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Yuba County Health and Human Services Child Welfare Services

Summary:

The Yuba County Grand Jury investigated the Child Welfare Services (CWS) of the Yuba County Health and Human Services Department (HHS). The Grand Jury found that the CWS staff follow mandated due process, have adequate training, and have a successful intern program. Procedural steps are in place to protect the welfare of children through due process.

Introduction and Background

The Grand Jury investigation of the CWS was initiated by a citizen's complaint. The Grand Jury is not required to investigate any complaint or request for investigation, but elected to do so in this instance. A thorough investigation concerning the citizen's complaint included a site visit, multiple interviews with CWS staff, a review of CWS staff training, and a review of documents.

Methodology and Approach:

The Grand Jury conducted an investigation and interviewed supervisory staff of the CWS, requested data from the HHS Director, and completed a site visit. The Grand Jury conducted interviews with CWS personnel and received requested detailed demographic data about Yuba-Sutter Counties. HHS/ CWS were very cooperative and expeditious in providing requested documents to the Grand Jury.

Documents:

- Child Welfare Services Manual, California Division 31 Regulations, <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/PG309.htm>
- California Welfare and Institutions Code 300 Codes, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=wic>
- California Penal Code 832, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=pen&group=00001-01000&file=830-832.17>
- California Code of Regulations, Title 22, <http://www.ccl.d.ca.gov>

Site Visit: The Grand Jury visited HHS during this investigation.

Interviews: The Grand Jury conducted interviews with the HHS Director, CWS supervisory staff, and personnel.

Discussion and Narrative:

The Grand Jury conducted an investigation and concluded that, according to CWS staff, all policies and California State guidelines are followed by CWS staff while working their caseloads. CWS staff followed State mandated criteria including due process. Due process is the administration of justice according to the established rules and principles. It is based on the legal

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principle that a person cannot be deprived of life, liberty or property without appropriate legal procedures and safeguards. The CWS staff appears to follow due process when working with families, relatives, and the children involved.

During the interview and investigation process, the Grand Jury found that the CWS supervisors and staff receive ongoing training. The CWS staff meets regularly and discusses current cases and issues with supervisors and peers. The Grand Jury found that CWS staff is deputized by the Yuba County Sheriff’s Department. The CWS staff has a productive relationship with a local university and has jointly created an intern program. CWS successfully utilizes this intern program to mentor, train, and employ future social workers.

The CWS staff provided the following demographic data in regards to case load:

Children in Out of Home Placement – Demographic Data

FY 2010-2011

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Case Count</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
American Indian	6	3.47%
Asian Indian	1	0.58%
Black	8	4.62%
Hispanic	28	16.18%
Hmong	4	2.31%
Japanese	2	1.16%
Laotian	1	0.58%
Mexican	9	5.20%
Samoan	2	1.16%
Vietnamese	1	0.58%
White	108	62.43%
White-Armenian	2	1.16%
White-European	1	0.58%
	Sum: 173 Cases	Total: 100%

**Top Four Local Zip Codes for Out of Home Placement
FY 2010-2011**

<u>Place Home Zip Code</u>	<u>Case Count</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
95961	43	24.86%
95901	40	23.12%
95993	16	9.25%
95991	11	6.36%
	Sum: 110 out of 173	Total: 63.58%

Findings:

The Grand Jury finds the following:

- F1. There were State mandated criteria followed by CWS staff before the removal of a child.
- F2. CWS staff follows established guidelines for due process. CWS's procedural steps are designed to protect the welfare of children through due process.
- F3. CWS supervisors and staff receive ongoing training.
- F4. CWS staff is deputized by the Yuba County Sheriff's Department.
- F5. CWS successfully utilizes an intern program to mentor, train, and employ future social workers.

Recommendations:

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends CWS staff continue the use of the intern program to mentor, train, and employ future social workers.

Commendations:

The Grand Jury commends the CWS staff for:

- C1. Strictly conforming to State mandates and due process

C2. The successful use of their intern program to mentor, train, and employ future social workers

Request for Responses:

Pursuant to California Penal Code section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following:

- Child Welfare Services (CWS) of the Yuba County Health and Human Services Department (HHS)

The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted in accordance with Penal Code 933(c) and subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

