



# County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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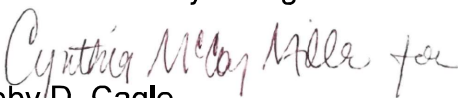
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March 12, 2021

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair  
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Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From:   
Bobby D. Cagle  
Director

## SENECA FAMILY OF AGENCIES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW OF REPORT

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Contracts Administration Division (CAD) conducted a virtual Contract Compliance Review of the Seneca Family of Agencies Foster Family Agency (the Contractor) in June 2020. The Contractor has one office located in Orange County. The office provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children, Probation foster youth, children placed by other counties and Non-Minor Dependents.

### Key Outcomes

NUMBER OF PRIORITY FINDINGS
PRIORITY 1 1
PRIORITY 2 1
PRIORITY 3 1

CAD conducted a virtual Contract Compliance Assessment review of the Contractor's compliance within the following applicable areas: General Contract Requirements; Resource Family Home (RFH) Requirements; Facility and Environment; Engagement and Teamwork; Needs and Services Plans; Permanency; Education and Independent Living Program Services; Health and Medical Needs; Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being; and Personnel Files.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

The Contractor was in full compliance with 8 of 11 applicable areas of CAD's Contract Compliance Review: General Contract Requirements; Resource Family Home Requirements; Engagement and Teamwork; Permanency; Education and Independent Living Program Services; Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Bering; and Personnel Files.

For the purpose of this review, six DCFS placed children were selected for the sample. CAD reviewed the files of the six selected children, two children were telephonically interviewed to assess the level of care and services they received. One child declined to be interviewed and three children were too young to be interviewed. These three children were virtually observed to be clean, well- groomed and healthy. An additional five discharged children files were reviewed to assess the Contractor's compliance with permanency efforts.

CAD reviewed three RFHs files and five staff files for compliance with Title 22 Regulations and County contract requirements. CAD also conducted telephonic interviews with staff and the Resource Family Parents. To assess the quality of care and supervision provided to the placed children, DCFS conducted virtual site visits at the Contractor's location and the RFHs.

CAD noted findings in the areas of:

Priority 1

- Facility and Environment
  - Common quarters were not safe and properly maintained. Knives and sharp objects were not safely stored and locked; and disinfectants and cleaning solutions were accessible to children.

Priority 2

- Health and Medical Needs
  - The FFA did not provide the required Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Information to the youth.

Priority 3

- Needs and Services Plans (NSPs)
  - NSPs were not signed timely by the Children's Social Worker/Deputy Probation Officer.

On July 15, 2020, the DCFS CAD Children Services Administrator I and II and the Out-of-Home Care Management Division Quality Assurance Specialist, held an exit conference with the Contractor's representatives.

The Contractor's representatives agreed with the review findings and recommendations, and were receptive to implementing systemic changes to improve the Contractor's compliance with regulatory standards.

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The Contractor provided the attached approved Corrective Action Plan addressing the noted findings in this compliance report.

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

BDC:KDR  
LTI:jar

#### Attachments

c: Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer  
Arlene Barrera, Auditor-Controller  
Dr. Adolfo Gonzales, Chief Probation Officer  
Brandon Nichols, Chief Deputy Probation Officer,  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee  
Molly Shaeffer, Assistant Director, Seneca Family of Agencies  
Kellee Coleman, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division  
Monica Marshall-Turner, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division



August 5th, 2020

J. Angel Rodriguez  
Los Angeles County - Department of Children and Family Services  
Contract Compliance Monitor

Dear Mr. Rodriguez,

Please find below the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) requested for the following items identified in the 2020 FFA Monitoring Review Exit Summary:

**Facility and Environment**

*15i. If appropriate, knives and sharp objects are safely stored and locked.*

*15k. Disinfectants, cleaning solutions, poisons, firearms and other dangerous items are not accessible to children.*

During the review, it was observed that knives, disinfectants, and cleaning solutions were kept unlocked on the top shelf of a kitchen cabinet. Given the children's ages (10 and 11 years old), the FFA explained that the Prudent Parent Standards were being applied to allow the youth to have access to such items in a developmentally appropriate manner. The review concluded that applying the Prudent Parent Standard to allow access to such items was not applicable due to the child's mental health diagnosis. Additionally, there was not documentation of an assessment to determine if the child could safely have access to such items under the Prudent Parent Standard. To address this, Seneca will do the following:

- For the specific family identified, the knives and cleaning products were immediately moved to a locked cabinet in the garage during the review.
- The agency will continue to conduct home safety inspections at least every 6 months, and more often as deemed appropriate to ensure that the home environment is safe and that necessary safety measures are developmentally appropriate and responsive to any identified risk factors.
- Resource Families will be trained to use the Reasonable and Prudent Parent standard to determine if it is necessary and appropriate for potentially dangerous items such as knives, sharp objects, and cleaning products to be locked to ensure inaccessibility. This will be reviewed with the family in pre-approval training, upon placement, during routine home safety inspections, and more frequently as needed.
- Social workers will confirm that all knives and cleaning products are safely stored and locked when determined to be appropriate. When making this determination, social workers will assess the child's developmental level and capacity to safely use items such as knives for food preparation and cleaning products to assist with household chores. Social workers will ensure such items are locked and inaccessible to young children who do not possess the skills to use these items without direct supervision. Additionally, the social worker will assess for any

identified risk factors related to the youth's behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs, including threat of harm to self or others that would determine it to be appropriate for such items to be locked as part of a safety plan.

- The social worker will document this assessment in the youth's Needs and Services Plan and determine if the child may have access to items under the Prudent Parent Standard. If it is determined that items need to be locked as part of a safety plan, the social worker will collaborate with the Child and Family Team to determine when any changes to the plan may be appropriate allowing the youth to safely have access to these items again and document this in the youth's NSP.
- The Placement Program Assistant Director will review expectations related to safely securing items in the home at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 12, 2020. Social workers will review information with resource families during contacts throughout the month of August and ensure all homes are in compliance as explained above by August 31, 2020.

### **Needs and Services Plans**

*23. The NSPs were completed accurately and on time.*

*23g. Signed by CSW/DPO (or documented efforts to obtain signatures).*

During the review, it was noted that 2 children's (siblings) 1<sup>st</sup> quarter NSPs (due on 11/9/19) were signed by the CSW 10 days late on 11/19/19 with no documented attempts to obtain a timely signature from the CSW. For these specific reports, there was a delay in completing and submitting the reports to the administrative team to process and send to the CSW for a signature. As soon as the CSW received the NSP, it was signed and returned on the first attempt. To address this, Seneca will do the following:

- The agency will review the current procedures for timely submission of NSPs with all staff and make efforts to obtain the CSWs signature within 5 days of the due date. To achieve this:
  - The social worker will submit a draft of the NSP to the supervisor 7 days prior to the due date to allow time for review and any necessary revisions.
  - A final draft signed by the youth (if age appropriate), resource family, social worker, and supervisor will be submitted to the administrative team to process on or before the due date.
  - The administrative team will make at least 3 attempts within 5 days of the due date to obtain the CSW's signature on the report as follows:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> attempt: NSP sent to CSW via email to be signed.
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt (if needed): NSP will be sent to the CSW and CSW's supervisor via email to be signed.
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt (if needed): NSP will be sent to the CSW, CSW's supervisor, and ARA via email to be signed.
  - If after 3 attempts, a signature has not been received, the efforts to obtain a signature will be documented in the youth's file.
- The Placement Program Assistant Director will review expectations related to timely submission of NSP's and procedures for obtaining CSW signatures at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 12, 2020.

## Health and Medical Needs

*45. The FFA has provided sexual and reproductive health rights information, age 10 or older.*

During the review, there was one resource family identified with children age 10 or older. While it was noted that the resource family had been provided with information related to the sexual and reproductive health rights of youth, and materials were available in the home, there was no verification in the file that the agency had reviewed this information with the youth. To address this, Seneca will do the following:

- The agency will continue to provide information related to the sexual and reproductive health rights of youth as part of the pre-approval training for all resource families.
- When a youth age 10 or older is placed with the FFA, the social worker will provide the youth with resources and developmentally appropriate information regarding their sexual and reproductive health rights. Additionally, the agency will ensure that any youth who turn 10 years of age while in placement receive this information.
- The agency will verify that this information has been provided to the youth and family by obtaining signatures from all parties and documenting this in the youth's file.
- Social workers will receive training and support in individual and group supervision to facilitate these conversations in a developmentally appropriate manner and to support youth and families in ensuring these rights are protected.
- The Placement Program Assistant Director will review expectations for verifying that youth have been provided with this information at the next scheduled all-staff meeting on August 12, 2020. Social workers will review information with resource families during contacts throughout the month of August and September to ensure verification has been received for all youth age 10 and older as explained above by September 30, 2020.

I, Molly Shaeffer, the Assistant Director of the Placement Program at Seneca Family of Agencies will oversee the implementation of this Corrective Action Plan, including required training, implementation, and monitoring of actions identified above. Such efforts to do so will be completed in individual and group supervisions and all-staff meetings.

Thank you for your input and collaboration throughout the review process to further improve our program and the services provided to our children and families. We look forward to continuing our partnership with DCFS to serve the children of Los Angeles County. Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you,



Molly Shaeffer, LCSW

Assistant Director - Southern California Placement Program  
Seneca Family of Agencies