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**DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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October 9, 2007

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

We have completed a contract compliance review of McKinley Children's Center (McKinley or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

## Background

DCFS contracts with McKinley, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

McKinley is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of 132 certified foster homes in which 333 DCFS children were placed. McKinley's offices are located in the Fourth and Fifth Districts.

DCFS pays McKinley a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, McKinley receives between $1,589 and $1,865 per month, per child.

Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between $681 and $901 per month, per child. McKinley was paid approximately $6,850,000 during Fiscal Year 2006-07.

## Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether McKinley was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed McKinley's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents.

## Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from McKinley generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, McKinley's social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations.

McKinley did not always comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. For example:

- Three (25%) of the 12 homes visited did not adequately secure detergents, medications or knives.

- The certification files for two (17%) of the 12 foster homes did not contain documentation that the Agency conducted criminal and child abuse clearances for all of the adults that resided in the homes or had frequent contact with the children.

- Sixteen (53%) of 30 Needs and Services Plans were not signed by the children's DCFS social workers as required.

- McKinley's social workers did not visit six (20%) of the 30 children during the children's first 90 days of placement in accordance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. The social workers missed a total of 14 out of the approximate 72 required visits with the six children during their first 90 days of placement.

The details of our review along with recommendations for corrective action are attached.

## Review of Report

We discussed our report with McKinley on August 20, 2007. In their attached response, McKinley management indicates general agreement with our report and the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank McKinley for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Sandro Villa, Director, McKinley Children's Center
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM**
**MCKINLEY CHILDREN'S CENTER**
**FISCAL YEAR 2006-2007**

## BILLED SERVICES

### Objective

Determine whether McKinley Children's Center (McKinley or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

### Verification

We visited 12 of the 132 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that McKinley billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in July and August 2006, and interviewed 13 foster parents and 18 children. We also reviewed the case files for the 18 foster parents and 30 of the children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

### Results

McKinley needs to ensure foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations during their regularly scheduled visits to the homes. McKinley also needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans, Quarterly Reports and children's case files contain all the required information.

Foster Home Visitation

- One (8%) of the 12 foster homes visited did not adequately secure medications and knives as required. The smoke detector in the home's hallway to the children's bedroom was not operable. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the foster parent purchased batteries for the smoke detector and purchased cabinet locks to ensure the medications and knives were not accessible to children.

- Two (17%) of the 12 homes visited did not adequately secure detergents and cleaning solutions as required. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the foster parents purchased cabinet locks to ensure the detergents and cleaning solutions were not accessible to children.

- One (8%) of the 12 homes visited had building materials in the backyard, such as a door and pieces of lumber stacked against the side of the home. The items posed a potential safety hazard to the children. The County contract requires foster parents to provide a home and yard that are safe and well maintained. Prior to the

conclusion of the review, the foster parents had the building materials removed from the backyard.

Our prior audit report, dated October 11, 2005, also noted that McKinley did not always ensure that foster homes were in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations during their regularly scheduled visits to the homes.

Foster Parent Certification

- Seventeen (95%) of the 18 foster parents' training certificates did not indicate the training hours received. Therefore, we could not determine if the foster parents received the required number of initial and ongoing training hours. The foster parents interviewed stated they attended training but could not verify how many hours they attended. The County contract requires the Agency to provide foster parents 18 hours of training prior to certification, 12 hours of training during the first year of certification, and 15 hours of training every year thereafter.

  Our prior audit report also noted that McKinley did not document training hours provided to foster parents.

- Three (17%) of the eighteen foster parents' certification files contained inadequate references. Two of the foster parents' references were not complete and the other foster parent's reference was completed by the foster parent and signed by her mother. McKinley's Program Statement requires foster parent certification files to include three references. Prior to the issuance of this report, McKinley obtained updated references for the three foster parents.

- Two (17%) of the 12 certification files reviewed did not contain documentation that the Agency conducted criminal and child abuse clearances for all adults that resided in the homes or had frequent contact with the children. One of the two homes had a detached room in the backyard that was rented out by an adult tenant. The other home used a relative as a designated driver for the foster parent and children because the foster parent did not have a driver's license or vehicle. The Agency also did not have copies of the designated driver's license and proof of automobile insurance. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the tenant in the detached room moved to another location.

Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports

- Sixteen (53%) of the 30 Needs and Services Plans (Plan) did not contain the children's DCFS social workers' signature indicating the social workers approved the Plans as required. McKinley indicated that the Plans were sent to the DCFS social workers for approval. However, they did not follow-up with the DCFS social workers when the Plans were not returned.

- Three (10%) of the 30 Plans reviewed contained goals for the children that were not specific and measurable.

- Five (17%) of the 30 Plans reviewed did not address the children's personal care and grooming.

- Eight (27%) of the 30 Plans reviewed did not address the children's family visitation plan, including transportation arrangements.

- Four (13%) of the 30 Plans reviewed did not address the reasons the children were placed in foster care.

- Nine (30%) of the 30 Quarterly Reports for children 14 years of age and older did not include a copy of the children's emancipation preparation contract. In addition, 11 of the 30 Quarterly Reports were missing a discussion of at least one of the elements required by the County contract. For example, four of the 11 did not include a discussion of progress made towards goals established for the children.

Medical Services

- One (5%) of the 19 children taking psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization in the child's records for the administration of the medication. The County contract requires Agencies to maintain copies of court authorizations for the administration of psychotropic medications in children's case files. Prior to the issuance of this report, the child emancipated from the Agency.

- Eight (42%) of the 19 children taking psychotropic medications were not seen monthly by their prescribing physician. The County contract requires that children taking psychotropic medications receive monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician unless otherwise documented by the physician.

- One (3%) of the 30 children's Plans indicated that the children needed a psychiatric evaluation as the result of observed behavioral patterns. At the time of our review, an evaluation had not been conducted or scheduled. The County contract requires that McKinley take all necessary steps to monitor children with a history of psychiatric problems, receive a clinical evaluation and submit the written results of such test to the DCFS social worker.

- Three (10%) of the 30 children's initial dental exams were not conducted within the timeframes specified. The County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations require children's initial dental exams to be conducted within thirty days of placement. The three children's initial dental exams were on average three months late. In addition, two (7%) of the 30 children's annual medical exams were approximately three months past due at the time of our review.

Children's Case Records

- Six (20%) of 30 children were not visited by McKinley's social workers as often as required. The County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations require that McKinley's social workers visit children weekly during the first ninety days of placement. The six children were missing a total of 14 out of the approximate 72 required visits during their first ninety days of placement.

  Our prior audit report also noted that McKinley did not always ensure that their social workers visit the children as required.

- Eleven (37%) of 30 children's case records did not contain documentation that the DCFS social worker was provided a monthly telephonic update on the children's progress as required.

**Recommendations**

**McKinley management:**

1. **Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and Title 22 regulations.**

2. **Ensure medications, knives, detergents and cleaning solutions are stored where they are inaccessible to children.**

3. **Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways to the children's bedrooms.**

4. **Ensure that the yards of foster homes are well maintained and free of potential safety hazards.**

5. **Ensure that foster parents complete and have support to document their initial and on-going training hours.**

6. **Ensure that foster parent certification files contain all the information required by the County contract.**

7. **Ensure that criminal clearances are conducted for all adults residing in foster homes or adults who have frequent contact with foster children.**

8. **Ensure that proof of current driver's licenses and automobile insurance is maintained for designated drivers.**

9. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required and that the DCFS social workers approve in writing all Needs and Services Plans.**

10. **Ensure that children taking psychotropic medications have current court authorizations for the administration of the medications and that the children are seen monthly by the prescribing physician.**

11. **Ensure that children with a history of psychiatric problems receive a clinical evaluation and provide the written results to the children's DCFS social worker.**

12. **Ensure that children receive initial and annual medical and dental exams within the timeframes specified in the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

13. **Ensure that McKinley's social workers visit the children weekly during the first ninety days of placement and that the DCFS social worker is updated monthly regarding the children's progress.**

## CLIENT VERIFICATION

### Objective

To determine whether the program participants received the services that McKinley billed DCFS.

### Verification

We interviewed 18 children placed in 12 McKinley certified foster homes and 13 foster parents to confirm the services McKinley billed DCFS.

