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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
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February 28, 2013

To: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman
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Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES, INC. 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 Serenity Infant Care Homes, Inc., Foster Family Agency (Serenity FFA) in October 2012. Serenity FFA has one licensed office in the Fifth Supervisorial District, and provides services to Los Angeles County DCFS foster children and youth. According to Serenity FFA's program statement, its mission is "to provide quality foster homes for abused, abandoned, and neglected infants and children, with special emphasis on the care of drug affected infants."

At the time of the review, Serenity FFA supervised 67 DCFS placed children in 61 certified foster homes. The placed children's average length of placement was 15 months, and their average age was five.

SUMMARY

During our review, the interviewed children generally reported feeling safe at Serenity 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 Serenity FFA staff in their efforts to provide care, supervision and service delivery to the children placed in their homes.

Serenity FFA was in full compliance with 10 of 11 sections of our program compliance review: Certified Foster Homes; 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.

We noted deficiencies in the area of Licensure/Contract Requirements related to placing more than two children in two newly licensed homes.

REVIEW OF REPORT

On December 5, 2012, the DCFS OHCMD Monitor, Thomas Manning, held an Exit Conference with Serenity FFA representatives, Jennifer Choctaw, Executive Director and Gloria Burrill, Supervising Social Worker. Serenity 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 A-C and Community Care Licensing (CCL).

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

We 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
EAH:NF:tm

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Wendy Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Jennifer Choctaw, Executive Director, Serenity FFA
Rosalie Gutierrez, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing

SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES, INC. FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The following report is based on a "point in time" monitoring visit. This compliance report addresses findings noted during the October 2012 review. The purpose of this review was to assess Serenity FFA's compliance with the County contract requirements and State regulations and included a review of the Serenity 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
- Personnel Records

For purpose of this review, nine children were selected for the sample. We interviewed five of the nine children. Four children were not interviewed due to their age as they are non-verbal. However, the monitor observed and interacted with these four children assessing for appropriate age developmental milestones, as well their interaction with their caretakers. We reviewed each of the children' case files to assess the care and services they received. Additionally, five discharged children's files were also reviewed to assess Serenity FFA's compliance with permanency efforts. At the time of the review, there were no placed children prescribed psychotropic medication.

We reviewed three certified foster parent files and five staff files were reviewed 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

We found the following area to be out of compliance.

Licensure/Contract Requirements

- Two of three certified foster homes exceeded the County Contract requirement of placement of no more than two children per home for the first year of certification.

Neither of the two homes met all three requirements for an exception of this policy, which included having an assessment of the certified foster home being conducted prior to placement of two or more children. The agency stated in their corrective action plan "Serenity acknowledges this OCHU regulation and agrees that from this date forward, we will limit the number of children placed in homes with less than one year experience to 2 children or less".

Recommendation

Serenity FFA's management shall ensure that:

1. All their staff is retrained on the County Contract policy of newly certified foster parents and inspect the foster homes to ensure ongoing compliance, including conducting an assessment of the certified foster home prior to placement of two or more children.

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

The OHCMD's last compliance report dated January 12, 2012, contained no findings.

MOST RECENT FISCAL REVIEW CONDUCTED BY THE AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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

SERENITY INFANT CARE HOMES, INC. FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
CONTRACT PROGRAM COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW-SUMMARY

600 S. Grand Ave., Covina, CA 91742
License Numbers: 191593485

	Contract Compliance Monitoring Review	**Findings: October 2012**
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	3. Full Compliance
	4. Are there CCL Citations/OHCMD Safety Reports	4. Full Compliance
	5. If Applicable, FFA Ensures Complete Required Whole Foster Family Home Training	5. Not Applicable
	6. FFA Pays Certified Foster Parents Whole Foster Family Home Payments	6. Not Applicable
	7. Assessment of Certified Foster Parent (CFP)Prior to Placement of Two (2) or More Children	7. Improvement Needed
II	**Certified Foster Homes (CFHs)** (12 Elements)	
	1. Home Study and Safety Inspection Prior to Certification	Full Compliance (ALL)
	2. Contact with References/Including Check with OHCMD	
	3. Timely DOJ, FBI, CACI	
	4. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement	
	5. Health Screening & TB Test Prior to Certification	
	6. Required Training Prior to Certification	
	7. Certificate of Approval on File/Including Capacity	
	8. Safety Inspection Every Six Months or Per Approved Program Statement	
	9. Completed 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	
	11. Other Adults In The Home: Health Screening/CDL/CPR DOJ/FBI/CACI/Auto Insurance	
	12. FFA Assists CFPs with Transportation Needs	

III	**Facility and Environment** (7 Elements) 1. Exterior/Grounds Well Maintained 2. Common Areas Maintained 3. Children's Bedrooms/Interior Maintained 4. Sufficient Educational Resources 5. Adequate Perishable and Non-Perishable Food 6. Disaster Drills Conducted and Documentation Maintained 7. Allowance Logs Maintained	Full Compliance (ALL)
IV	**Maintenance of Required Documentation/Service Delivery** (10 Elements) 1. County Worker's Authorization to Implement NSPs 2. NSPs Implemented and Discussed with Foster Parents 3. Children Progressing Towards Meeting NSP Goals 4. Develop Timely, Comprehensive Initial NSP With Child's Participation 5. Develop Timely, Comprehensive Updated NSPs With Child's Participation 6. Therapeutic Services Received 7. Recommended Assessments/Evaluations Implemented 8. County Workers Monthly Contacts Documented in Child's Case File 9. 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 Children's Educational Goals Met 3. Children's Academic Performance and/or Attendance Increased 4. Current Report Cards Maintained 5. FFA Facilitates Child's Participation in YDS/Equivalent/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 Medications** (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 3. CFPs' Efforts to Provide 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 7. Reasonable Chores 8. Children Informed About Their Medication and Right to Refuse Medication 9. Children Aware of Right to Refuse 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. Clothing Allowance in Accordance with FFA Program Statement ($50 Minimum If After November 1, 2012) 2. Ongoing Clothing Inventories of Adequate Quantity and Quality 3. Children's Involvement in Selection of Clothing 4. Provision of Sufficient Supply of Clean Towels and Personal Care Items Meeting Ethnic Needs 5. Minimum Monetary Allowances	Full Compliance (ALL)

	6. Management of Allowance/Earnings 7. Encouragement/Assistance with Life Book	
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. DOJ, FBI, Child Abuse Criminal Index (CACI) Submitted Timely 2. Timely, Completed, Signed Criminal Background Statement 3. Education/Experience Requirements 4. Employee Health Screening/TB Timely 5. Valid CDL and Auto Insurance 6. Signed Copies of FFA Policies and Procedures 7. Staff Completed All Required Training and Documentation Maintained 8. FFA Social Workers Have Appropriate Caseload Ratio 9. Written Declarations For Contract FFA Social Workers That Caseloads Not Exceed Total of 15 Children	Full Compliance (ALL)

December 1, 2012

Corrective Active Plan

During a recent audit by OHCU, it was noted that two families, certified less than one year, had been placed with more than two children. We were informed that even though the children were placed for sound reason (one home was able to keep siblings together and the other was a child who had previously been in the care of this foster mother as his daycare provider), it is DCFS's policy that foster families with less than one year experience be placed with two children or less. We were also advised to contact CCL on this matter. We were told by our CCL analyst that CCL has no regulation on the number of children placed in homes with less than 1 year experience.

Serenity acknowledges this OCHU regulation and agrees that from this date forward, we will limit the number of children placed in homes with less than one year experience to 2 children or less.

Linda Kontis, Director of Children's Placement

Gloria Washington, Intake Coordinator

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