County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

FESIA A. DAVENPORT
Chief Deputy Director

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

November 27, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

OPTIMIST 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 Optimist Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in August 2013. The FFA has one licensed office located in the Fifth Supervisorial District, 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 culturally sensitive, comprehensive treatment, specialized education and support services to abused, neglected or at-risk children and youth, and their families, to establish stability within families and communities."

At the time of the review, the FFA supervised 41 DCFS placed children in 16 certified foster homes. The placed children's average length of placement was 15 months, and their average age was 12.

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 contract compliance review: Facility and Environment; Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery; 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 a substantiated complaint by Community Care Licensing (CCL); and Certified Foster Parents, related to the FFA failing to submit an inquiry to OHCMD for historical abuse/neglect information for a prospective certified foster parent prior to certification and one certified foster home had a swimming pool, but the certified foster parents did not have a water safety certificate.

Attached are the details of our review.

REVIEW OF REPORT

On August 19, 2013, the DCFS OHCMD Monitor, Cori Shaffer, held an Exit Conference with FFA representatives, Crystal Brackin, Assistant Executive Director and Nancy Ramos, FFA Administrator. 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 will confirm that these recommendations have been implemented during our next monitoring review.

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:cs

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Wendy L. Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Sil Orlando, Executive Director, Optimist FFA
Angelica Lopez, Acting Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing

OPTIMIST FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW SUMMARY

520 W. Palmdale Blvd., Suite H
Palmdale, CA 93551
License Number: 197601246

	Contract Compliance Monitoring Review	Findings: August 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	1. Full Compliance
	2. Agency's Inquiry with OHCMD for Historical Information Prior to Certification	2. Improvement Needed
	3. Timely Criminal Clearances (DOJ, FBI, CACI) Prior to Certification	3. Full Compliance
	4. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement	4. Full Compliance
	5. Health Screening & TB Test Prior to Certification	5. Full Compliance
	6. All Required Training Prior to Certification	6. Full Compliance
	7. Certificate of Approval on File/Including Capacity	7. Full Compliance
	8. Safety Inspections Completed At Least Every Six Months or Per Approved Program Statement	8. Full Compliance
	9. Completed Annual Training Hours for Re-certification and Current CPR/First-Aid/Water Safety Certificates	9. Improvement Needed
	10. Current CDL/Auto Insurance/Annual Vehicle Maintenance Documentation for CFPs and Designated Drivers, if Applicable Car Seat(s)	10. Full Compliance
	11. Criminal Clearances and Health Screening/CDL/CPR/ DOJ/FBI/CACI/Auto Insurance for Other Adults in the Home	11. Full Compliance
	12. FFA Assists CFPs in Providing Transportation Needs	12. Full Compliance

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's 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	Full Compliance (ALL)
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)

OPTIMIST 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 August 2013 review. The purpose of this review was to assess Optimist Foster Family Agency (the FFA's) 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, seven children were selected for the sample. The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) reviewed the seven children's case files and interviewed six children to assess care and services they received. One child was not available to be interviewed, as he started high school on the day of the visit. Additionally, three discharged children's files were also reviewed to assess the FFA's compliance with permanency efforts. At the time of the review, three placed children were prescribed psychotropic medication. We reviewed their 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 two staff files for compliance with Title 22 Regulations and County contract requirements. Interviews were conducted with two 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 Personal Rights violation, as a result of deficiencies and findings during the investigation of CCL complaints. According to a complaint report dated March 19, 2013, two of the six placed children reported being hit by the certified foster parent. CCL determined the allegation of physical abuse to be inconclusive, as the statements made given were contradicting and inconsistent. During the course of the investigation, CCL determined that the certified foster parent had violated the children's

personal rights by yelling at them. The FFA submitted a Plan of Correction to CCL that included additional training from the Personal Rights section of the Title 22 regulations with the certified foster parent, which was approved. The allegation of Physical Abuse was determined to be inconclusive by DCFS and Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCIS), as all but one child denied the abuse. Further, interviews with collateral contacts refuted the allegation and had no concerns regarding any abuse or neglect in this certified foster home. OHCIS requested that the FFA submit a Corrective Action Plan, which addressed retraining the certified parent in the area of disciplinary techniques and included the plan that the FFA Social Worker interview the children, as to their care in the certified foster home and make unannounced visits to the certified foster home two times a month for a six month period.

