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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
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October 2, 2015

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
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Supervisor Shelia Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Contracts Administration Division (CAD) conducted a review of Serenity Infant Care Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in December 2014. The FFA has one licensed office located in the Fifth Supervisorial District, and provides services to DCFS children. According to the FFA's program statement, its mission is "to provide quality foster homes for abused, abandoned, and neglected infants and children, with special emphasis on the care of drug affected infants."

At the time of the review, the FFA supervised 81 DCFS placed children in 59 certified foster homes. The placed children's average length of placement was thirteen months and their average age was four.

SUMMARY

During CAD's contract compliance review, the interviewed children generally reported feeling safe at the FFAs certified foster homes; having been provided with good care and appropriate services; being comfortable in their environment and treated with respect and dignity. The certified foster parents reported they were supported by the FFA staff in their efforts to provide care, supervision and service delivery to the children placed in their homes.

The FFA was in full compliance with 7 of 11 areas of our contract compliance review: Facility and Environment; Education and Workforce Readiness; Health and Medical Needs; Psychotropic Medications; Personal Rights and Social Emotional Well-Being; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being; and Discharged Children.

CAD noted deficiencies in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, related to two Special Incident Reports (SIRs) not submitted timely and Community Care Licensing (CCL) citations;

Certified Foster Homes, related to one certified foster parent not completing the required annual training hours and one vehicle used to transport the children was not well maintained; Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery, related to the Initial and Updated Needs and Service Plans (NSPs) not being developed timely and not submitting quarterly reports to County Children's Social Workers timely; and Personnel Records, related one employee not signing a criminal background statement timely and not completing the health-screening timely.

Attached are the details of our review.

REVIEW OF REPORT

On February 10, 2015, Linda Lai, DCFS CAD, held an Exit Conference with the FFA representatives: Jennifer Choctaw, Executive Director; Linda Kontis, Director of Social Services; Gloria Burrill, Senior Supervising Social Worker; Amanda Morales, Social Worker Supervisor; Angela Kalies, Social Worker Supervisor; and Gloria Washington, Certification Specialist. DCFS staff included: Mary Espinoza, Out-of-Home Care Management (OHCMD). The FFA representatives were in agreement with the review findings and recommendations; were receptive to implementing systemic changes to improve compliance with regulatory standards; and to address the noted deficiencies in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

A copy of this report has been sent to the Auditor Controller and CCL.

The FFA provided the attached approved contract compliance CAP.

CAD conducted a follow-up visit to the FFA on May 14, 2015, to verify implementation of the CAP.

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:EM
LTI:ll

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Interim Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Jerry E. Powers, Chief Probation Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Jennifer Choctaw, Executive Director, Serenity Infant Care Homes
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW SUMMARY

600 S. Grand Avenue
Covina, CA 91742
License Number: 191593485

	Contract Compliance Monitoring Review	**Findings: December 2014**
I.	**Licensure/Contract Requirements** (7 Elements)	
	1. Timely Notification for Child's Relocation	1. Full Compliance
	2. Timely, Cross-Reported SIRs	2. Improvement Needed
	3. Runaway Procedures in Accordance with the Contract	3. Full Compliance
	4. Are there CCL Citations/OHCMD Safety Reports	4. Improvement Needed
	5. If Applicable, FFA Ensures Complete Required Whole Foster Family Home Training	5. Not Applicable
	6. FFA Pays Certified Foster Parents (CFP) Whole Foster Family Home Payments	6. Not Applicable
	7. FFA Conducts an Assessment of CFP Prior to Placement of Two (2) or More Children	7. Full Compliance
II	**Certified Foster Homes (CFHs)** (12 Elements)	
	1. Home Study and Safety Inspection Conducted Prior to Certification	1. Full Compliance
	2. Agency's Inquiry with OHCMD for Historical Information Prior to Certification	2. Full Compliance
	3. Timely, Criminal Clearances (DOJ, FBI, CACI) Prior to Certification	3. Full Compliance
	4. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement	4. Full Compliance
	5. Health Screening & TB Test Prior to Certification	5. Full Compliance
	6. All Required Training Prior to Certification	6. Full Compliance
	7. Certificate of Approval on File/Including Capacity	7. Full Compliance
	8. Safety Inspection Completed At Least Every Six Months or Per-Approved Program Statement	8. Full Compliance
	9. Completed Annual Training Hours for Re-certification and Current CPR/First-Aid/Water Safety Certificates	9. Improvement Needed
	10. Current CDL/Auto Insurance/Annual Vehicle Maintenance Documentation for CFPs and Designated Drivers	10. Improvement Needed
	11. Criminal Clearances and Health Screening/CDL/CPR/ DOJ/FBI/CACI/Auto Insurance for Other Adults in the Home	11. Full Compliance
	12. FFA Assists CFPs in Providing Transportation Needs	12. Full Compliance

III	**Facility and Environment** (7 Elements) 1. Exterior/Grounds Well Maintained 2. Common Areas Well Maintained 3. Children's Bedrooms/Interior Well Maintained 4. Sufficient and Appropriate Educational Resources 5. Adequate Perishable and Non-Perishable Food 6. CFP Conducted Disaster Drills and Documentation Maintained 7. Money and Clothing Allowance Logs Maintained	Full Compliance (All)
IV	**Maintenance of Required Documentation/Service Delivery** (10 Elements) 1. FFA Obtains or Documents Efforts to Obtain County Children's Social Worker's (CSW) Authorization to Implement NSPs 2. CFPs Participated in Development of the NSPs 3. Children Progressing Towards Meeting NSP Goals 4. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Initial NSP with Child's Participation 5. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Updated NSPs with Child's Participation 6. Therapeutic Services Received 7. Recommended Assessments/Evaluations Implemented 8. County Children's Social Workers Monthly Contacts Documented in Child's Case File 9. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Quarterly Reports 10. FFA Social Workers Conduct Required Visits	1. Full Compliance 2. Full Compliance 3. Full Compliance 4. Improvement Needed 5. Improvement Needed 6. Full Compliance 7. Full Compliance 8. Full Compliance 9. Improvement Needed 10. Full Compliance
V	**Education and Workforce Readiness** (5 Elements) 1. Children Enrolled in School Within Three School Days 2. Children Attend School as Required and FFA Facilitates in Meeting Children's Educational Goals 3. Current Children's Report Cards/Progress Reports Maintained 4. Children's Academic Performance and/or Attendance Increased 5. FFA Facilitates Child's Participation in YDS or Equivalent Services and Vocational Programs	Full Compliance (All)

VI	**Health and Medical Needs** (4 Elements) 1. Initial Medical Exams Conducted Timely 2. Follow-Up Medical Exams Conducted Timely 3. Initial Dental Exams Conducted Timely 4. Follow-Up Dental Exams Conducted Timely	Full Compliance (All)
VII	**Psychotropic Medications** (2 Elements) 1. Current Court Authorization for Administration of Psychotropic Medication 2. Current Psychiatric Evaluation Review	Full Compliance (All)
VIII	**Personal Rights and Social Emotional Well-Being** (10 Elements) 1. Children Informed of Agency's Policies and Procedures 2. Children Feel Safe in the CFP Home 3. CFPs' Efforts to Provide Nutritious Meals and Snacks 4. CFPs Treat Children with Respect and Dignity 5. Children Allowed Private Visits, Calls and to Receive Correspondence 6. Children Free to Attend or Not Attend Religious Services/Activities of Their Choice 7. Children's Chores Reasonable 8. Children Informed About Their Medication and Right to Refuse Medication 9. Children Aware of Right to Refuse or Receive Medical, Dental and Psychiatric Care 10. Children Given Opportunities to Participate in Extra-Curricular, Enrichment and Social Activities	Full Compliance (All)

