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November 12, 2014

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

BIENVENIDOS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a review of Bienvenidos Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in July 2013. The FFA has two licensed offices; one in the First Supervisorial District, and one in San Bernardino County and provides services to County of Los Angeles DCFS foster children and youth. According to the FFA's program statement, its mission is "to provide short-term emergency and longer term therapeutic foster care to children and siblings who cannot immediately return home to their birth families. The program selects, trains, certifies, and supports foster families for care to the children. The aim of the program is to work with all related parties toward reunification or some other appropriate permanency plan."

At the time of the review, the FFA supervised 187 DCFS placed children in 58 certified foster homes. The placed children's average length of placement was 12 months, and their average age was 9.

SUMMARY

During OHCMD's review, the interviewed children generally reported: feeling safe at the FFA; having been provided with good care and appropriate services; being comfortable in their environment and treated with respect and dignity. The certified foster parents reported they were supported by the FFA staff in their efforts to provide care, supervision and service delivery to the children placed in their homes.

The FFA was in full compliance with 9 of 11 sections of our program compliance review: Certified Foster Homes; Facility and Environment; Education and Workforce Readiness; Health and Medical Needs; Psychotropic Medication; Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being; Discharged Children; and Personnel Records.

OHCMD noted deficiencies in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, related to seven Community Care Licensing (CCL) citations as a result of deficiencies and findings during CCL investigations complaints; and Maintenance of Required Documentation/Service Delivery, related to untimely Needs and Services Plans (NSPs)/Quarterly Reports and children not being visited weekly by FFA social workers during the first three months of placement.

Attached are the details of our review.

REVIEW OF REPORT

On August 20, 2013, the DCFS OHCMD Monitor, Sharon Koga, held an Exit Conference with FFA representatives, Stephanie Ivler, Program Director, Victoria Ramirez, Regional Office Supervisor, Aurora Guerra, Regional Office Supervisor, Jocelyn Coraminas, Regional Office Supervisor, and Elizabeth Marisol, Quality Assurance and Recertification Coordinator. The FFA's representatives: agreed with the review findings and recommendations; were receptive to implementing systemic changes to improve their compliance with regulatory standards; and agreed to address the noted deficiencies in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

A copy of this compliance report has been sent to the Auditor-Controller and CCL.

The FFA provided the attached approved CAP addressing the recommendations noted in this compliance report.

OHCMD conducted a visit to the Group Home on May 28, 2014 to provide technical assistance to assist the FFA with the implementation of their CAP. CAD will verify that these recommendations have been implemented during the next monitoring review.

Additionally, with the upcoming implementation of the Contract Monitoring Section, we will be able to focus more on quality assurance for an increased uniform standard and comprehensive measure of overall programmatic efficacy by providing additional training, support and oversight to the Foster Family Agencies.

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

PLB:EM:KR
RDS:NF:sk

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Stephanie Ivler, Program Director, Bienvenidos FFA
Lajuannah Hills Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing

BIENVENIDOS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW SUMMARY

9828 Central Ave., Montclair, CA 91763
License Numbers: 366408173

255 N. San Gabriel Ave., Pasadena, CA 91107
License Number: 197805967

	Contract Compliance Monitoring Review	**Findings: July 2013**
I	**Licensure/Contract Requirements** (7 Elements)	
	1. Timely Notification for Child's Relocation	1. Full Compliance
	2. Serious Incident Report Documentation and Cross Reporting	2. Full Compliance
	3. Runaway Procedures in Accordance with the Contract	3. Full Compliance
	4. Are there CCL Citations/OHCMD Safety Reports	4. Improvement Needed
	5. If Applicable, FFA Ensures Complete Required Whole Foster Family Home (WFFH) Training	5. Not Applicable
	6. FFA Pays Certified Foster Parents (CFP) WFFH Required Supplemental Payments	6. Not Applicable
	7. FFA Conducts an Assessment of CFP Prior to Placement of Two (2) or More Children	7. Full Compliance
II	**Certified Foster Homes (CFHs)** (12 Elements)	
	1. Home Study and Safety Inspection Conducted Prior to Certification	Full Compliance (ALL)
	2. Agency's Inquiry with OHCMD for Historical Information Prior to Certification	
	3. Timely Criminal Clearances (DOJ, FBI, CACI) Prior to Certification	
	4. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement	
	5. Health Screening & TB Test Prior to Certification	
	6. All Required Training Prior to Certification	
	7. Certificate of Approval on File/Including Capacity	
	8. Safety Inspections Completed At Least Every Six Months or Per Approved Program Statement	
	9. Completed Annual Training Hours for Re-certification and Current CPR/First-Aid/Water Safety Certificates	
	10. Current CDL/Auto Insurance/Annual Vehicle Maintenance Documentation for CFPs and Designated Drivers, if Applicable Car Seat(s)	
	11. Criminal Clearances and Health Screening/CDL/CPR DOJ/FBI/CACI/Auto Insurance for Other Adults in the Home	

