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September 25, 2008

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

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Acting Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – KIDS FIRST FOUNDATION - MID VALLEY YOUTH CENTER GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Kids First Foundation. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home is an eighty-four bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home was providing services for one DCFS child, sixty-five Probation children, eight San Bernardino County children, three Orange County children, one Alameda County child, one Kern County child and one San Francisco County child.

Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home is located in the Third 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 except for a few deficient areas.

Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home needs to develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that include input from all members of the treatment team and the child, document efforts to enroll children in school and teach children daily living, self-help and survival skills. The Group Home also needs to re-train staff to treat children with respect and dignity at all times, provide a sufficient quantity of food and encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

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 Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

WLW:MMO:DC:CC:asl

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Richard C. Schnetzer, Board President, Kids First Foundation
Kenny Cook, Executive Director, Kids First Foundation
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

Kids First Foundation
Mid Valley Youth Center Group Home
Van Nuys, California 91405
License Number: 191220771
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Mid Valley Youth Center 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.

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.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms 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.

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.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Ten

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 Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current. However, input from all members of the treatment team and the child are not included in the development or implementation of the NSPs. In addition, the NSPs are not comprehensive and do not include measurable and achievable short and long term goals.

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

Recommendations

1. **Kids First Foundation management:**

   a. **Include input from all members of the treatment team and the child in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.**

   b. **Develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that include measurable and achievable short and long term goals.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Ten

Comments:

Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in school. However, one child is not enrolled in school, and efforts to enroll the child in school are not documented.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate. However, the Group Home's program does not include the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills.

Recommendations

2. **Kids First Foundation management:**

   a. **Maintain documentation to show efforts to enroll children in school.**

b. Teach children daily living, self-help and survival skills.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Ten

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

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.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Ten

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. Overall, the children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that most of the staff treats them with respect and dignity. However, some children report that one of the staff members uses inappropriate language when interacting with children.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail and have private visitors. Children 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.

Overall, children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. However, some children report that second portions of meals are not always available.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

3. **Kids First Foundation management:**

   a. **Re-train staff to treat children with respect and dignity at all times and monitor their interactions.**

   b. **Provide children with sufficient quantities of food.**

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Ten

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.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, children are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

4. **Kids First Foundation management encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**

KIDS FIRST

Mid Valley Youth Center

April 29, 2008

Ms. Candace Rhue
County of Los Angeles
Department of Auditor-Controller
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple St. Room 410
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: March 11, 2008 Audit

Ms. Rhue,

Listed below is the Plan of Correction (POC) relative to your visit on March 11, 2008. This plan will address the recommendation for our program made by your observations.

Recommendation

Kids First Foundation management

a. Develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that include measurable and achievable short and long term goals.
b. Include input from all members of the treatment team and the child in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans.

Plan: Regularly scheduled Treatment Team Meetings will address daily living and coping skills of the client. The treatment team will consist of the Clinical Director, Therapist, and Primary Counselor, Dorm Manager, Executive and/or Associate Director and client. Therapist will refer to client's needs and assessment plan to direct the treatment team to determine if client is on track with goals or modify goals to meet the client's current needs. Each aforementioned action will be followed with thorough documentation including a clinical individual therapy progress note, group rehabilitation note, and action plan. Kristi L. Williams, Clinical Director will oversee the process. In addition, the needs and assessment plan were integrated in January 2008.

Recommendation

Kids First Foundation management:

a. Maintain documentation to show efforts to enroll children in school.
b. Teach children daily living, self-help and survival skills.

Plan: A plan of action will be generated for a new resident upon intake. Basic background information will be gathered and compiled. A request will be made for client's transcripts and/or IEP Resident will be placed in appropriate grade and school according to educational information.

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Mid Valley Youth Center

Please see attached documents. Chris Williams, School Program Specialist is assigned to reintegrate his education process. His process was reinforced in March 2008.

Plan: Counselors will be providing daily living skills, coping skills, and self esteem program using scripted, exploratory, and interactive lessons on a daily basis. Therapists and Mental Health Rehabilitation Specialists will be incorporating topics associated with daily livings skills in the daily Resident Accountability Group. Dorm Managers of each unit will be primarily responsible for this process. The life books were reintegrated in March 2008.

Recommendation

Kids First Foundation management:

a. Train all staff to treat children with children with respect and dignity at all times, and monitors their interactions.
b. Provide children with sufficient quantities of food.

Plan: Clients will be provided with three meals a day as well a snack after school and after dinner. All meals include meat/meat alternate, grains/breads, vegetables/fruits, milk, and extra food. This process was implemented several months by the Stephanie Taylor, Food Services Director. Ms. Taylor is designated to monitor this process in her department. In addition, the Food Services department will measure that our clients are receiving sufficient quantities of food by utilizing an anonymous monthly survey that will be distributed to our clients.

Plan: Mid Valley Youth Center requires that employee interactions with clients and former clients to be conducted in a professional manner. Guidelines for such interactions includes, but not limited to inappropriate physical contact with clients including hugs or kisses. The Training Director will engage in a facility wide training education on professional conduct in an organization on April 9, 2008. Please see attached training schedule. An anonymous quarterly survey will be distributed to clients to measure if they are being treated fairly and with respect from employees.

Recommendation

Kids' First Foundation management encourages and assists children in creating and maintains photo albums/life books.

Plan: Upon intake a life book will be issued to each client and on an on-going basis developed with residential staff which includes, but not limited to primaries, team leaders, and dorm managers.

Thank you,

Franseca A. Kitajima, MS
Associate Director

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