IX	**Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being** (7 Elements) 1. Clothing Allowance Provided in Accordance with FFA Program Statement 2. On-going Clothing Inventories of Adequate Quantity and Quality 3. Children's Involvement in Selection of Their Clothing 4. Provision of Sufficient Supply of Clean Towels and Personal Care Items Meeting Ethnic Needs 5. Minimum Weekly Monetary Allowances 6. Management of Allowance/Earnings 7. Encouragement/Assistance with Life Book or Photo Album	Full Compliance (All)
X	**Discharged Children** (3 Elements) 1. Completed Discharge Summary 2. Attempts to Stabilize Children's Placement 3. Child Completed High School (if applicable)	Full Compliance (All)
XI	**Personnel Records** (9 Elements) 1. Criminal Clearances (DOJ, FBI, CACI) Signed and Submitted Timely 2. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement 3. FFA Social Workers Met Education/Experience Requirements 4. Timely Employee Health Screening/TB Clearances 5. Valid CDL and Auto Insurance 6. FFA Employees Signed Copies of FFA Policies and Procedures 7. FFA Employees Completed All Required Training and Documentation Maintained 8. FFA Social Workers Have Appropriate Caseload Ratio 9. FFA Maintained Written Declarations for Part-Time Contracted FFA Social Workers Caseloads Not to Exceed a Total of 15 Children	1. Full Compliance 2. Improvement Needed 3. Full Compliance 4. Improvement Needed 5. Full Compliance 6. Full Compliance 7. Full Compliance 8. Full Compliance 9. Full Compliance

SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The following report is based on a "point in time" monitoring visit. This compliance report addresses findings noted during the December 2014 review. The purpose of this review was to assess Serenity Infant Care Homes Foster Family Agency's (the FFA's) compliance with its County contract and State regulations and included a review of the FFA's program statement, as well as internal administrative policies and procedures. The monitoring review covered the following 11 areas:

- Licensure/Contract Requirements,
- Certified Foster Homes,
- Facility and Environment,
- Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery,
- Education and Workforce Readiness,
- Health and Medical Needs,
- Psychotropic Medication,
- Personal Rights and Social Emotional Well-Being,
- Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being,
- Discharged Children, and
- Personnel Records.

For the purpose of this review, ten placed children were selected for the sample. The Contracts Administration Division (CAD) interviewed six of the ten children. Four children were not interviewed as they were either pre-verbal or too young. During the home visits, the children were observed to be comfortable and well-cared for in the certified foster homes (CFHs) and their certified foster parents (CFPs) were observed to be attuned to the needs of the children. CAD reviewed all ten case files to assess the care and services they received. Additionally, four discharged children's files were reviewed to assess the FFA's compliance with permanency efforts. At the time of the review, one placed child selected for the sample was prescribed psychotropic medication. This case file was reviewed to assess for timeliness of Psychotropic Medication Authorizations and to confirm the required documentation of psychiatric monitoring.

CAD reviewed five CFH files and four staff files for compliance with Title 22 Regulations and County contract requirements. Interviews were conducted with five CFPs to assess the quality of care and supervision provided to children.

CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE

CAD found the following areas out of compliance:

Licensure/Contract Requirements

- Special Incident Reports (SIRs) were not submitted timely.

A review of thirteen SIRs revealed that two were submitted late. One SIR was submitted on August 19, 2014, for an incident that occurred on August 16, 2014. The other SIR was submitted on August 27, 2014 for an incident that occurred on August 24, 2014. Both SIRs were for minor injuries that were required to be reported by the next business day.

During the Exit Conference, the agency representatives stated the SIR submitted on August 19, 2014, was also reviewed and cited by CCL on August 21, 2014. They had re-trained the staff involved, and they will provide SIR training to all responsible staff based on CAD's review.

The FFA provided training to all staff on February 24, 2015, and submitted a copy of attendees' signatures to CAD on March 12, 2015. During a CAD follow-up visit on May 14, 2015, three additional SIRs were sampled and it was confirmed that all three SIRs were submitted timely.

- Community Care Licensing (CCL) cited the FFA.