	12. FFA Assists CFPs in Providing Transportation Needs	
III	**Facility and Environment** (7 Elements) 1. Exterior/Grounds Well Maintained 2. Common Areas/Interior Well Maintained 3. Children's Bedrooms/Interior Well Maintained 4. Sufficient and Appropriate Educational Resources 5. Adequate Perishable and Non-Perishable Food 6. CFP Conducted Disaster Drills and Documentation Maintained 7. Money and Clothing Allowance Logs Maintained	Full Compliance (ALL)
IV	**Maintenance of Required Documentation/Service Delivery** (10 Elements) 1. FFA Obtains or Documents Efforts to Obtain County Children's Social Worker's (CSW) Authorization to Implement NSPs 2. CFPs Participated in Development of the NSPs 3. Children Progressing Towards Meeting NSP Goals 4. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Initial NSP with Child's Participation 5. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Updated NSPs with Child's Participation 6. Therapeutic Services Received 7. Recommended Assessments/Evaluations Implemented 8. County Children Social Workers Monthly Contacts Documented in Child's Case File 9. FFA Social Workers Develop Timely, Comprehensive Quarterly Reports 10. FFA Social Workers Conduct Required Visits	1. Full Compliance 2. Full Compliance 3. Full Compliance 4. Improvement Needed 5. Full Compliance 6. Full Compliance 7. Full Compliance 8. Full Compliance 9. Full Compliance 10. Improvement Needed
V	**Education and Workforce Readiness** (5 Elements) 1. Children Enrolled in School within Three School Days 2. Children Attend School as Required and FFA Facilitates in Meeting Children's Educational Goals 3. Current Children's Report Cards/Progress Reports Maintained 4. Children's Academic Performance and/or Attendance Increased 5. FFA Facilitates Child's Participation in YDS or Equivalent Services and Vocational Programs	Full Compliance (ALL)

VI	**Health and Medical Needs** (4 Elements) 1. Initial Medical Exams Conducted Timely 2. Follow-Up Medical Exams Conducted Timely 3. Initial Dental Exams Conducted Timely 4. Follow-Up Dental Exams Conducted Timely	Full Compliance (ALL)
VII	**Psychotropic Medication** (2 Elements) 1. Current Court Authorization for Administration of Psychotropic Medication 2. Current Psychiatric Evaluation Review	Full Compliance (ALL)
VIII	**Personal Rights and Social Emotional Well-Being** (10 Elements) 1. Children Informed of Agency's Policies and Procedures 2. Children Feel Safe in the CFP Home 3. CFPs' Efforts to Provide Nutritious Meals and Snacks 4. CFPs Treat Children with Respect and Dignity 5. Children Allowed Private Visits, Calls and to Receive Correspondence 6. Children Free to Attend or Not Attend Religious Services/Activities of Their Choices 7. Children's Chores Reasonable 8. Children Informed About Their Medication and Right to Refuse Medication 9. Children Aware of Right to Refuse or Received Medical, Dental and Psychiatric Care 10. Children Given Opportunities to Participate in Extra-Curricular Activities, Enrichment and Social Activities	Full Compliance (ALL)
IX	**Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being** (7 Elements) 1. $50 Clothing Allowance Provided in Accordance with FFA Program Statement 2. Ongoing Clothing Inventories of Adequate Quantity and Quality 3. Children's Involvement in Selection of Their Clothing 4. Provision of Sufficient Supply of Clean Towels and Personal Care Items Meeting Ethnic Needs 5. Minimum Weekly Monetary Allowances 6. Management of Allowance/Earnings 7. Encouragement/Assistance with Life Book/Photo Album	Full Compliance (ALL)

