



County of Orange
California

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

July 26, 2011

Honorable Thomas J. Borris
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Child Abuse Emergency Response Effectiveness

Dear Judge Borris:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. The respondent is the Social Services Agency. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Zink at (714) 834-7487 in the County Executive Office, who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

Enclosure

cc: 2011-12 Orange County Grand Jury

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**2010-2011 Grand Jury Report
Child Abuse Emergency Response Effectiveness
Social Services Agency
Responses to Findings and Recommendations**

Responses to Findings F.1 through F.7

- F.1** Even though there has been a 22% decrease in personnel assigned to Emergency Response Units I and II (2008-2010), the needs of children who are referred to Emergency Response Units I and II in Orange County are being met.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

- F.2** While case load has not increased in ERU, workload has increased due to increased reporting requirements.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

- F.3** Response time to address child abuse, both 10 day and immediate, consistently exceeds mandated State requirements.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

- F.4** The percentage of children who receive a monthly visit for whom a visit was required, exceeds State standards.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

- F.5** The interaction between Emergency Response Units I and II, the Child Abuse Registry, Child Abuse Services Team, Intake and law enforcement are working effectively.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

- F.6** Mandated in-service training for social workers (40 hours every two years) is perceived by some social workers as redundant.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

- F.7 Social Workers sometimes use their personal vehicles to transport minors when removing them from their home, causing them concern about their liability.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

Responses to Recommendation R.1 through R.3

- R.1 Conduct workshop(s) jointly with law enforcement to enhance the role of each and ways to seek more efficient interaction when working together on child abuse cases.

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

Children and Family Services (CFS) Senior Social Workers (SSWs) are out stationed in police departments throughout Orange County. They participate in roll call as a reminder to officers that they are there to offer assistance on child abuse cases and they frequently respond with officers. The Child Abuse Services Team, (CAST) attends police briefings regarding child abuse reporting and utilization of CAST. CFS also conducts "Lunch n Learn" and the CAST Quarterly Law Enforcement meetings hosted by the District Attorney's office. One of the functions of the meetings is to identify opportunities to develop and conduct joint workshops with law enforcement.

- R.2 Review and analyze procedures concerning the transportation of children in social workers personal automobiles in terms of liability and possible alternatives.

Response: *The recommendation requires further analysis.*

CFS will examine the feasibility of implementing this recommendation over the next three months. Analysis will include: potential and perceived impact on staff, discussions with Risk Management regarding potential liability, and an exploration of possible alternatives.

- R.3 Continue analyzing the ERU reporting requirements using social workers from both units to reduce redundancy and increase efficiency.

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

CFS established a workgroup to review Emergency Response (ER) reporting requirements in an effort to reduce redundancy and to increase efficiency in the program. The workgroup is also identifying tasks that clerical staff can complete to further assist the SSWs. The workgroup has met three times this year and continues to meet frequently to streamline work processes and maintain effectiveness. ER management met with County Counsel to identify ways to streamline the court reports, which are required when a child is brought into protective custody. ER management continues to work with ER SSWs and welcomes their input on ways they can more efficiently perform their duties.