



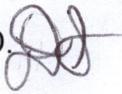
County of Los Angeles  
**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**  
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DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D.  
Director

February 21, 2006

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From: David Sanders, Ph.D.   
Director

**MAY 17, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #2 – MOTION BY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA RE: EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMAND POST MONTHLY LENGTHS OF STAY**

**INTRODUCTION**

On May 17, 2005, the Board instructed the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to:

- Report back to the Board within seven (7) days on immediate steps taken to address Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) "overstays", including increasing the availability of emergency shelter beds;
- Provide monthly reports for the next year, which track the numbers of emergency shelter beds and the length of time children spend waiting for placement;
- Provide a 30-day report regarding possible short-term and long-term solutions, with attention to placement needs of the more difficult-to-place children and youth;
- Work in collaboration with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA) and group homes on the assessment of placement processes to identify and resolve barriers to successful placement of these youths.

### **SCOPE OF PROBLEM**

Most often, the population of children described in the ERCP Lengths-of-Stay reports are "difficult-to-place" children with current behaviors that present serious risks to their health and safety, such as, violent interactions with others, illegal drug consumption, gang involvement, or chronic runaway episodes. This population also includes parenting teenagers and dependent children over the age of 18 years who do not meet the licensing provision for residence in our emergency shelters.

In November 2005, ERCP continued to make remarkable progress. There were 69 children that were served at the Emergency Response Command Post. Of the 69 children (100%) served, 56 children (81%) were placed within 0 to 4 hours, and 13 children (19%) of the 69 children exceeded the four-hour time frame.

In December 2005, there were 66 children that were served at the ERCP. Of the 66 children (100%), 49 children (74%) were placed within 0 to 4 hours, and 17 children (26%) of the 66 children exceeded the four-hour time frame. Of these 17 children, 2 children stayed at ERCP an inordinate amount of time.

January 2006 has been the best month since the initial report in May 2005. During the month of January 2006, there were a total of 40 children served at the ERCP. Of the 40 children (100%) served, 34 (85%) were placed within 0 to 4 hours and only 6 (15%) of the 40 children exceed the four hour time frame.

Those children that remained at ERCP over four hours have general placement issues; including defiant behaviors, illicit drug use, psychiatric problems and chronic run away as the major reasons for the delay in finding suitable placements in a timely manner.

For example, two youths that stayed in ERCP for an inordinate amount of time (60 hours) during the reporting period of December 2005 had initially arrived together and presented themselves to the Department as under-age minors. As a result, services were offered and numerous placement attempts were made. A former MacLaren Children's Center employee recognized one of the children and identified her by her true name. The youth had an on-going court case with permanent placement orders. The other youth was believed by the regional and ERCP staff to be an adult. As such, a request was made to Dependency Court to have the child submit for fingerprinting. That order was issued and the result of such fingerprinting provided her true identity: An adult, with a different name who had runaway from a psychiatric facility in another state.

### **SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS**

Additional short-term solution steps taken and progress made, to date, include:

1. DCFS has scheduled recruitment meetings to recruit emergency shelter care foster parents to care for teens and sibling groups.

2. DCFS placed Resource Utilization Management (RUM) staff on-call, beginning Thursday at 5:00 p.m. through Monday at 2:00 a.m., to assist ERCP in locating and matching placements for difficult-to-place youths.
3. DCFS has scheduled a meeting with the "Way In" to discuss reserving emergency beds for boys.
4. DCFS has primarily focused on maintaining current bed availability.

With the expansion of licensed foster home beds, FFA beds and Group Home beds as detailed above, we believe that we have sufficient capacity to assure that few, if any children, await placement at ERCP for longer than eight (8) hours. Coupled with the long-term solutions that follow, intended to provide continued service expansion and management improvements necessary, we believe we are able to further reduce the length-of-stay for youths at ERCP.

### **LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS**

As previously mentioned, ERCP has a new management team, who continues to be actively involved in this issue. The Regional Administrator and the Assistant Regional Administrators have reported ongoing tremendous progress, and continue to attend on-going meetings with our community partners.