X	**Discharged Children** (3 Elements) 1. Completed Discharge Summary 2. Attempts to Stabilize Children's Placement 3. Child Completed High School (if applicable)	Full Compliance (ALL)
XI	**Personnel Records** (9 Elements) 1. Criminal Clearances (DOJ, FBI, CACI) Signed and Submitted Timely 2. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement 3. FFA Social Workers Met Education/Experience Requirements 4. Timely Employee Health Screening/TB Clearances 5. Valid CDL and Auto Insurance 6. FFA Employees Signed Copies of FFA Policies and Procedures 7. FFA Employees Completed All Required Training and Documentation Maintained 8. FFA Social Workers Have Appropriate Caseload Ratio 9. FFA Maintained Written Declarations for Part-Time Contracted FFA Social Workers Caseloads Not Exceed Total of 15 Children	Full Compliance (ALL)

BIENVENIDOS FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The following report is based on a "point in time" monitoring visit. The compliance report addresses findings noted during the July 2013 review. The purpose of this review was to assess Bienvenidos Foster Family Agency's (the FFA) compliance with the County contract and State regulations and included a review of the FFA's program statement, as well as administrative internal policies and procedures. The monitoring review covered the following 11 areas:

- Licensure/Contract Requirements,
- Certified Foster Homes,
- Facility and Environment,
- Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery,
- Educational and Workforce Readiness,
- Health and Medical Needs,
- Psychotropic Medication,
- Personal Rights and Social Emotional Well-Being,
- Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being,
- Discharged Children, and
- Personnel Records.

For purposes of this review, 12 children were selected for the sample. The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) interviewed 12 children and reviewed their case files to assess the care and services they received. Additionally, 4 discharged children's files were reviewed to assess the FFA's compliance with permanency efforts. At the time of the review, 20 placed children were prescribed psychotropic medication. We reviewed 10 case files to assess for timeliness of Psychotropic Medication Authorizations and to confirm the required documentation of psychiatric monitoring.

OHCMD reviewed three certified foster parent files and five staff files for compliance with Title 22 Regulations and County contract requirements. Interviews were conducted with three certified foster parents to assess the quality of care and supervision provided to children.

CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE

OHCMD found the following two areas to be out of compliance.

Licensure/Contract Requirements

- Community Care Licensing (CCL) cited the FFA for a Personal Rights Violation as a result of deficiencies and findings during the investigation of CCL complaints.

- According to the complaint report by CCL on January 18, 2013, the certified foster parent's 16-year-old daughter was victimizing a six year old child in the home by slapping, punching and verbally abusing the child. Allegedly the certified foster parent was aware of the abuse and did not intervene. CCL substantiated the complaint and a referral was made to the Child

Protection Hotline (CPHL). The Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) Children's Social Worker (CSW) and Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section (OHCIS) determined the referral to be "substantiated." The FFA decertified the certified foster parents. OHCMD placed the home on "Indefinite Hold" and all children in this home were replaced.

- According to the complaint report by CCL on September 25, 2012, CCL cited the FFA for lack of supervision involving the certified foster mother leaving a foster child unsupervised at a monitored visit, and not notifying the FFA when she discovered that the child was not in the certified foster home. CCL substantiated the complaint and a referral was made to the CPH. The ERCP CSW and OHCIS determined the referral to be "substantiated." The FFA decertified the foster parents. OHCMD placed the home on "Indefinite Hold" and all children in this home were replaced.

- CCL investigated a complaint report dated September 17, 2012 for lack of supervision and personal rights violations (inappropriate sleeping arrangements, children called inflammatory names, foster children treated differently from bio-children and foster children had to purchase their hygiene products and miscellaneous supplies) determined it to be "inconclusive" due to statements provided by the children being inconsistent. However, a referral was made to the CPHL. The ERCP CSW and OHCIS determined the referral to be "substantiated." The FFA decertified the foster parents. OHCMD placed the home on "Indefinite Hold" and all children in this home were replaced.

- CCL determined a complaint report dated July 9, 2012, for emotional abuse involving the children being exposed to the verbal disagreement between the certified foster parents to be "substantiated." A referral was made to the CPHL. The ERCP CSW determined the referral to be "substantiated." The FFA decertified the foster parents and OHCMD placed the home on "Indefinite Hold" and all children in the home were replaced.

