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July 13, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

DANGERFIELD INSTITUTE OF URBAN PROBLEMS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Dangerfield Institute of Urban Problems Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in January 2016. The FFA has one office located in the Second Supervisorial District and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to provide these children with continuity of care, nurturance and services, which will meet their individualized needs and those of their families."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In April 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all areas; therefore, the FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

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

PLB:KR
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Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
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Elouise Dangerfield, Executive Director, Dangerfield Institute of Urban Problems FFA
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
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DANGERFIELD INSTITUTE OF URBAN PROBLEMS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Dangerfield Institute of Urban Problems Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in January 2016. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the FFA's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), three FFA staff members, three certified foster parents and one service provider.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised 25 DCFS placed children in 10 certified foster homes. The focus children's average number of placements was three, their overall average length of placement was 10 months and their average age was five. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The FFA received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with certified foster parents, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the FFA staff, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	5 - Good Status	The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, FFA staff, caregivers and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	6 - Optimal Stability	The focus children have optimal stability in placement settings and enjoy positive and enduring relationships with primary caregivers, key adult supporters and peers. There is no history of instability over the past 30 days.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	5 - Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections	Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents working with the focus children, their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	6 - Optimal Engagement Efforts	To an optimal degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable), caregivers and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that excellent efforts are being used.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Service Needs - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5 - Good Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is frequently updated.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	5 - Good Teamwork	The team contains most of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a good, dependable working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5 - Good Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the FFA in February 2015. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 areas and it was determined that a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was not required. In September 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. Based on the information below, it appears that the FFA continues to score at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas on their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	6	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	6	5

In the areas of Safety and Placement Stability, the FFA scored at the optimal level. The FFA continues to provide a highly safe living environment for the focus children. The FFA requires that their certified foster parents participate in training prior to certification and on a monthly basis thereafter. The FFA goes above and beyond providing the required 12 hours of annual training. The FFA provides up to 48 hours of annual training to their certified foster parents. Some of the training provided by the FFA includes Title 22 Regulations; child safety; certified foster parent expectations; child development; children's needs; and collaboration with service providers. These trainings assist in sustaining safe and stable living conditions for the placed children. At intake, information is obtained about each placed child. Specifically, each placed child's strengths and needs are discussed, which the FFA Social Workers share with the certified foster parents. Additionally, the FFA Social Workers continue conducting safety assessments during their weekly home visits, which also include two unannounced visits per month. The certified foster parents have their FFA Social Worker's and

administrator's cell phone numbers for 24-hour accessibility to report any concerns and to request assistance. The focus children reported having established positive and enduring relationships with their certified foster parents. The focus children refer to their certified foster mothers as "mom" or "mommy". For one focus child, the FFA Social Worker collaborated with the certified foster parent to address her behavioral challenges. Intervention strategies implemented included linking the focus child to the Regional Center and the certified foster parent providing individualized social interaction modeling and structure in the home. Due to their efforts, the focus child has ceased to exhibit negative behaviors and is doing well in the home. The DCFS CSW for this focus child reported to have been impressed with the positive change in the focus child's conduct and attitude. The focus children all appear to be thriving and happy in their placements. None of the focus children have experienced any placement disruptions.

In the areas of Permanency and Visitation, the FFA continues to provide a good quality of services and stability to the focus children. The FFA continues to assist the focus children in reaching their permanency goals by facilitating family visitation when the permanency goal is Family Reunification services. On a weekly basis, the focus children, have approximately ten scheduled hours of visitation that is monitored by the FFA Social Workers. For one of the focus children, the FFA Social Worker also provides transportation for the visits. For the other two focus children, their certified foster parents provide transportation services to facilitate their visits. For one focus child, the plan is adoption and the FFA staff will liaison between the third party agency and the DCFS CSW to complete the adoption home study, as this focus child is in the process of being adopted by her certified foster mother. The second focus child's plan is Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (PPLA) and the certified foster mother had committed to adopting her. However, a family member came forward recently and the focus child has since been placed with the relative. For the third focus child, the plan is Family Reunification and the FFA staff is providing transportation and monitoring services for visitation between the focus child and a sibling. Also, for age appropriate children who have a plan of PPLA, the FFA facilitates independent living skills classes and the certified foster parents teach life skills as well.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	5	5	5

In the area of Engagement, the FFA continues to score at the optimal level. The quality of services provided to the placed children continue to be of high caliber. The focus children, certified foster parents and DCFS CSWs reported feeling heard and respected by the FFA

staff. The DCFS CSWs and service providers continue to report that the FFA Social Workers maintain contact and provide updates as to the focus children's progress. The FFA Social Workers also continue to engage family members for active participation. As an example, the FFA worked with the biological mother to accommodate her schedule to attend a meeting with the Regional Center evaluator.

In the areas of Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA continues to make good efforts to engage the focus children and key people in decisions that are being made on their behalf. The FFA staff continues to facilitate and/or attend team meetings to address educational needs, visitation, permanency, goals and service needs of the focus children. There continues to be a good array of services provided to the focus children such as in-home individual therapy, tutoring, and Full Service Partnership services. Full Service Partnership services consist of a therapist, a parent partner and a facilitator that assists the focus children with adjusting to placement and to meeting their mental health needs. Intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plan and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) match the services that are being provided to the focus children. The FFA continues to assess the focus children's needs and provides intervention for them to function effectively in daily settings. The FFA Social Workers also discuss their ongoing assessment during their bi-monthly FFA staff meetings, so that as a team they can identify other resources or services to enhance the focus children's well-being. During the FFA staff meetings, tracking of the children's progress occurs and modifications are made by the FFA Social Worker and FFA Supervisor. On a quarterly basis, the FFA Social Workers document the modifications and progress in the focus children's NSPs. The FFA Social Workers and certified foster parents communicate with the DCFS CSWs, service providers and family regarding any changes in the status of the focus children.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In April 2016, the OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery, Education and Workforce Readiness, and Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure that runaway procedures are in place; NSPs are comprehensive; DCFS CSW's and the focus child's signatures are obtained timely for the authorization of the NSPs; documentation of educational progress and support is maintained; and certified foster parents encourage and assist children to update their life books or photo albums.

In April 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 areas. The FFA was not required to provide a QIP. The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation, as needed.