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June 23, 2016

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

**TRINITY YOUTH 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 Trinity Youth Services Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in August 2015. The FFA has five offices: one located in the First Supervisorial District, one in the Fourth Supervisorial District, one in the Fifth Supervisorial District and two offices in San Bernardino County. The FFA provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to provide children with an appropriate family match and give the families support and training to ensure that placements will be beneficial in meeting the children's needs. As well as provide case work services and specific treatment to each child as specified in the treatment plan."

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 8 of 9 focus areas: Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment. OHCMD noted opportunity for improved performance in the focus area of Safety.

In October 2015, OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in the area of Safety. The FFA provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing the recommendation noted in this report.

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

PLB:KR:KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
John Neiuber, Executive Director, Trinity Youth Services FFA
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**TRINITY YOUTH SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**
**QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW**
**FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Trinity Youth Services Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in August 2015. 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 164 DCFS placed children in 108 certified foster homes. The focus children's average number of placements was two, their overall average length of placement was three months and their average age was 14. 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 | 5 - Good Safety Status | The focus children have a generally and substantially safe living situation with reliable and competent caregivers who protect the focus children well under usual daily conditions. Protective strategies are generally 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 | 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. |
| **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 | 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. |

| 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 November 2014 and noted an opportunity for improvement in the focus areas of Visitation and Teamwork. In May 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in these two areas. Based on the information below, it appears that the FFA showed improvement in the areas of Visitation and Teamwork. However, opportunity for improvement was noted in the area of Safety on their 2015-2016 QAR.

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

| Status Indicators | Safety | Permanency | Placement Stability | Visitation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2014-2015 Scores** | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| **2015-2016 Scores** | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

In the area of Safety, the FFA scored below the minimum acceptable score due to a child safety concern related to supervision. The incident involved one of the focus children. The focus child and another placed child were not being appropriately supervised while in the swimming pool at the certified foster home. Consequently, the focus child kicked another placed child in the chest before the certified foster mother could intervene. The placed child did not sustain any injuries. The FFA addressed the safety concern with the certified foster mother and the focus child. The placed children in the home were reminded of pool safety rules, appropriate boundaries, personal space, and the need to respect others. The certified foster mother was also trained on swimming pool safety and supervision rules, as well as the importance of reminding placed children of the swimming pool safety rules prior to the children entering the pool.

In the areas of Permanency and Placement Stability, the FFA and the certified foster parents are supportive of ensuring permanency and placement stability for the focus children. The FFA is providing services that correspond with each focus child's permanency plan. The FFA provides permanency services, such as Emancipation Services, Youth Development Services, and prepares age-appropriate children for transitional housing and living independently. The FFA staff and the certified foster parents continue to provide stable home environments for the focus children. The FFA staff encourages the development of positive relationships between the focus children and their certified foster parents. The certified foster parents shared that they care about the well-being of the focus children, and they stated that they want the focus children to remain in their care as long as is necessary. The focus children have established positive relationships with key adult supporters, such as the FFA staff, FFA therapist and the certified foster parents. The focus children have not experienced any placement disruptions while placed in their current certified foster homes.

In the area of Visitation, OHCMD found that the FFA had implemented the 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to ensure that placed children visit with family members/NREFMs. The FFA has improved in assisting with the transportation of the placed children to visits with their families and is ensuring increased involvement and support by the certified foster parents who are not only transporting placed children for visits, but also assisting with the monitoring of visits when necessary. The certified foster parents are supportive of consistent visitation between the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, and appeared to take an active role in ensuring visits occurred. The certified foster parents for two focus children were providing transportation for the focus children to the visits with their family members. The third focus child has no family members involved in his life; however, he had a DCFS Permanency Partners Program (P3) Worker who visits him regularly and was in the process of reconnecting the focus child with a NREFM that he was previously placed with.

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

| **Practice Indicators** | Engagement | Service Needs | Assessment & Linkages | Teamwork | Tracking & Adjustment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2014-2015 Scores** | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| **2015-2016 Scores** | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages and Tracking & Adjustment, the FFA continues to make consistent, good efforts to engage placed children and the key people in their lives. The FFA staff has a good understanding of the focus

children's functioning and support systems. The focus children reported that they have a good connection with the FFA staff and they meet with the FFA Social Worker two to three times per month. There continues to be a good array of services available to placed children such as, individual therapy and anger management counseling. The FFA demonstrated continuity of care and services, by ensuring that one of the focus children was able to continue receiving individual therapy from the same therapist that he had prior to his placement with the FFA. The FFA, the DCFS CSW and the therapist worked collaboratively to make sure the relationship continued. The FFA provides regular monitoring and tracking of the focus children's status through regular team meetings and monthly face-to-face contacts with the focus children to discuss Needs and Services Plan (NSP) goals, and to ensure that the focus children are making progress towards achieving those goals. Additionally, the FFA Social Workers meet regularly with the certified foster parents to address any concerns the focus children may have at school and at their certified foster home. All three DCFS CSWs reported that the FFA stays in regular contact with them to provide updates regarding the focus children's progress, as well as discuss any adjustments to services and/or treatment plans. The DCFS CSWs further reported that the focus children are doing well and receive guidance, care and support from their certified foster parents.

In the area of Teamwork, OHCMD found that the FFA had implemented the 2014-2015 QIP, as the FFA is ensuring that placed children and their DCFS CSWs are included in team meetings. Additionally, the FFA is reaching out to the placed children's family members/NREFMs by inviting them to participate in team meetings. The FFA is ensuring a coherent pattern of effective teamwork with important supporters and key people in the focus children's lives, including certified foster parents, FFA Social Workers, DCFS CSWs, and service providers. The focus children all reported being included in regular team meetings with the key people in their lives. The DCFS CSW and the FFA Social Worker for one of the focus children reported that the child's mother participated in a team meeting. Another focus child reported that his P3 Worker participated in team meetings that also included his DCFS CSW and the FFA Social Worker.

## NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In October 2015, OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure the development of comprehensive and timely NSPs, participation of the certified foster parents in the development of the NSPs and ensuring the FFA obtains or documents efforts to obtain the DCFS CSW's authorization to implement the NSPs.

In October 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support addressing methods on improving in the area of Safety. The FFA submitted the attached approved QIP. OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the FFA in implementing their QIP.