CCL cited the FFA as a result of deficiencies and findings during a facility visit conducted on August 21, 2014. According to the report dated, August 21, 2014, the FFA was cited for not reporting one SIR within the required time frame. CCL requested a Plan of Correction (POC) which required the FFA to re-train all staff and CFPs on SIRs in order to meet the required time frame by September 12, 2014. The FFA submitted its POC to CCL on August 29, 2014, stating that training has been provided. CCL cleared the POC on September 16, 2014.

Recommendations:

The FFA management shall ensure that:

1. SIRs are submitted timely.

2. The FFA is in compliance with Title 22 regulations and free of CCL citations.

Certified Foster Homes

- All required training prior to re-certifying a parent was not completed.

One CFH has two CFPs on file. One CFP had only ten hours of training instead of the required fifteen hours when the annual re-certification was renewed on October 26, 2014.

At the Exit Conference, the FFA representatives stated that they had made arrangements several times for this parent to obtain required training, but the parent missed it due to various reasons. The FFA will continue working with the parent to ensure sufficient training hours are obtained prior to the next re-certification.

During a follow-up visit conducted on May 14, 2015, CAD reviewed two CFP files and confirmed that the FFA implemented new procedures to ensure CFPs received sufficient training hours prior to re-certification.

- A vehicle was not maintained in good repair.

During the home visit on January 8, 2015, CAD inspected two vehicles of a CFP. One vehicle had a non-functioning front left turn light and a broken seatbelt. CAD immediately notified the CFP to use the other vehicle to transport children and take the vehicle with deficiencies for repair. The CFP provided a receipt dated January 8, 2015, as documentation. CAD returned on January 22, 2015, to verify that the vehicle has been repaired.

Recommendations:

The FFA management shall ensure that:

3. Certified foster parents received all the required training prior to certification.

4. All vehicles are maintained in good repair.

Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery

- FFA Social Workers did not develop timely initial Needs and Services Plans (NSPs).

Three of ten initial NSPs were not signed timely. The FFA did not obtain required signatures within the timeframe. Two children were placed on June 11, 2014 and their initial NSPs were developed and signed on the date of the placement. Another child's initial NSP was due on October 14, 2014 and the CFP signed the NSP on October 31, 2014.

During the Exit Conference, the FFA representatives stated their staff inadvertently used the placement date as the completion date for the siblings' initial NSP.

- FFA social workers did not develop timely updated NSPs.

Three of twenty-four updated NSPs were not signed timely. Two sibling children's updated NSP was due on September 11, 2014, and was signed by the CFP on September 23, 2014. Another child had one updated NSP due on November 13, 2014, and signed by the CFP on December 2, 2014.

- FFA social workers did not develop timely quarterly reports.

Ten of twenty-four quarterly reports were submitted to the County Children's Social Workers (CSWs) late. The FFA did not submit quarterly reports for four children to the CSWs timely. Three sibling children had three quarterly reports that were sent to their assigned CSW late. One quarterly report was due on May 14, 2014 and the FFA sent it to the CSW on

May 29, 2014. Another was due on August 14, 2014 and the FFA sent it to the CSW on August 21, 2014. One quarterly report was due on November 14, 2014 and sent to the CSW on December 4, 2014. Additionally, one quarterly report that was due on August 13, 2014 was sent to the CSW on August 22, 2014.

At the Exit Conference, the FFA representatives stated that they will follow the new time frame specified in the 2014 contract amendment to ensure timely development of initial and updated NSPs and submission of quarterly reports.

The FFA provided NSP training to their social workers on February 24, 2015, and submitted a copy of the signature page to CAD. On May 14, 2015, CAD compliance sampled two additional initial NSPs and two updated NSPs, and confirmed the initial and updated NSPs and quarterly reports were timely.

Recommendations:

The FFA management shall ensure that:

5. FFA Social Workers develop timely initial NSPs.
6. FFA Social Workers develop timely updated NSPs.
7. FFA Social Workers develop timely quarterly reports.

Personnel Records

- Timely signed criminal background statement was not completed.

One employee did not sign a criminal background statement timely. This employee was hired on September 9, 2013 and the criminal background statement was not signed until September 16, 2013.

- Timely employee health screening not completed.