- According to the complaint report by CCL on June 26, 2012, CCL cited the FFA for general neglect, involving the certified foster mother transporting children without a driver's license. CCL substantiated the complaint and a referral was made to the CPHL. The ERCP CSW and OHCIS determined the referral to be "substantiated." The FFA decertified the foster parents. OHCMD placed the home on "Indefinite Hold" and all children in the home were replaced.

- CCL cited the FFA for a Personal Rights Violation as a result of deficiencies and findings during the investigation of a CCL complaint. According to the complaint report by CCL on June 15, 2012, the children were restricted to their upstairs bedrooms for an extended period. CCL substantiated the complaint and a referral was made to the CPHL. The Regional CSW follow-up investigation and OHCIS determined the referral to be "inconclusive." The information gathered by the ER CSW revealed that although the youths' free access to all the areas in the home was restricted, their immediate health and safety was not compromised, leading the ER CSW to conclude that the allegations were Inconclusive. However, the FFA decertified the foster parents. OHCIS placed the home on "Indefinite Hold" due to CCL's substantiation and concerns based on investigations of other referrals. All children in this home were replaced.

- According to the complaint report by CCL on April 9, 2012, CCL cited the FFA for lack of supervision when a three-year-old child wandered away from the certified foster home. CCL substantiated the complaint and the FFA's Special Incident Report indicates that a referral was made to the CPHL. However, a referral was not found and no ERCP CSW or OHCIS investigation was conducted. The FFA decertified the foster parents. OHCMD placed the home on "Indefinite Hold" and all children in this home have been replaced.

The Director of Foster Care & Adoptions Division stated, "In each of these instances, and as a matter of best practice, the Bienvenidos Regional Office Supervisor (ROS) to whom the foster family was assigned, consulted with the Director of the Foster Care & Adoptions Division to review the allegation(s) and identify what steps, if any, might have been taken to prevent the events or circumstances leading up to the allegation. When it was determined that preventive steps could have been taken, the ROS addressed this with the case carrying foster care social worker. This discussion may have taken the form of a counseling or may have risen to the level of a disciplinary proceeding, depending on the circumstances. Additionally, the ROS considered whether the matter called for an in-service review with all foster care social worker staff and foster care providers; and if so, provided the necessary in-service training.

In each of these cases, the circumstances surrounding the investigation and its findings were brought before the Bienvenidos Foster Care & Adoptions Division Certification Committee, which then determined that decertification was appropriate."

Recommendation

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

1. Agency is in full compliance with Title 22 Regulations, free of CCL citations.

<u>Maintenance of Required Documentation/Service Delivery</u>

- The Initial Needs and Services Plan (NSP) for three children were not submitted timely.

During the Exit Conference, the FFA's Program Director stated the FFA would provide NSP retraining to staff that would include the due date for initial NSPs, and for staff not to hold on to the NSPs once they are completed. The FFA Supervisors will meet with staff to track NSPs due dates. The FFA is implementing a computerized system that will alert, track, monitor, and report data to the FFAs. It is expected that this will strengthen compliance in this area.

It should be noted that the FFA representative attended the OHCMD NSP Training for providers on January 23, 2012 and was made aware of the NSP requirements.

- Five children were not visited weekly by the FFA Social Worker during the first three months of placement, in accordance with the County of Los Angeles Contract.

During the Exit Conference, the FFA's Program Director stated that the FFA Social Worker for the five children was a contracted social worker, but had previously been with the FFA and was aware of the visitation requirements. This social worker is no longer with the FFA. The FFA is implementing a computerized system that will alert, track, monitor, and report data to the FFA

Regional Office Supervisors and management. It is expected that this will strengthen compliance in this area.

Recommendation

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

2. Initial NSPs are completed timely.

3. All children are visited in compliance with the contract requirements.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP FROM DCFS OHCMD's FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

The OHCMD's last compliance report dated January 18, 2013 identified seven recommendations.

Results

Based on OHCMD follow-up, the FFA fully implemented 6 of 7 previous recommendations of which they were to ensure that:

- All prospective foster homes are cleared through OHCMD prior to certification.
- All certified foster homes have timely re-certification safety inspection and re-evaluation.
- All certified foster parents complete the 12 – 15 hours of required additional training in a timely manner.
- All age-appropriate children and certified foster parents participate in the development of the NSPs and sign the NSPs.
- Initial NSPs are comprehensive containing goals that are specific, measurable and time-framed.
- All staff complete initial training and documentation is maintained in their file.

