



# County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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BRANDON T. NICHOLS  
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April 10, 2024

To: Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, Chair  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell  
Supervisor Janice Hahn  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From:   
Brandon T. Nichols  
Director

## VISTA DEL MAR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES 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 Vista del Mar Child and Family Services Foster Family Agency (the Contractor) in October 2023. The Contractor has one office located in the Third Supervisorial District. The office provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children, children placed by other counties and Non-Minor Dependents.

### Key Outcomes

NUMBER OF PRIORITY FINDINGS
PRIORITY 1 1
PRIORITY 2 0
PRIORITY 3 0

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

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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.

The Contractor was in full compliance with 10 of 11 applicable areas of CAD's Contract Compliance Review: 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.

For the purpose of this review, six DCFS placed children were selected for the sample. CAD reviewed the files of the six selected children and virtually interviewed one to assess the level of care and services they received; five children (ages 0 to 4 years) were too young to be interviewed and of the five children, four were virtually observed to be clean and well-groomed and one was not virtually observed due to hospitalization. An additional four discharged children files were also reviewed to assess the Contractor's compliance with permanency efforts.

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

CAD noted a finding in the area of:

**Priority 1**

- General Contract Requirements (1 Finding)
  - One child Special Incident Report was not timely submitted or properly cross-reported in the I-Track system.

On November 20, 2023, the Children Services Administrator teams from DCFS' CAD and the Out-of-Home Care Management Division held an exit conference with the Contractor representatives.

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

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

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 371-6052.

BTN:CMM  
LTI:ms

#### Attachments

- c: Fesia Davenport, Chief Executive Officer
- Oscar Valdez, Auditor-Controller
- Guillermo Vera Rosa, Chief Probation Officer
- Public Information Office
- Audit Committee
- Lena Wilson, J.D. President/Chief Executive Officer, Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services
- Kellee Coleman, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
- Monique Marshall-Turner, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
- Celeste M. Fitchett, MSW Bureau Chief, Performance and Fiscal Audits, CDSS

Richard Acosta  
Nancy Epstein  
Co-Chairs, Board of Directors

Lena Wilson, J.D.  
President/Chief Executive Officer



VISTA DEL MAR  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

December 20, 2023

Department of Children and Family Services Contracts & Administration Division  
3530 Wilshire Blvd, 4th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90010  
Attn: Matthew St. John (stjohnma@dcfs.lacounty.gov)

### Re: DCFS/CAD 2022-2023 FFA Contract Compliance Review

On November 20, 2023, Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services Agency (VDM) received the Foster Family Agency Contract Compliance Review Field Exit Summary which was conducted on November 20, 2023. The following Corrective Action Plan addresses the following deficiencies, as identified:

#### I. GENERAL CONTRACT REQUIREMENT:

1. One SIR regarding an Emergency Room Incident/Injury which occurred on 9/1/2023 was not reported to the agency or entered into iTrack until 9/7/2023.
  - a) The FFA staff/interns were retrained on Reporting SIRs Timely on 11/29/2023.
    - i. The FFA staff/interns signed an acknowledgement form to acknowledge that they understand the requirements. **(See Attached Exhibit I (16 pages))**
  - b) The FFA staff/interns will ensure that the following requirements are followed as it pertains to Reporting SIRs Timely:
    - i. During each weekly/bi-weekly visit with the Resource Family, the FFA-Social Worker/Intern will inquire about any incidents that may require an SIR.
    - ii. On a quarterly (Feb, May, Aug & Nov) basis the FFA-Social Worker/Intern will discuss the following with the Resource Family: Timely Reporting of SIRs:
      - What types of incidents to report
      - When to report
      - Who to report to
      - How to report
    - iii. FFA-Social Worker/Intern will document the review of the above mentioned in the following documents:
      - i. Progress Notes
      - ii. RFA 809
    - iv. FFA-Social Worker/Intern shall obtain the Resource Family signature on the following form quarterly:
      - i. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Reporting SIR's Timely
    - v. FFA-Social Worker/Intern will add an auto response to their emails when unable to check emails for the duration of the workday. The auto response should identify who their assigned Resource Families should contact in the event an incident occurs that requires a SIR to be completed.



- vi. FFA-Social Worker/Intern understands that a SIR should be completed and saved in PMIS within the following timeline to ensure the FFA Supervisor review and approved within 24 hours: If an incident occurs at 1pm on a Monday, the SIR must be completed and saved no later than the end of the same business day.
  - vii. If an incident occurs after 5pm on any day, the SIR must be completed and saved no later than 12pm the following day (including weekends).
  - viii. If an incident is reported late by the Resource Family, the SIR must be completed and saved immediately (directly after receiving the information).
  - ix. FFA Social Worker/Intern understands that should PMIS not work properly when it's time to complete an SIR, they are required to utilize the Unusual Incident-Injury Report LIC624.pdf form to submit to the appropriate individuals indicated on the form SIR-PMIS LA County procedures Aug 2023.doc. The SIR is required to be completed and saved in PMIS once the system is available.
  - x. FFA-Social Worker/Intern understands that they must adhere to the following reporting requirement timelines found here DCFS-SIR Guidelines May 2021.pdf as it pertains to who to report to, when to report and how to report.
  - xi. FFA-Social Worker/Intern understand that they can access the SIR folder Vista Del Mar online portal <https://vistadelmarorg.sharepoint.com/sites/AdoptionsDept> which grants the FFA-Social Worker/Intern the ability to review all procedure, guidelines and forms needed for timely SIR reporting.
- c) The FFA staff/interns were instructed and retrained on Reporting SIRs Timely on 11/29/2023.
- i. The FFA staff/interns signed an acknowledgement form to acknowledge that they understand the requirements. **(See Attached Exhibit I (16 pages))**
- d) The FFA staff/interns will ensure that the following requirements are followed as it pertains to Reporting SIRs Timely:
- i. The Resource Families both with current placements as well as waiting families were retrained on Reporting SIRs Timely during weekly/biweekly visits.
    - i. The Resource Families signed an acknowledgement form to acknowledge that they understand the requirements. **(See Attached Exhibit II (54 pages))**
  - ii. As an Approved Resource Family through Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services, Resource Families signed acknowledgment forms indicating their understanding of the requirements as it pertains to reporting Special Incidents Reports (SIR) timely:
    - i. **Who to and when to report:**
      - 1. Report any special incidents that occur in/out of my home pertaining to any child/Non-Minor Dependent (NMD), and/or (Resource Family) immediately following the incident. For an example:
        - a. If an incident occurs with a child/NMD in my presence, I/we must report to our assigned FFA-Social Worker/Intern within 1-hour of the incident occurring.
        - b. If an incident occurs while the child/NMD is out of my presence (at school, with a friend and etc.), I/we must report to our assigned FFA-Social Worker/Intern no later than an hour from being notified (including weekends).
        - c. I/we must avoid waiting to report incidents during the next home visit, instead report following the incident.
    - ii. **How to report:**



1. Call or text my assigned FFA-Social Worker/Intern to report the incident immediately.
    - a. Avoid sending only an email to report, as my assigned FFA-Social Worker/Intern may not have immediate access to their email.
    - b. If I/we have a lot of details to report and my assigned FFA-Social Worker/Intern do not answer the phone, I/we will send a text to request they check their email for all the details of the incident
  2. If our assigned FFA-Social Worker/Intern is out of the office for the day, I/we are required to follow the guidance given in the auto response that directs us to who to report our incident timely.
- iii. **What to report:**
1. BEHAVIORAL/MENTAL HEALTH – Incident that adversely affects the physical health, mental health, emotional health, educational well-being, or safety of a child.
  2. INJURY, ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT – Incident that results in medical treatment by a health care professional beyond routine medical care, with the exception of a planned surgery. If in doubt, call our assigned FFA-Social Worker/Intern for clarification.
  3. DEATH – Death must be reported by telephone to police/law enforcement (when appropriate), CSW and Child Protection Hotline (CPHL) within one hour of incident.
  4. UNAUTHORIZED ABSENCE – Absence of a child without the permission and supervision of the Resource Parent which threatens the physical health, emotional health, or safety of the child.
  5. ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE – All Resource Parent are required by law to report known, suspected, or alleged incidents of child abuse as defined in Penal Code Section 11165-11174.4.
  6. SCHOOL RELATED – Incident that involves school-related matters or that occur on school grounds.
  7. DISASTER – Incident that involves the resource family home and may have a serious impact on resource families/child/NMD or create a potentially dangerous environment.
- iv. Expectation - Failure to report SIRs timely to Vista Del Mar more than twice will result in receiving a Corrective Action Plan.
- e) The FFA staff/interns are required to review the Resource Families responsibility to report SIR's timely quarterly (Feb, May, Aug & Nov) to ensure the Resource Family fully understand their responsibility.
- i. The FFA staff/interns will obtain the Resource Family signature on the acknowledgement form to acknowledge that they understand the requirements. **(See Attached Exhibit III (1 page))**

Richard Acosta  
Nancy Epstein  
*Co-Chairs, Board of Directors*

Lena Wilson, J.D.  
*President/Chief Executive Officer*



VISTA DEL MAR  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me directly at (310) 836-1223 ext. 537.

Sincerely,

Madysyn Creighton, MSW  
Foster Family Agency Social Work Supervisor