Furthermore, the Department continues in its efforts with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA) to further develop long-term shelter solutions for the more challenging population of youth who await placement at ERCP for extended lengths of time.

Additional long-term solution steps taken and progresses made, to date, include:

1. DCFS staff met with representatives of SEIU Local 535 to expand input and consider workplace-related perspectives as solutions are proposed.

On January 26, 2006, the Department met with ACHSA to discuss the status of the three DCFS/ACHSA program development groups. In view of the dramatic decrease in the number of "overstays" at ERCP, the Department is currently re-evaluating the need to contract specifically for "Crisis Beds." A follow-up meeting is scheduled in April 2006 to explore other options in this area.

2. Girls and Boys Town is scheduled to open their new 16-bed facility in Compton in September 2006. They are willing to build their program to meet our shelter care needs.

3. DCFS has met with Children Are Our Future to develop six shelter care/assessment beds for male youth. It is expected that this home will be up and ready to accept youth within four months.
4. DCFS is working with Dr. Heger from LAC-USC to develop a Family Assessment Center where hard-to-place youths will have immediate psychological and medical exams. This should assist in securing appropriate placements.

### **SUMMARY**

There has been a remarkable achievement made in the last several months. From a high of 121 children reported in the month of August 2005, to that of 40 children in the month of January 2006, is a noteworthy achievement by any measure. The Deputy Director and Regional Administrator have been working in collaboration with Regional Administrators to maximize regional resources and to limit the utilization of the ERCP resources to hard-to-place children.

The attached chart provides you with the monthly tracking for 40 children who had ERCP contact in January 2006. This information is based on data from the ERCP logs from January 1, 2006 through January 31, 2006. During this reporting period, 40 children were served at the emergency Response Command Post. Of the 40 (100%) children served, 34 (85%) were placed within 0 to 4 hours, and 6 (15%) of the 40 children exceed the four-hour time frame. The prevalent issues of defiant behaviors, illicit drug use, psychiatric problems and chronic run away have been the major reasons for the delay in finding suitable placement in a timely manner.

The Department remains committed to the goal of ensuring prompt response and processing of Emergency Response Command Post placement.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AW:JL:eaf

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMAND POST'S MONTHLY OVERSTAY REPORT – MINORS AT ERCP JANUARY 2006

Numbers of children and youth who stayed 4 hours and longer by age:

Total: 6 (15%)

Hours	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	TOTALS	
0 to 4	5	9	19	1	34	85%
4 to 8	0	2	2	0	4	10%
9 to 13	0	0	2	0	2	5%
14 to 19	0	0	0	0		
20 to 23	0	0	0	0		-
24 to 28	0	0	0	0		-
29 to 32	0	0	0	0		-
33 and over	0	0	0	0		-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5(13%)</b>	<b>11(28%)</b>	<b>23(57%)</b>	<b>1(2%)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Children and youth's placement type prior to stay at ERCP:**

Placement	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	TOTALS	
Home of parent	0	0	0	0		
Adoptive parent	0	0	0	0		
Home of Relative	0	0	0	0		
Foster Home	0	1	0	0	1	17%
Group Home	0	1	0	0	1	17%
Awol	0	0	3	0	3	50%
Probation	0	0	1	0	1	16%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2(33%)</b>	<b>4(67%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Numbers of Children and Youth who came to ERCP by age and Gender: Total: 40**

0-10 years		11-14 years		15-18 years		19 and over	
5(27%)		11(28%)		23(57%)		1(2%)	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
2	3	3	8	10	13	0	1

**Children and Youth's placement type following their stay at ERCP:**

Placement	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	TOTALS	
Home of Parent	0	0	0	0		
Home of Relative	0	0	0	0		
Foster Home	0	0	1	0	1	17%
Group Home	0	2	2	0	4	66%
Law Enforcement	0	0	1	0	1	17%
Hospital	0	0	0	0		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2(33%)</b>	<b>4(67%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>