



**County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020  
(213) 351-5602

BRANDON T. NICHOLS  
Acting Director

Board of Supervisors  
HILDA L. SOLIS  
First District  
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District  
SHEILA KUEHL  
Third District  
JANICE HAHN  
Fourth District  
KATHRYN BARGER  
Fifth District

July 13, 2017

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Janice Hahn  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: *for Cynthia McCoy Miller*  
Brandon T. Nichols  
Acting Director

**HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES 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 the Hamburger Home dba Aviva Family and Children Services Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in February 2017. The FFA has one office located in the Third 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 specialized, supportive foster care homes in Los Angeles County, and thereby maximize the children's potential for optimal growth and development."

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 nine focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In May 2017, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the acceptable minimum score in all nine focus areas; therefore, a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is not required.

Each Supervisor  
July 13, 2017  
Page 2

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

BTN:KR  
NS:pbg

#### Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer  
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee  
Regina Bette, President, Hamburger Home dba Aviva Family and Children Services  
Foster Family Agency  
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES  
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY  
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017**

**SCOPE OF REVIEW**

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Hamburger Home dba Aviva Family and Children Services Foster Family Agency (the FFA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2017 in February 2017. 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 focus 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), five FFA staff members, three certified foster parents, and one service provider.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised 46 DCFS placed children in 36 certified foster homes; their overall average length of placement was six months. The focus children's average number of placements was two, their overall average length of placement was seven months, and their average age was eight. The focus children were randomly selected. None

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY  
 AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
 PAGE 2

of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) FY 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, interviews with the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is six in the area of Safety and five in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
<p><b>Safety</b> - 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.</p>	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	<p>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.</p>
<p><b>Permanency</b> - 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, Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.</p>	5	5 - Good Status	<p>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.</p>

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
PAGE 3

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
<p><b>Placement Stability</b> - 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.</p>	5	5 - Good Stability	The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 30 days.
<p><b>Visitation</b> - 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.</p>	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.
<p><b>Engagement</b> - 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.</p>	5	5 - Good Engagement Efforts	To a strong 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 good, consistent efforts are being used.

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY  
 AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
 PAGE 4

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
<p><b>Service Needs</b> - 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.</p>	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.
<p><b>Assessment &amp; Linkages</b> - 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.</p>	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.
<p><b>Teamwork</b> - 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.</p>	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.

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
PAGE 5

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
<b>Tracking &amp; Adjustment -</b> 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.

The OHCMD conducted the previous QAR of the FFA for FY 2015-2016 in June 2016, and noted that the FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), as the FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all nine focus areas. In July 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of that QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for maintaining and/or improving their level of service. Based on the following information, it appears that the FFA continues to provide quality of service and supervision to the placed children, as the FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all nine focus areas of their FY 2016-2017 QAR.

**STATUS INDICATORS**  
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
<b>2015-2016 Scores</b>	6	5	5	5
<b>2016-2017 Scores</b>	6	5	5	5

In the area of Safety, the FFA continues to score at the optimal level. The FFA Social Workers reported that the FFA provides the certified foster parents with ongoing training on following proper protocols and guidelines to ensure the safety of the placed children. The DCFS CSWs reported that the FFA Social Workers are responsive and consistently share information regarding the focus children's well-being. The certified foster parents reported that the FFA Social Workers made them aware of the placed children's behavioral triggers by sharing the focus children's history at the time of placement. The focus children reported that their certified foster parents and the FFA Social Workers make them feel safe and comfortable in their certified foster homes and that there is always adult supervision. The certified foster mother for the first focus child reported that she informs all the placed children in her home of the house rules and guidelines. She also shared that the FFA Social Worker

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY  
AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
PAGE 6

is always supportive and available if any concerns arise. The second focus child stated she loves her certified foster mother, who makes her feel safe. Her DCFS CSW reported that the certified foster mother is kind and caring and that the focus child always appears happy when he visits the focus child at her certified foster home. The third focus child reported that she is safe in her certified foster home and that she turns to her certified foster mother for support.

