made in therapy.

  *McKinley's attached response indicates that they retrained their staff to include this information.*

- Seven (23%) of the 31 case files reviewed had no documentation that indicated if the children were visited by Agency social workers weekly during the first three months of placement as required. This issue was also noted in our October 9, 2007 report.

  *McKinley's attached response indicates that they will visit newly placed children four times per month.*

- Two (11%) of the 19 case files reviewed for children who were taking psychotropic medications did not have a current court authorization for the medication, and case files for seven (37%) children did not have required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician. However, the foster parents and children indicated that the children were taking their medication, and were seen monthly by their prescribing physician. This issue was also noted in our October 9, 2007 report.

  *McKinley's attached response indicates that they attempted to obtain court authorizations and have documentation of the monthly physician evaluations. However, the Agency did not provide us with documentation that they had attempted to renew the court authorizations before they expired, or that the children were seen by the physician monthly.*

Details of our review, along with recommendations for corrective action, are attached.

## Review of Report

We discussed our report with McKinley on January 6, 2011, and with DCFS. McKinley management's response (Attachment I) indicates the actions the Agency has taken to address the issues noted in our report. DCFS' response (Attachment II) indicates they will monitor the Agency for compliance with our recommendations.

We thank McKinley management for their cooperation and assistance during our review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:JLS:DC:AA

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., Interim Director, DCFS
Mary Ann Kessler, Board of Directors Chair, McKinley Children's Center
Al Mason, Chief Executive Officer, McKinley Children's Center
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

# MCKINLEY CHILDREN'S CENTER FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
# FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
# FISCAL YEAR 2009-10

## BACKGROUND

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pays McKinley Children's Center Foster Family Agency (McKinley or Agency) a negotiated monthly rate per child placement. The rate is established by the California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. McKinley receives between $1,430 and $1,679 per child per month, based on the child's age, for a total of approximately $4.9 million during Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10.

## PURPOSE/METHODOLOGY

The purpose of our review was to determine whether McKinley was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and their County contract. We reviewed the Agency's certified foster parent files, children's case files and personnel files, and interviewed McKinley staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents. Issuance of our report was delayed by some higher priority assignments. To enable McKinley to begin taking action immediately, we discussed the findings and recommendations from our review with Agency management while we were completing our review in February 2010.

## BILLED SERVICES

### Objective

Determine whether McKinley provided program services in accordance with their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

### Verification

We reviewed the records for 12 of McKinley's 177 Los Angeles County certified foster homes, visited 11 of the Agency's foster homes, and interviewed 12 foster parents and 19 children placed in the 11 homes. We also observed seven toddlers who were too young to interview. In addition, we reviewed the case files for 20 foster parents and 31 children, and reviewed the Agency's monitoring activities.

### Results

McKinley did not always adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they complied with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

Foster Home Visitation and Foster Parent Certification

- Two (18%) of the 11 foster homes we visited were not maintained in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. One home had dirty carpet that needed to be cleaned or replaced. The other home had a bathroom door that needed to be repaired or replaced, and had a small hole at the base of the hallway wall that needed to be repaired.

- Two (10%) of the 20 foster parents reviewed did not complete the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training. We noted a similar issue in our October 9, 2007 report on McKinley.

Needs and Services Plans and Children's Case Files

- Nineteen (31%) of the 62 Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed were completed late. Specifically, 13 (42%) of the 31 initial NSPs were completed an average of 12 days late, and six (19%) of the 31 current NSPs were completed an average of 38 days late.

- Nine (29%) of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not include the required planned length of the child's placement.

- Four (13%) of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not include the required discussion of modifying the services the children need. One of these NSPs indicated the child had the same goals for four consecutive quarters.

- Seven (23%) of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not have recommendations for ongoing placement needs.

- Three (10%) of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not include details of any progress the children had made in therapy.

- Seven (23%) of the 31 case files reviewed had no documentation that the children were visited by Agency social workers weekly during the first three months of placement as required. We noted a similar issue in our October 9, 2007 report.

- Two (7%) of the 29 Termination Reports reviewed did not include the required thorough closing summary of the Agency's placement records.

Medical Services

- Two (11%) of the 19 case files reviewed for children who were taking psychotropic medications did not have a current court authorization for the medication, and case files for seven (37%) children did not have required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician. However, the foster parents indicated that

the children were taking their medication and were seen monthly by the prescribing physician. We noted a similar issue in our October 9, 2007 report.

**Recommendations**

**McKinley management ensure:**

1. **Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

2. **Foster homes are well-maintained in accordance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

3. **Foster parents complete the required number of annual continuing education training hours.**

4. **NSPs are completed timely.**

5. **NSPs include the planned length of placement, a discussion of modifying services the children need, recommendations for ongoing placement needs and details of any progress made in therapy.**

6. **Children are visited weekly during the first three months of placement, and that the visits are documented.**

7. **Termination Reports have all the required information.**

8. **Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the medication, and have required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician.**

## CLIENT VERIFICATION

**Objective**

Determine whether the foster parents and children received the services that McKinley billed to DCFS.

