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

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March 15, 2012

To Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

**SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES, INC., FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW**

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a review of the Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., Foster Family Agency (FFA), in May 2011, at which time they served 42 placed DCFS children in 37 certified foster homes. The placed children's overall average length of placement was three months and the average age was four years old.

Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA is located in the 1st Supervisorial District and provides services to Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) foster youth. According to the Serenity Infant Care Homes FFA program statement, its purpose is "to provide quality foster homes for abused, abandoned, and neglected infants and children, with special emphasis on the care of drug affected infants." Serenity Infant Care Homes FFA is licensed to serve children between the ages 0 through 18.

For the purposes of this review, four discharge files and seven currently placed children's case files were reviewed, and two of the seven foster children were interviewed, as five children were too young to be interviewed. In addition, two certified foster parent (CFP) files were reviewed and the foster parents were interviewed. Four staff files were reviewed for compliance with the Title 22 regulations and contract requirements.

There were no children on psychotropic medication.

## SCOPE OF REVIEW

The purpose of this review was to assess the Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA's compliance with the contract and State regulations. The visit included a review of the Serenity Infant Care Homes FFA program statement, administrative internal policies and procedures, seven placed children's case files, and a random sampling of four personnel files. Visits were made to two certified foster homes to assess the quality of care and supervision provided to children, and interviews were conducted with the children to assess the care and services they were receiving.

A copy of this report has been sent to the Auditor-Controller (A-C) and Community Care Licensing (CCL).

## SUMMARY

Overall, the children interviewed indicated that they were provided with good care and appropriate services, were comfortable in their environment and were treated with respect and dignity.

Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA was in substantial compliance with the contract, program statement, and regulatory standards reviewed, scoring an overall 100% level of compliance. There were no deficiencies noted in the 11 areas reviewed.

In conclusion, Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA continues to provide a high level of care and service to the children and families they serve. The Foster Family Agency Executive Director and her staff were accessible, cooperative and expressed their willingness to make any necessary corrections, if needed.

## NOTABLE FINDINGS

There were no notable findings during this monitoring review period.

## EXIT CONFERENCE

The following are highlights from the Exit Conference held May 27, 2011:

**In attendance:**

Jennifer Choctaw, Executive Director; and Linda Kontis, Director of Child Placement, Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc.; and Thomas Manning, Monitor, DCFS OHCMD.

**Highlights:**

The FFA Directors were in agreement with the results of the monitoring review. The FFA Directors stated they recently had to down-size the agency, and, despite the poor economy, they secured employment for every worker who was laid off. Their efforts are indicative of the service they provide for the children and families they serve. Moreover, they pledged to maintain the highest quality of service and care to the children and families they serve.

We will assess for full implementation of the recommendations during our next monitoring review.

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

PLB:RS:KR:
EAH:NF:tm

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Wendy Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Randy Argo, Chair, Board of Directors, Serenity
Jennifer Choctaw, Executive Director, Serenity
Jean Chen, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing

**SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES, INC., FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**
**MONITORING REVIEW SUMMARY**

**600 S. Grand Ave.**
**Covina, CA 91724**
**License Number: 191593485**

| | **Contract Compliance Monitoring Review** | **Findings: April 2011** |
|---|---|---|
| I | **Licensure/Contract Requirements** (6 Elements)<br><br>1. Timely Notification for Child's Relocation<br>2. SIRs Documented and Cross-Reporting<br>3. Runaway Procedures<br>4. Community Care Licensing Citations, Out-of-Home Care Management Division Reports on Safety and Physical Deficiencies<br>5. If Applicable, FFA Ensures Complete Required Whole Foster Family Home Training<br>6. FFA pays Certified Foster Parents Whole Foster Family Home Payments | Full Compliance (ALL) |
| II | **Certified Foster Homes** (13 Elements)<br><br>1. Home Study Prior to Certification<br>2. Contact with References/Including Check with OHCMD<br>3. Safety Inspection Prior to Certification<br>4. Timely DOJ, FBI, CACI<br>5. Health-Screening Prior to Certification<br>6. Required Training Prior to Certification<br>7. Current Certificate of Approval on File Including Capacity<br>8. Home Inspection/Evaluations for Re-certification<br>9. Completed Training Hours for Re-certification<br>10. CPR/First-Aid/Water Safety Certificates<br>11. CDL/Auto Insurance<br>12. Other Adults: DOJ/FBI/CACI<br>13. Transportation | Full Compliance (ALL) |
| III | **Facility and Environment** (8 Elements)<br><br>1. Exterior Well Maintained<br>2. Common Areas Maintained<br>3. Children's Bedrooms/Interior Maintained<br>4. Sufficient Recreational Equipment<br>5. Sufficient Educational Resources<br>6. Adequate Perishable and Non Perishable Food<br>7. Disaster Drills Conducted<br>8. Allowance Logs | Full Compliance (ALL) |