One employee did not complete a health screening timely. The same employee listed above did not have a health screening on file. The FFA later provided a report dated January 2, 2015, indicating the health screening was performed on August 14, 2014.

The FFA representative stated this was an oversight. The employee was a previous volunteer who had a criminal background and tuberculosis clearance on file. They haven't hired a volunteer to a permanent position before and they will review the hiring process to ensure all required elements for a new employee are completed.

The FFA updated the new personnel file checklist and submitted a copy to CAD. On May 14, 2015, CAD sampled three new employee files and confirmed the criminal background statements and health screening were completed timely.

Recommendations:

The FFA management shall ensure that:

8. Employees complete and sign a criminal background statement timely.

9. Employees complete health screening timely.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP FROM DCFS OUT-OF-HOME CARE MANAGEMENT DIVISION'S (OHCMD) FFA CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

The OHCMD's last compliance report, dated January 29, 2014, indicated that the FFA was in full compliance with all 11 areas of the contract compliance review.

At the Exit Conference, the FFA representative expressed their desire to remain in compliance with all Title 22 Regulations and Contract requirements. A follow-up visit was conducted on May 14, 2015, by CAD and the FFA had fully implemented 9 of 9 recommendations noted in this report. CAD will continue to assess implementation of the recommendations during our next monitoring review. OHCMD will provide on-going technical assistance prior to the next review.

Corrective Action Plan for DCFS Contract Compliance Audit 3/12/15

Licensure/Contract Requirements- in reference to # 2:

In addressing the untimely SIR submission, the Serenity social workers were retrained on proper SIR completion and the foster parents were also retrained on timely and appropriate reporting. Social workers and foster parents signed forms indicating their participation in the retraining.

In reference to #4:

On 8/21/14, Serenity received a substantiated Community Care Licensing complaint regarding untimely SIR submission. Serenity received a Type B citation and submitted a plan of correction including supporting documents dated 9/12/14. This POC was cleared on 9/16/14. Social workers and foster parents were retrained on reporting requirements and the importance of timely reporting and submission of SIR's.

Certified Foster Homes- in reference to # 16 and #17:

Certified foster parents will complete 15 hours of training hours prior to the most recent recertification.

- Social workers will assess the progress of foster parent training hours every six months during the six month home evaluation.
- The Serenity recertification specialist will distribute the recertification packet three months prior to the recertification date to remind FP's to complete training hours timely.
- Serenity will offer monthly trainings to the foster parents to allow for ample opportunity to complete training hours.
- Social workers will submit all recertification documents to their supervisor one month prior to the recertification date. Supervisors will review recertification and training hour progress prior to the recertification date. If a family does not submit all recertification documents prior to recertification, then any foster children in the home will be placed in respite until the family can be successfully recertified.
- The vehicle has been fixed and auditor. Linda Lai has checked the vehicle since the repair. The foster parents are required to complete yearly vehicle inspections. Foster parents will be reminded to have repairs done immediately to ensure child safety, per auditor Lai.

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- **Maintenance of Required Documents and Service Delivery - in reference to #'s 30, 31, 35:**

Social workers will submit initial and updated NSP's within 5 calendar days of the due date. The signature page must be signed by the foster parent prior to submitting the NSP within the 5 day time frame. Social workers will complete and submit a draft of initial and updated NSP's to their supervisor 7 days prior to the due date. Supervisors will track report due dates and monitor progress during weekly supervision. The social workers will have NSP signature page dates reflect the actual date the foster parent, social worker, and supervisor reads and signs the report. Auditor does not recommend pre-printed dates. Supervisors will ensure that pre-printed dates are not used and that all signatures are received prior to submitting within the 5 day time frame.

Personnel Records- in reference to # 69 and #71:

The criminal background statements will be signed for new personnel prior to the employee start date. The health screen and TB test will be submitted and reviewed prior to the employee start date. All required documents will be tracked on the Schedule of Required Information by Serenity's bookkeeper.

Amanda Morales Jimenez, LCSW
Social Work Supervisor

3/12/15
Date