One recommendation was not implemented:

- Initial NSPs are completed in a timely manner.

Recommendation

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

The outstanding recommendation from the 2012–2013 monitoring report dated January 18, 2013, which is noted in this report as Recommendation 2 is fully implemented.

At the Exit Conference, the FFA representative expressed her desire to remain in compliance with all Title 22 Regulations and Contract requirements. The Program Director stated that the FFA is implementing a computerized system which will alert, track, monitor, and report data to the FFA's Regional Office Supervisors and management. It is expected that this will strengthen the FFA's compliance in the areas of timely initial NSPs.

OHCMD conducted a visit to the Group Home on May 28, 2014 to provide technical assistance to assist the FFA with the implementation of their CAP. CAD will verify that these recommendations have been implemented during the next monitoring review.

MOST RECENT FISCAL REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER (A-C)

A fiscal review of the FFA has not been posted by the A-C.

Bienvenidos
Foster Care Services

BY EMAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

August 27, 2013

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
Out of Home Care Management Division
9320 Telstar Avenue Suite 216
El Monte, CA 91731

Attn: Sharon Koga, Monitor

Re: 2012 – 2013 Monitoring Review; Corrective Action Plan

Bienvenidos submits the following Corrective Action Plan in response to the Foster Family Agency Monitoring Review Field Exit Summary reviewed on August 20, 2013.

Please note: Bienvenidos continues its process of implementing Evolv, an electronic health record software system with comprehensive case management features to track, monitor and report data. This centralized case management system includes all processes, such as intake and referral, service plans reporting and quality assurance. It also provides resource family management and facilities management. Once entered into Evolv, the system will schedule, alert, monitor and report failure to adhere to standards, timelines and policies to the organization's supervisors, management and quality assurance coordinator. Pending full implementation of Evolv, we maintain our existing case management systems.

I. LICENSURE/CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Is the Agency free of substantiated Community Care Licensing complaints' reports on safety and physical plant deficiencies since the last review?

There were seven (7) substantiated complaints during the audit period. Bienvenidos decertified all seven homes. In addition, in response to OHCMD's Findings and Recommendations and/or Community Care Licensing's Complaint Investigation reports, Bienvenidos addressed the areas of deficiency globally with staff and certified foster parents during in-service trainings (staff and foster parent) as well as in foster parent support group meetings. These subjects have included prudent parenting standards for appropriate levels of supervision, the obligation to timely report circumstances and incidents to FFA staff and/or the authorities, and foster children's personal rights.

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Bienvenidos has established an annual training curriculum for staff and certified foster parents in order to maintain a high standard of support and to address any issues that we, or our foster families, feel are needing attention. The curriculum components include such topics as: Title XXII compliance, prudent parenting standards, responding to behavioral challenges, promoting positive behaviors and self-responsibility, issues related to sexuality and sexual abuse, respecting and supporting child/birth ties, becoming partners in parenting and strengthening teamwork skills.

IV. MAINTENANCE OF REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Did the FFA social worker develop timely, comprehensive, initial (NSPs) with the participation of the developmentally age-appropriate child?

In three instances, Initial NSPs were timely developed but not timely signed by the FFA social worker. Going forward, Bienvenidos Regional Office Supervisors will diligently enforce a timeline requiring submission of signed NSPs seven (7) working days prior to due date. Once transition is complete, the Evolv system will alert the supervisor that the NSP is due.

Do FFA social workers conduct required visits with placed children in accordance with the contract?

Bienvenidos utilized a qualified contract social worker responsible for five (5) children in the care of one foster family. This worker is no longer contracted with the agency. Going forward, Bienvenidos policy and procedure will mandate that contact notes and quarterly reports due are to be submitted to the Regional Office Supervisor on a monthly basis together with the contractor's invoice for services rendered. Once fully implemented, the Evolv case management system will track and alert the Regional Office Supervisor responsible for monitoring and managing the contract social workers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions.

Very truly yours,

Stephanie Ivler, Esq.
Director, Foster Care Division