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| IV | **Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery** (11 Elements)<br><br>1. DCFS CSW Authorization to Implement NSPs<br>2. Children's Participation in the Development of NSPs<br>3. NSPs Implemented and Discussed with Foster Parents<br>4. Children's Progress Towards Meeting Goals<br>5. Timely Developed Initial NSPs with Child<br>6. Timely Comprehensive Initial NSPs with Child<br>7. Therapeutic Services Received<br>8. Recommended Assessments/Evaluations Implemented<br>9. DCFS CSWs Monthly Contacts Documented<br>10. Timely Developed Updated NSPs with Child<br>11. Timely Comprehensive Updated NSPs with Child | Full Compliance (ALL) |
| V | **Education and Workforce Readiness** (7 Elements)<br><br>1. Child Enroll in School Within Three Days<br>2. Child Attends School as Required<br>3. Agency Facilitates Child's Educational Goals<br>4. Child's Academic and/or Attendance Increase<br>5. Current IEPs Maintained<br>6. Current Report Cards Maintained<br>7. Agency Facilitates Child's Participation in YDS/Equivalent/Vocational Program | Full Compliance (ALL) |
| VI | **Health and Medical Needs** (6 Elements)<br><br>1. Initial Medical Examinations Conducted<br>2. Initial Medical Examinations Timely<br>3. Follow-up Medical Examinations Timely<br>4. Initial Dental Examinations Conducted<br>5. Initial Dental Examinations Timely<br>6. Follow-up Dental Examinations Timely | Full Compliance (ALL) |
| VII | **Psychotropic Medications** (2 Elements)<br><br>1. Current Court Authorization for Administration of Psychotropic Medication<br>2. Current Psychiatric Evaluation Review | Not Applicable (ALL) |

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| VIII | **Personal Rights** (13 Elements)<br><br>1. Children Informed of Home's Policies and Procedures<br>2. Children Feel Safe<br>3. Satisfaction with Meals and Snacks<br>4. Foster Parents Treatment of Children with Respect and Dignity<br>5. Appropriate Rewards and Discipline System<br>6. Children Allowed Private Visits, Calls, and Correspondence<br>7. Children Free to Attend Religious Services/Activities<br>8. Reasonable Chores<br>9. Children Informed About Psychotropic Medication<br>10. Children Aware of Right to Refuse Psychotropic Medication<br>11. Children Informed About Right to Refuse Medical and Dental Care<br>12. Children Participation in At-Home School, Community Activities<br>13. Children Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities | Full Compliance (ALL) |
| IX | **Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-being** (8 Elements)<br><br>1. $50 Clothing Allowance<br>2. Ongoing Clothing Inventories of Adequate Quantity<br>3. Ongoing Clothing Inventories of Adequate Quality<br>4. Involvement in Selection of Clothing<br>5. Provision of Personal Care Items<br>6. Minimum Monetary Allowances<br>7. Management of Allowance<br>8. Encouragement and Assistance with Life Book | Full Compliance (ALL) |
| X | **Discharged Children** (3 Elements)<br><br>1. Stabilization of Placement prior to Discharge<br>2. Discharge Summary Completed<br>3. Child Completed High School | Full Compliance (ALL) |

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| XI | **Personnel Records** (14 Elements)<br><br>1. DOJ Timely Submitted<br>2. FBI Timely Submitted (After January 1, 2008)<br>3. CACIs Timely Submitted<br>4. Signed Criminal Background Statement Timely<br>5. Education/Experience Requirement<br>6. Employee Health-Screening Timely<br>7. Valid Driver's License<br>8. Signed Copies of FFA Policies and Procedures<br>9. Initial Training Documentation<br>10. One-hour Training of Child Abuse Reporting<br>11. CPR Training Documentation<br>12. First-Aid Training Documentation<br>13. Ongoing Training Documentation<br>14. Social Workers Appropriate Case Ratio | Full Compliance (ALL) |

# SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES, INC., FFA CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

**600 S. Grant Ave.**
**Covina, CA 91724**
**License Number: 191593485**

The following report is based on a "point in time" at the time of the monitoring visit. This compliance report addresses findings noted during the May 2011 monitoring review.

## CONTRACTUAL COMPLIANCE

Based on our review of seven children's files, two certified foster parent files, four staff files, four discharge files, and/or documentation from the provider, the Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA was in substantial compliance scoring an overall 100% level of compliance. Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA was in full compliance with 10 sections of our Contract Compliance review: Licensure/Contract Requirements; Certified Foster Homes; Facility and Environment; Maintenance of Required Documentation and Services Delivery, Education and Workforce Readiness; Health and Medical Needs; Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being; Discharged Children; Personnel Records. One section, Psychotropic Medication, was not applicable as there were no children on psychotropic medication.

## PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP FROM THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER'S REPORT

### Objective

Determine the status of the recommendations reported in the A-C's last monitoring review.

### Verification

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the last A-C's compliance monitoring report dated March 9, 2011 were implemented.

### Results

The A-C's prior monitoring report contained two outstanding findings. Specifically, Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA was to ensure that all foster parents adequately secure detergents, cleaning solutions, alcohol and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children. In addition, the agency was to ensure that all foster parents complete the required number of annual continuing education training hours.

Based on our follow-up of these recommendations, Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA fully implemented all the outstanding recommendations from the A-C's contract compliance report of March 9, 2011.

**Recommendation:**

None

## MOST RECENT FISCAL REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

The A-C has not conducted a fiscal review of the Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., FFA.

**Recommendation:**

None