### Results

The foster children indicated they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents interviewed stated they were generally pleased with the services they received from the Agency.

### Recommendation

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

### Objective

Determine whether McKinley's social workers' caseloads do not exceed fifteen placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

### Verification

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

### Results

Overall, McKinleys' 34 social workers carried an average caseload of ten cases and the Agency's seven supervising social worker supervised an average of six social workers. However, as noted below, McKinley did not always ensure that the caseloads for their nine contracted social workers did not exceed the maximum level.

#### Recommendation

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS

### Objective

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

### Verification

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

### Results

McKinley's director and social workers possessed the education and work experience required. However, two supervising social workers did not meet the work experience qualifications required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations.

McKinley also did not obtain a written and signed declaration from their nine contracted social workers stating that the socials workers' total caseloads for all contracting Agencies would not exceed 15 cases as required by the County contract. In addition, three of 43 personnel files reviewed did not contain current performance evaluations. Prior to the issuance of this report, McKinley obtained the required signed declarations from their contracted social workers and completed performance evaluations for the three employees.

### Recommendations

**McKinley management:**

14. **Ensure that social workers possess the appropriate experience requirements.**

15. **Ensure that contract social workers sign a written declaration stating that the social workers' total contracted caseload will not exceed fifteen placed children.**

16. **Ensure that staff receive annual performance evaluations.**

## PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP

### Objective

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the prior monitoring review completed by the Auditor-Controller.

### Verification

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on October 11, 2005.

### Results

The prior monitoring report contained six recommendations. McKinley implemented three of the recommendations. As previously indicated, three findings from the prior monitoring report were also noted during this monitoring review.

### Recommendation

17. **McKinley management implement the three outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring report.**

McKINLEY CHILDREN'S CENTER

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August 27, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
J. Tyler McCauley Auditor Controller

From: Sandro Villa, M.S.W.
Executive Director of Foster Care
McKinley Children's Center

Subject: Response to McKinley Children's Center, Foster Family Agency Contract review.

The following is McKinley Children's Center, Foster Family Agency's response to the findings and recommendations made by the Auditor-Controller/ Contract Monitoring Division during their contract compliance review.

McKinley, during the review process has immediately corrected all deficiencies, and implemented new monitoring systems where needed.

**Recommendations and Responses:**

1. **Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with County contract and Title 22 regulations.**

McKinley FFA will continue providing on-going training on Title 22 and County contract to all FFA staff. McKinley FFA staff will continue to monitor homes during each home visit, conduct a home inspection on a monthly basis and a Q.A. home review on a quarterly basis. Supervising social workers shall review compliance issues with social workers during supervision meetings and shall periodically inspect homes to monitor compliance.

2. **Ensure medications, knives, detergents, and cleaning solutions are stored where they are inaccessible to children.**

McKinley FFA social workers will conduct a foster home walk through during each home visit. FFA social workers and foster parents will sign a visit passport indicating that a walk through was conducted and that the foster home complies with all agency, County contract and Title 22 regulations. The walk through shall include an inspection to ensure that medications, knives, detergents and cleaning solutions are

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properly stored.

3. **Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways to children's bedrooms.**

McKinley FFA social workers will conduct a foster home walk through during each home visit. FFA social workers and foster parents will sign a visit passport indicating that a walk through was conducted and that the foster home complies with all agency, County contract and Title 22 regulations. This includes ensuring that smoke detectors in the hallways to children's bedrooms are operable.

4. **Ensure that the yards of foster homes are well maintained and free of potential safety hazards.**

McKinley FFA social workers will conduct a foster home walk through during each home visit. FFA social workers and foster parents will sign a visit passport indicating that a walk through was conducted and that the foster home complies with all agency, County contract and Title 22 regulations. This includes ensuring that back, front and side yards are well maintained and free of potential safety hazards.

5. **Ensure that foster parents complete, and have documented in their certification file, the required amount of initial and on-going training hours.**

McKinley FFA has changed the sign-in sheets and training certificates to include the total time of each session, location of training and modules taught. Copies of these sign-in sheets and certificates shall be placed in each foster parent's certification file.