Recommendation

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

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

Certified Foster Homes

- For one certified foster home, the FFA's failed to submit an inquiry to OHCMD for historical abuse/neglect information for a prospective certified foster father. During the review, the FFA Administrator submitted the certified foster father's identifying information to OHCMD for historical abuse/neglect information, which included the certified foster parent's previous address, which was not provided with the inquiry for the certified foster mother, prior to certification. The search revealed a substantiated allegation of Physical and Emotional Abuse by the certified foster mother in 2003. OHCMD immediately notified the FFA Administrator who indicated that the foster mother had not disclosed the previous allegation to the FFA during the certification process. The certified foster home was placed on an Indefinite Hold. The two placed children, whose placement was stable, remained in the home. A safety plan was developed and approved by the Department of Children and Family Services. The FFA Administrator indicated that once the children are replaced, the FFA will decertify the home. During the Exit Conference, the FFA Administrator indicated that a new tracking system was developed to ensure that all prospective foster parent inquiries are completed prior to certification.

- One certified foster home had a swimming pool in the backyard. OHCMD did not find that the certified foster parents had completed a Water Safety course as required by Title 22 regulations. During the Exit Conference, the FFA Administrator provided verification that the certified foster mother had completed a Water Safety Course and would be the designated parent to supervise the children in the pool. The certified foster father did not complete the Water Safety course and will not be permitted to supervise the children in the pool. The FFA Administrator indicated that the FFA will ensure that the certified foster father does not supervise the children in the pool and documentation of such will be noted in the certified foster parent's file. The FFA Administrator also indicated that the FFA will ensure that all certified foster parents with swimming pools have a Water Safety certificate, as part of the certification requirements.

Recommendations

The FFA's management shall ensure that:

2. Foster Parents' case files include written verification of the FFA's inquiry with OHCMD prior to certification of the home.

3. All certified foster parents with swimming pools have completed a Water Safety Course and have a valid Water Safety certificate on file with the FFA.

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

The OHCMD's last compliance report dated January 22, 2013 identified four recommendations.

Results

Based on OHCMD follow-up, the FFA fully implemented all four previous recommendations for which they were to ensure that:

- Certified foster parents maintain annual vehicle inspections.

- FFA Social Workers contact all placed children's County Social Workers and the contacts are appropriately documented in the children's case files. CSWs Children's absences and other incidents are appropriately documented and cross-reported in timely SIRs.

- Staff health screenings/TB clearances are timely.

- Required staff have valid car insurance on file with the FFA.

At the Exit Conference, the FFA representatives expressed their desire to remain in compliance with all Title 22 Regulations and Contract requirements. The FFA Executive Director and the Administrator will conduct periodic monitoring checks to ensure compliance with the CAP.

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.

Today's Children Tomorrow's Promis

OPTIMIST COMMUNITY SERVICES

FOSTER FAMILY, ADOPTION, DAY TREATMENT & MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

A division of Optimist Youth Homes & Family Services

Serving Youth Since 1906

August 27, 2013

Silvio John Orlando, ACSW
Executive Director

Joan E. Probst, LMFT
Associate Director

Ms. Cori Shaffer, CSA I
Dept. of Children & Family Svcs.
9320 Telstar Avenue, Suite 216
El Monte, CA 91731

The following is the corrective action plan for Optimist FFA 2012/2013 Compliance Review:

Affiliations

ACCREDITED Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services

Accredited by California Alliance of Child and Family Services

A·C·H·S·A Association of Community Human Service Agencies

American Association of Children's Residential Centers

Optimist International

1. **(#4)** There was a substantiated CCL citation for one home in 2013. The Corrective Action Plan was completed and accepted. The agency met with the foster parent to review personal rights and how to handle specific situations/behaviors. Trainings regarding personal rights are provided to foster parents annually at the Foster Parent Support Groups.

2. **(#9)** Foster parent case records did not include one of the foster parents' inquiry of historical information prior to certification. Historical information was obtained for foster father. Director developed tracking system to ensure that all inquiries are completed prior to certification.

3. **(#16)** The foster parents that needed Water Safety training obtained their training and certificates. The agency will require all foster parents that have pools at their residence to complete Water Safety trainings as part of the certification process. Optimist FFA will provide the training as it has individuals within the agency trained in Water Safety.

The required documentation to substantiate the above CAP was submitted at the Review Exit Meeting. We have made changes in the certification process to address the Certified Foster Homes findings. Thank you for your assistance with the above above matters. If you have any questions, please contact me at (661) 575-8395.

Nancy Ramos, LCSW
Regional Director, AV