In the areas of Permanency and Placement Stability, the FFA provides good permanency and stability for the focus children and continues to support the focus children in reaching their permanency goals. The first focus child has been placed in her certified foster home for four months and has not experienced any placement disruptions. The focus child reported that she likes living at her certified foster home and her certified foster parents have been very good to her. The FFA Social Worker stated that this focus child has a good relationship with her certified foster parents. Her permanency plan is Family Reunification (FR) with her biological mother and siblings. Her DCFS CSW reported that the certified foster parents and the FFA Social Worker were supportive of the permanency plan. They encouraged visitation and the focus child called her biological mother daily. Shortly after the QAR interview, the focus child was reunified with her biological mother and siblings. The second focus child's permanency plan is also FR with her biological father. This focus child shared that she has resided at her certified foster home for three months. Although she likes her certified foster mother, who is the main person she looks to for support, she wants to live with her biological father. The third focus child's permanency plan is Adoption and a prospective adoptive family has been identified. Her certified foster mother stated that she is supportive of the adoption and that she and the adoptive family have a good relationship. She further stated that the adoptive family expressed to her that they are happy they are adopting the focus child and they look forward to finalizing the adoption process. The focus child also shared that she is looking forward to being adopted.

In the area of Visitation, the FFA supports the maintenance of important connections for the placed children. The FFA is ensuring the focus children are visiting with family members/NREFMs and other key people in their lives. The FFA Social Workers ensure that they adhere to all court visitation orders. The FFA Social Workers reported that they work closely with the DCFS CSWs, family members/NREFMs, and the certified foster parents to coordinate visits and telephone communication. The focus children reported they enjoy their visits with their family members/NREFMs. Prior to reunifying with her biological mother and siblings, the first focus child had unmonitored overnight visits at her biological mother's home. The second focus child has unmonitored weekend visits with her biological father. Her certified foster mother transports the focus child to a neutral location. The certified foster mother reported that the focus child is happy with her visits and looks forward to visiting with her father. The third focus child reported that she enjoys her weekend overnight visits with her prospective adoptive family. Her certified foster mother shared that monitored visits between the focus child and her biological mother have been sporadic. She added that the focus child's maternal grandmother recently requested to have visits with the focus child; however, at this time her maternal grandmother has only had telephone contact with the focus child.



**PRACTICE INDICATORS**  
*(Measured over last 90 days)*

<b>Practice Indicators</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Service Needs</b>	<b>Assessment &amp; Linkages</b>	<b>Teamwork</b>	<b>Tracking &amp; Adjustment</b>
<b>2015-2016 Scores</b>	5	5	6	5	6
<b>2016-2017 Scores</b>	5	5	5	5	5

In the area of Engagement, the FFA continues to make good efforts to ensure the focus children, their certified foster parents, the DCFS CSWs, family members/NREFMs, and key people in the focus children's lives are involved in the decision-making. The FFA Social Workers meet with the certified foster parents and the focus children weekly to discuss any concerns they may have. Each of the certified foster parents reported that they have a good relationship with the FFA Social Workers and the focus children's DCFS CSWs. The DCFS CSW for the first focus child stated that the FFA Social Worker keeps her informed of the focus child's progress. She further expressed that the FFA Social Worker is timely in responding to her inquiries and providing her with information about the focus child. The first focus child shared that she has observed that her certified foster mother, her DCFS CSW, and the FFA Social Worker have a good relationship and work well together. She also reported that the FFA Social Worker visits her at the certified foster home weekly. The FFA Social Worker for the second focus child reported that she and the certified foster mother are in contact at least weekly. The FFA Social Worker further shared that they have a good relationship and that the certified foster mother is very protective of the focus child. This focus child's DCFS CSW reported that he has a good relationship with the FFA Social Worker and the certified foster mother. The FFA Social Worker for the third focus child reported that she is in regular contact with the DCFS CSW via e-mail or telephone calls and they have a good working relationship. The third focus child said she likes her FFA Social Worker and stated that her FFA Social Worker and her certified foster mother appear to get along well.

In the areas of Service Needs and Assessment & Linkages, the FFA continues to provide a good array of services to the focus children. Intervention strategies identified in the case plans and the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) match the services provided to the focus children. The certified foster parents reported that the FFA Social Workers included them in discussions regarding the services the focus children are receiving, as well as the focus children's progress during their weekly visits. The first focus child's therapist reported that the focus child receives weekly individual therapy to address behavior issues and depression. Additionally, she was not doing well academically. However, with her certified foster mother's help, her grades improved. The second focus child received a Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) assessment in February 2017, and it was determined that she was doing well, and did not require any therapeutic services. The third focus child receives tutoring and her certified foster mother, a former teacher, helps her with homework and encourages her to overcome academic challenges. The FFA continuously assesses the focus children's needs

HAMBURGER HOME DBA AVIVA FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY  
AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW  
PAGE 8

to ensure they are making progress towards their treatment plan goals. The FFA utilizes its program, Line of Sight (LOS), to develop, organize, and implement a framework of performance indicators in order to provide reliable, timely, and accurate information regarding the services provided. The LOS program assists the FFA Social Workers in ensuring that the services provided to the focus children remain appropriate. The FFA Facility Managers and the FFA Social Workers continue to review the focus children's status on a daily basis. The FFA Social Workers and the certified foster parents encourage the focus children to participate in extracurricular activities that enhance their development. The first focus child reported that she plays basketball at school. The DCFS CSW and the certified foster parent for the second focus child stated that the focus child plays basketball and kickball, enjoys bowling, and she is a Girl Scout. She also attends Kare Youth League, where she participates in community projects, sports, and group outings. Her certified foster mother provides transportation for the focus child to attend these after-school activities. The third focus child reported that she plays soccer and basketball at school and enjoys other organized sport activities in the community.

In the area of Teamwork, the FFA staff makes substantial efforts to work as a team with the focus children, their DCFS CSWs, family members/NREFMs, and other community partners. The FFA staff holds regular team meetings, which center on discussing the focus children's treatment plan goals, progress, and their daily routines. The team members are able to use the LOS programming data to develop effective treatment plans for each focus child. The FFA Social Workers provide regular updates to the DCFS CSWs and the certified foster parents via e-mail, telephone calls, or during face-to-face visits at the certified foster homes. The certified foster mother for the first focus child reported that she, the focus child, the FFA Social Worker, the DCFS CSW, and the focus child's therapist held regular team meetings to discuss the focus child's FR plan with her biological mother, as well as educational and behavioral concerns the focus child may be experiencing. The certified foster mother for the second focus child stated that whenever the FFA Social Worker visits the focus child, a team meeting is conducted with the focus child's participation. The third focus child's certified foster mother reported that whenever the FFA Social Worker visits the focus child, the three of them meet to discuss how the focus child is doing and to provide updates on the adoption process.

In the area of Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA tracks the focus children's progress to ensure that services and supports provided reflect the focus children's needs. The FFA Social Workers develop the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) goals for the focus children in collaboration with their respective DCFS CSWs, certified foster parents, and the focus children. These goals may be modified if the focus children are not showing progress toward achieving the intended goals. The FFA Social Workers provide regular monitoring and tracking of the focus children's status through regular telephone contact and face-to-face meetings with the certified foster parents and the focus children, as well as to discuss NSP and treatment plan goals to ensure that the focus children are making progress towards achieving desired outcomes. The first focus child reported that the FFA Social Worker reviews her treatment plan with her and gives her the opportunity to provide input. The certified foster mother for the second focus child stated that the FFA Social Worker discusses the focus child's treatment plan with her whenever the FFA Social Worker visits the focus

child. They discuss the need for adjustments to the treatment plan, if necessary. She also keeps track of the focus child's behavior and progress, and notifies the FFA Social Worker and the DCFS CSW when drastic or moderate changes are observed. The third focus child's certified foster mother reported that the FFA provided a log for her to document the focus child's daily behaviors, academic progress, medical and dental appointment information, and she shares the information with the DCFS CSW and the FFA Social Worker.

### **NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES**

In February 2017, the OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's FY 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, Certified Foster Homes, Facility and Environment, and Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure that Special Incident Reports (SIRs) are properly cross-reported. Technical support was also provided to assist the FFA in ensuring it remains free from substantiated Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) complaints regarding safety and physical plant deficiencies, that certified foster parents and/or designated drivers have a valid California Driver's License, and that the placed children's bedrooms and allowance logs are well maintained. In addition, technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure that the DCFS CSWs are contacted monthly and the contacts are appropriately documented in the placed children's files.

In May 2017, 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 nine focus areas of the QAR; therefore, a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was not required. The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the FFA, as needed.