6. **Ensure that foster parents certification files contain all the information required by the County contract.**

All certification files shall be reviewed to ensure that they contain all required information. Supervising social workers and Quality Assurance staff shall also periodically review certification files to ensure completion.

7. **Ensure that criminal clearances are conducted for all adults residing in foster homes or adults who have frequent contact with foster children.**

McKinley FFA obtains clearances for all certified foster parents prior to certification. McKinley FFA will ensure that clearances and any other appropriate documentation are obtained from any adult that may have frequent contact with foster children.

8. **Ensure that proof of a current driver's license and automobile insurance is maintained for designated drivers.**

McKinley FFA obtains driver's license and automobile insurance from all foster parents prior to certification and prior to expiration date. McKinley will ensure that proof of

current driver's license and automobile insurance is maintained from all other designated drivers.

9. **Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required and that the DCFS social workers approve in writing all Needs and Services Plans.**

McKinley FFA as of 9/07 is implementing the new template/format provided by DCFS to all Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports. The new format contains all the information required by County contract.

McKinley's practice is to send a letter to CSWs asking for input and approval of all Appraisal Needs and Services. McKinley FFA will follow up with a phone call to CSW within seven days if there has been no response. If the second attempt fails, a McKinley FFA Supervisor will contact CSW's supervisor for feedback and approval of Appraisal Needs and Services Plan.

10. **Ensure that children taking psychotropic medication have current court authorizations for the administration of the medications and that the children are seen monthly by the prescribing physician.**

McKinley FFA will continue to train social workers regarding policies and procedures to ensure that children taking psychotropic medication have a current court authorization and are being seen by the prescribing physician in a monthly or otherwise specified basis. Supervising social workers and Quality Assurance staff shall review charts to ensure that current court authorizations are present.

11. **Ensure that children with a history of psychiatric problems receive a clinical evaluation and provide the written results to the children's DCFS social worker.**

McKinley FFA social workers will document on a minor's Appraisal Needs and Services the clinical needs of children. With the approval of CSW, children will be referred to appropriate clinical services while keeping the CSW fully informed.

12. **Ensure that children receive initial and annual medical and dental exams within the timeframe specified in the county contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**

McKinley FFA has implemented a 4th day report. This report is completed by a social worker before the 4th day of placement of each minor; this report indicates the date of medial and dental initial evaluations. This report is closed by a supervisor once verification of initial medical and dental examinations is obtained. Social workers have been trained to monitor and ensure that all children receive a timely yearly medical and dental evaluation. A periodic review of annual medical and dental evaluations shall be done by supervising social workers and Quality Assurance staff.

13. **Ensure that children are visited the amount of times required and that the DCFS social worker is updated monthly regarding the children's progress.**

McKinley FFA has developed a visit passport to be signed by a social worker and foster parent at each visit. This is a new tool to monitor and ensure that visits are conducted according to County contract. McKinley FFA social worker will continue to maintain at least two monthly contacts with CSWs. McKinley FFA social workers have been instructed to be detailed and specific when documenting contacts attempted or made with CSWs.

14. **Ensure that social workers possess the appropriate experience requirements.**

McKinley FFA works closely with our H.R. department to ensure that all staff possesses the appropriate experience requirements. Experience verification shall be placed in all social worker's personnel files.

15. **Ensure that contract social workers sign a written declaration stating that the social worker's total contracted caseload will not exceed fifteen placed children.**

McKinley FFA has made this declaration form a part of all new hire employee's packet. This form is signed by all staff - full time and on-call.

16. **Ensure that staff receive annual performance evaluations.**

McKinley Children's Center has implemented a new evaluation system. All employees are evaluated during the month of September. The completion of evaluations is monitored by our H. R. Department.

17. **McKinley management to implement the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring report.**

McKinley FFA will implement all recommendations made during the Fiscal Year 2005-2006.

McKinley Children's Center appreciates the thorough review and welcomes the recommendations provided. McKinley Children's Center takes pride in the quality of our FFA program and will utilize the feedback provided to further improve the quality of services provided to children and families in our program.

Respectfully,

Sandra Villa, M.S.W.
Executive Director of Foster Care
McKinley Children's Center

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