COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

December 27, 2006

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – LINDEN CENTER GARDNER HOUSE AND KENISTON HOUSE GROUP HOMES**

We have completed a review of Gardner House and Keniston House Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by the Linden Center. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Linden Center Group Homes are each six-bed facilities, which provide care for girls ages 13 -17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Gardner House Group Home was providing services for two DCFS children and two privately placed children. Keniston House Group Home was providing services for two DCFS children and three privately placed children.

Linden Center Group Homes are located in the Second District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues, and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program

services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency needs to address a few deficient areas.

Both Group Homes need to clean or replace the carpet in the common areas and the bedrooms; repair the broken window screens; and provide all children with the required minimum weekly allowance.

Keniston House needs to maintain the landscape in the backyard; repair the exterior window frame; provide all children with the required monthly clothing allowance; and encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining life books/photo albums.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:gfw
http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group_home.asp

Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Dr. Ronald Ricker, M.D., Executive Director, Linden Center
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

Linden Center
Gardner House
170 South Gardner Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90036
Phone: (323) 931-5035
License Number: 191800173
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Gardner House Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean, and adequately landscaped.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the hallway carpet is stained.

The children's bedrooms are orderly, and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, the carpet in the bedrooms is dirty and stained, and in bedroom two, the window screen is broken.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

1. **Linden Center management:**

    a. **Clean or replace the carpet in the hallway and bedrooms.**

    b. **Repair the window screen in bedroom two.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities, and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication, and are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment –Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home, and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff, and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required $50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

Children spend their allowances as they choose. However, one child has not been provided with the required minimum weekly allowance.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

2. **Linden Center management provide all children with the required minimum weekly allowance.**

Linden Center
Keniston House
938 Keniston Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90019
Phone: (323) 936-7656
License Number: 191801841
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Keniston House Group Home is located in a residential community. Generally, the exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front yard is clean and adequately landscaped. However, the backyard grass is dry; there is a large pile of leaves, and one of the exterior window frames and screen are broken.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the carpet in the common areas is dirty.

Children's bedrooms are clean and orderly, and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, the carpet in bedroom three is stained.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

1. **Linden Center management:**

    a. **Provide appropriate landscape in the backyard.**

    b. **Repair the exterior window frame and screen.**

    c. **Clean the carpet in the common areas.**

    d. **Clean the carpet in bedroom three.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities, and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication, and are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment –Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home, and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff, and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity. However, one child has not been provided with the required $50 monthly clothing allowance.

Children spend their allowances as they choose. However, one child has not been provided with the required minimum weekly allowance.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

2. **Linden Center management:**

   a. **Provide all children with the required $50 monthly clothing allowance.**

   b. **Provide all children with the required minimum weekly allowance.**

   c. **Encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**

672 S. Lafayette Park Pl. Suite # 35
Los Angeles,California 90057
(213) 251-8226 Fax: (213) 251-8238

November 13, 2006

Dept. of Auditor-Controller
Attn.: Candace Rhue, Group Home Audit Supervisor
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St., Room 515-A
Los Angeles, CA 90012
FAX: 213-346-9020

RE: Linden Center CAP

Dear Ms. Rhue:

The Linden Center purposes to adopt the following Correction Plan based on the recommendation made from our review dated 10/2/06.

Gardner House:

The economic feasibility of replacing the carpet or alternative methods to "fix" the carpet will be discussed and recommended to the Board of Directors. The next meeting is scheduled for December.

The bedroom carpets' will be cleaned by January 1, 2007.

The window screen in bedroom two will be repaired by December 1, 2006.

Staff will be reminded through an in-service to make sure that DCFS children receive at least $ 7.00 a week allowance. The in-service is scheduled for November 14, 2006. Confirmation of compliance will be checked on a weekly basis by the Administrator.

The dried leaves in the backyard have been removed. The backyard landscaping will be discussed with the gardner by December 16, 2006. Because of the amount of shade in the backyard, it would be very difficult to have grass.

The exterior window frame and screen have already been repaired.

The carpets in the house will be cleaned by January 1, 2007.

Staff will be reminded through an in-service to make sure that DCFS children receive at least $ 7.00 a week allowance and that children will receive monthly clothing allowance. The in-service is scheduled for November 14, 2006. Confirmation of compliance will be checked on a weekly basis by the Administrator.

Each child's special staff will encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining lifebooks. The Administrator will make sure that the books are kept up.

I hope that these plans meet your approval. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 213-251-8226, ext. 209.

Sincerely,

Dung Bui
Administrator