County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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April 1, 2015

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
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From: Philip L. Browning, Director
Department of Children and Family Services

RESPONSE TO THE MARCH 17, 2015 BOARD MOTION (ITEM NO. 9) TO SUPPORT OR PURSUE LEGISLATION TO CLARIFY EXISTING LAW PERTAINING TO STATE SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES' USE OF FUNDS TO SUPPLEMENT CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES

Executive Summary

This report is in response to your Board's amended motion on March 17, 2015, instructing the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), through the Interim Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) office, to report back in a couple of weeks on the extent it uses and can use its own funds to increase childcare subsidies to foster parents given the critical shortage of foster care homes.

The motion also instructed the Interim CEO to work with the County's legislative advocates in Sacramento to support or pursue legislation to clarify existing law for State subsidized child development services; and send a five-signature letter to Governor Brown with copies to the County's Legislative Delegation, in support of clarifying legislation, to explicitly include foster children and children with parents who are under the supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services. Pursuant to the Board-approved motion, the CEO is working with the County's Sacramento advocates to pursue this legislation. In addition, the CEO has prepared the 5-signature letter and mailed it to Governor Brown and the County's Legislative Delegation requesting their support of this legislation. The CEO will continue to keep the Board apprised of the progress of the legislation via Sacramento Update memos.

The goal of the DCFS Child Care Program is to provide subsidized child care for children who have been abused or neglected, who remain safely in the homes of their birth parents, or are placed outside their birth homes with relative caregivers and foster parents. Through an annual agreement with the California Department of Education (CDE), the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) accepts Alternative Payment Program (APP) funding for the continued operation of the Child Care Program.

Through this agreement, during Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-2014, DCFS provided subsidized child care to 2,840 abused and neglected foster children. In an effort to prevent overstays for very young children by meeting the child care needs of working non-relative (foster) caregivers, DCFS projects exceeding its FY 2014-15 allocation by approximately $4.0 million (38%) and will cover these costs with Realignment funds.

Providing subsidized child care to more at-risk children promotes optimal child development and strengthens families; however, the need continues to far exceed the CDE allocation to DCFS for child care. DCFS remains committed to meeting the quality early education and child care needs of at-risk children under its supervision. To do so, the Department needs an increased level of subsidized child care funding, with a particular focus on supporting the child care needs of its pregnant and parenting teens.

As indicated in the following chart, between FY 2010-2011 and FY 2012-2013, the Department did not fully expend its CDE earnings. However, beginning in FY 2013-2014, when DCFS began providing subsidized child care to working non-relative caregivers with the goal of securing timely placements for very young children, expenditures increased significantly. To address the increased spending, DCFS identified and appropriated alternative funding to cover the increased child care costs.

The following are DCFS' service earnings from the CDE and its expenditures over the last five years:

FY	# CHILDREN SERVED	CDE ALLOCATION	EXPENDITURES
2010-2011	4,399	$15,848,002	$15,665,475 (99%)
2011-2012	3,199	$12,130,520	$10,868,406 (90%)
2012-2013	2,459	$10,043,310	$ 9,684,308 (96%)
2013-2014	2,840	$10,012,472	$10,419,240 (104%)
2014-2015	2,795	$10,331,447	$ 8,514,042* (82%)

*Through February 2015

The amount of DCFS' FY 2014-15 State and Federal APP funding under the CDE Agreement is $10,331,447. Under this Agreement, the CDE provides for 100% reimbursement of administrative costs, provided that total APP expenditures do not exceed $10,331,447 and the administrative costs do not exceed 15% or $1,549,717. In turn, the County must provide $170,019 annually for Maintenance of Effort (MOE), which will be net County cost and is subject to change for the current and subsequent fiscal years.

Based on the funding criteria and educational codes of the California Department of Education (CDE), (CCR 5 18082 & 18078), prior to initial enrollment, a formal process (face-to-face interview) must take place to collect information and documentation to determine that the family and/or child meets the criteria for receipt of subsidized services. Child Care services are then approved for the duration of the Child Protective Services (CPS) case. There is no state funding available to cover the period of needed child care prior to completion of the eligibility determination process.

The DCFS Child Care Program provides child care for as long as there is an active (open) Child Protective Services (CPS) case. Child Care services are initially provided for six (6) months with a recertification period thereafter, if child care remains a part of the case plan. The average length of child care services provided is eighteen (18) months.

The criteria for child care need (full or part-time), is determined by the hours of child care the caregiver requires. Caregivers requiring 30 hours or more per week are eligible for ***full-time*** child care services. Those requiring less than 30 hours are eligible for ***part-time*** care. Additionally, if the caregiver is working or attending school, depending on the geographical distance from the home to the daycare provider, the Program allows travel time up to an hour each way. For the parenting teens who are attending school, the Program allows for an additional two (2) hours of study time per class. The majority of the working foster parents enrolled in the Child Care Program are employed and approved for full-time (40 to 45 hours) per week.

Child Care is provided for both licensed center-based and family daycare homes, based on the caregiver's choice. All approved child care providers must be licensed by the Community Care Licensing (CCL). DCFS approves a relative to provide child care for DCFS-supervised children only if the relative is licensed. The ratio in providing child care services is currently 50/50 between parents/relatives and working foster parents.

If you have any questions or need additional information, you may call me or your staff may contact Aldo Marin, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

PLB: CS:HB
JG:JH:lw

c: Interim Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Acting Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors