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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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August 30, 2004

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – O’CONNER &
ATKINS GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of O’Conner & Atkins Group Home (Group Home or Agency). The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

O’Conner & Atkins Group Home is an eight-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 5-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, O’Conner & Atkins Group Home was providing services for five DCFS children. O’Conner & Atkins Group Home is located in the Second District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency’s Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and interviews with two children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

“To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service”

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency was providing the services outlined in its Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to repair/replace the curtains in the dining room; repair the broken dresser drawer in the resident's bedroom; and provide all residents with the minimum required monetary allowance.

Attached is a detailed report of the review findings.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Children's Group Home Ombudsman within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. 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 DeWitt Roberts at (626) 293-1101.

JTM:DR:CC:bg

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
Virginia O'Conner, Executive Director, O'Conner & Atkins Group Home
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**O'Conner and Atkins Group Home.
2010 West 41st Drive.
Los Angeles, CA 90062
Phone: (323) 294-7305
License No.: 191871781
Rate Classification Level: 7**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The O'Conner & Atkins Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is a large facility located in a residential community. The Group Home is well maintained, nicely landscaped, and blends well with the other homes on the block. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior of the Group Home is generally neat and clean. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks. However, there are two areas that need attention.

In the dining room, the window curtains are torn and the bottom hem is coming out. In one resident's bedroom, there is a broken dresser drawer.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. O'Conner & Atkins' Group Home management:**
 - a. Repair/replace the window curtains in the dining room.**
 - b. Repair/replace the broken dresser drawer in the resident's bedroom.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, realistic, measurable, and time specific. The children and their placement workers have the opportunity to participate in developing and updating the NSPs.

The quarterly reports are current, comprehensive, and focused on the goals of the NSPs.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and emotional and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. Both residents are receiving individual and group therapy.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

One resident attends regular classes at a local school. The other resident is enrolled in Special Education classes at a local school. Records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports for the residents. Residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed.

Residents are too young to work or participate in emancipation or vocational programs.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. The residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for one case file

Comments:

The resident has a current court authorization for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that the child is routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. Residents participate in an initial orientation, and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with most staff. Residents feel there is at least one staff member they can easily talk to and trust.

The residents reported that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls. They are permitted to contact their social workers, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend weekly religious services of their choice and they feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles and allows them to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

The residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to the residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

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The Agency does not provide residents with the required minimum base allowance. However, residents are able to increase their allowance according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Residents are provided with an opportunity to maintain photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

- 2. O'Conner & Atkins Group Home management provide all residents with the required minimum base allowance.**