**Verification**

We interviewed 19 children placed in 11 of McKinley's certified foster homes and 12 foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. In addition, we observed seven toddlers who were too young to interview.

**Results**

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents, and the foster parents indicated that the services they received from McKinley met their expectations. In addition, the toddlers we observed appeared well cared for and healthy.

**Recommendation**

**None.**

## STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

**Objective**

Verify that McKinley social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements, and that the supervising social workers do not supervise more than six social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

**Verification**

We interviewed McKinley's administrator and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social workers.

**Results**

McKinley's social workers carried an average of 15 cases. The Agency's supervising social workers supervised an average of six social workers, and did not carry any cases of their own.

**Recommendation**

**None.**

## STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

**Objective**

Determine whether McKinley's staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances before hiring staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

## Verification

We interviewed McKinley's administrator and reviewed each staff member's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

## Results

McKinley's staff possessed the required education and work experience, and the Agency conducted hiring clearances and provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract.

### Recommendation

**None.**

# PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP

## Objective

Determine the status of the recommendations from the 2007 Auditor-Controller monitoring review.

## Verification

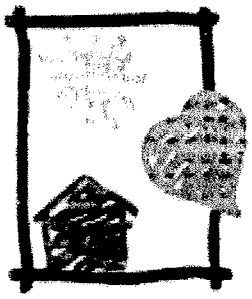
We determined whether the recommendations from our FY 2007-08 monitoring review had been implemented. The report was issued on October 9, 2007.

## Results

Our October 9, 2007 monitoring report on McKinley had 17 recommendations. The Agency has fully implemented 11 recommendations and partially implemented two recommendations. Three of the issues noted in our current review, related to monitoring foster homes, foster parent training, and maintaining documentation for children taking psychotropic medications were also noted in our 2007 report. The remaining recommendation from our 2007 report was for McKinley to implement the recommendations from our earlier 2005 monitoring report on the Agency. Because the issues related to monitoring foster homes, foster parent training, and social workers visiting the children discussed in this report were also noted in our 2005 report, we consider that recommendation to also be not implemented.

### Recommendation

9. **McKinley management implement the outstanding recommendations from the 2007 monitoring report.**



McKINLEY CHILDREN'S CENTER

January 14, 2011

To: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor Controller

From: Julissa Castillo
Executive Director

**Mckinley Children's Center Foster Family Agency Response to Issues Identified in Program Review per Auditor Controller's Report provided January 2011**

**Review conducted by AC on Foster Family Agency – May/June 2009**

***AC Reports-***

- Two of the 11 homes reviewed were not maintained in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically, one home had dirty carpet that needed to be cleaned or replaced. The other home had a bathroom door that needed to be repaired or replaced and a small hole at the base of the hallway wall that needed to be repaired. Our prior review also noted this exception.

***McKinley Response*** -

*The agency maintains high expectations of foster parents in accordance with Tittle22 regulations by conducting quarterly home inspections in addition to annual home inspections. The assessment of adherence to Tittle 22 in one of our homes is subjective in regards to the 'dirty' carpet. The juice stain is in a corner of the living room and pictures have been provided to AC. The family's budget does not allow for replacement at this time. The second home needing a door replaced consisted of a hole not bigger than a one inch circumference. This home has involuntarily decertified for other reasons. Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.*

***AC Reports-***

- One of the 20 foster parent certification files reviewed did not have documentation that the foster parent completed the required 15 hours of annual continuing education training. Our prior review also noted this exception.

***McKinley Response*** -

*Mckinley requires certified parents to complete at least15 hours of recertification training. We allot a12 months as a time frame for this to be completed. If a foster family does not complete any hours in the first six months this is not a problem as long as they complete them by the time their certificate expires. This was this case with the family noted. The family was decertified June 2010 by the agency for other reasons and is the same family noted with the door issue as violation of Title 22. Foster parents will complete the required number of annual continuing education training hours.*

**Chief Executive Officer**

Al Mason

**Accredited By:**

COA

Accrediting Commission for Schools
[illegible]
Bethesda, CA [illegible]
Phone [illegible]

**Member Agency:**

- California Alliance of Child and Family Services
- Association of Children's Service Agencies
- Child Welfare League of America
- United Way

762 West Cypress Street • San Dimas, CA 91773-3599 • Phone: 909/[illegible] • FAX: 909/[illegible]

***AC Reports-***

- Thirteen of the 31 initial NSPs reviewed were completed late by an average of 12 days and six (19%) of the 31 current NSPs reviewed were completed late by an average of 38 days.

***McKinley response-***

*Agency protocol is to submit all reports ten days prior the due date. Supervisors will ensure reports are submitted on time to allow for revisions, family, and CSW input. The agency will have measures in place to prevent changes in case assignment to assist with preventing case transfers affecting the production of reports in timely manner..*

***AC Reports-***

- Nine of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not include the planned length of the child's placement as required.

***McKinley response –***

*As an agency Mckinley Children's Center Foster Family Agency does not know the case plan goal for length of placement, case management documentation is provided in the charts as efforts to obtain this information from CSW. In the future, we have been instructed by AC to include a general statement of 3 to 6 months as opposed to "unknown at this time" or leaving it blank.*

***AC Reports-***

- Four of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not include a discussion on modifying the services the children need as required. One of these NSPs indicated the child had the same goals for four consecutive quarters.

***McKinley response –***

*Supervisors will review all reports thoroughly to ensure there is proper documentation as to the progress our youth are making in their Needs and Services plans. The staff who wrote the report with the same goals for four consecutive quarters is no longer part of the agency.*

***AC Reports-***

- Seven of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not have recommendations for ongoing placement needs.

***McKinley response –***

*Mandatory training was completed in June 2010. Although the staff did not feel comfortable making such recommendations when as social workers they do not have enough knowledge or information on the biological family to provide an accurate recommendation as to "placement" of the child. Discussions and guidance on how to meet AC's recommendation have been provided to all staff*

***AC Reports-***

- Three of the 31 NSPs reviewed did not include details of any progress the children made in therapy.

***McKinley response –***

*Mandatory training was completed in June 2010. Supervisors will exercise caution when reviewing reports to ensure proper documentation of therapy progress is noted in report that is already provided in the mental health section of the chart.*

***AC Reports-***

- Seven of the 31 case files reviewed did not have documentation that the children were visited weekly by Agency social workers during the first three months of placement as required. Our prior review also noted this exception.

***McKinley response –***
*Issue Identified: FFASW visits not in compliance*
*MCC implemented a change of three visits per month due to the budget constraints on our program. There was an oversight as to new placements and transfers. Please note, Recertification training is provided to the foster families on the Third Sunday of the month whereby all children attend age appropriate groups along with ILP classes for the older youth which is a contact our staff have with clients on a monthly basis that is not documented as a weekly contact although it may serve that purpose.*

*Response: As of January 1st, 2010, Mckinley Children's Center policy on visitation & monitoring of children is the following.*

1. *All new placements must be visited minimally 4x/month for the first 3 months of placement.*
2. *Whenever a change in the assigned FFASW takes place, whenever a child transfers placement, or whenever any significant SIR's occur, children 6 years and under must be visited minimally 4x/month for 3 months.*
3. *Whenever a change in the assigned FFASW takes place, whenever a child transfers placement, or whenever any significant SIR's occur, children over 6 years of age must be visited minimally 4x/month for 1 month.*

***AC Reports-***

- Two of the 29 Termination Reports reviewed did not include a thorough closing summary of the Agency's placement records as required.

***McKinley response –***
*Termination Reports will have all the required information.*

***AC Reports-***

- Two of the 19 children reviewed that were taking psychotropic medications did not have a current court authorization for the medication and case files for seven children did not have required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician. However, the foster parents indicated that the children were taking their medication and were seen monthly by their prescribing physician. Our prior review also noted these exceptions.

***McKinley response –***
*Agency staff have documented efforts in requesting this information from other service providers and has been diligent in maintaining progress and following up on proper documentations. Children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization for the medication and have required documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician. We have case notes documenting all efforts in the files.*

Julissa Castillo
Executive Director

162 West Cypress Street • San Dimas, CA 91773-3388 • Phone 909/593-1727 • FAX 909/592-3841

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, CA 90020

ANTONIA JIMENEZ
Acting Director

Board of Supervisors
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Fifth District

March 25, 2011

TO: Aggie Alonso, Chief Accountant-Auditor
Countywide Contract Monitoring Division

FROM: Elizabeth A. Howard, Section Head
Out-of-Home Care Management Division
Foster Family Agency/Group Home Performance Management

**DCFS RESPONSE TO THE AUDITOR CONTROLLER'S CONTRACT REVIEW OF McKINLEY FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

The Auditor Controller's (A-C) Contract Review of McKinley Foster Family Agency was completed in February 2010. The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) received the Auditor-Controller's January 21, 2011 final draft report of the contract compliance review on January 21, 2011.

The A-C's final draft report found no egregious findings which rose to the level of a referral to the Child Protection Hotline. The report noted there were findings related to two homes visited which had non-safety physical plant deficiencies, and two foster parents reviewed did not complete the required training hours. The A-C's report also noted findings in the areas of Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports; seven children's files did not contain documentation noting weekly visits within the first three months of placement; termination reports were not comprehensive; current psychotropic medication authorizations were not on file for two of 19 children; and seven of the 19 children did not have documentation of monthly evaluations by the prescribing physicians. McKinley has submitted a Corrective Action Plan to address each of the the recommendations made in the A-C's draft report.

The OHCMD will assess for full implementation of the A-C's recommendations after the issuance of the A-C's final report.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (626) 569-6804.

KR:EAH