

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Do You Know What I Know? Juvenile Court Hearings

Report Date: June 25, 2018

Response by: Connie Beck

Title: Director of Health & Human Services

FINDINGS

1. I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F1, F2, F3, F4, F5
2. I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: N/A
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendations numbered N/A have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implementation actions.)
2. Recommendations numbered R1, R2, R3 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
3. Recommendations numbered N/A require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the Grand Jury report.)
4. Recommendations numbered N/A will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date:

Signed:

Juvenile Court Hearings

FINDINGS

F1. Foster parents generally are keenly aware of their foster children's daily behavior and developmental issues, so their input is valuable at the 6-Month Review Hearing and the 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings.

Response: DHHS-CWS agrees with this finding. The observation of caregivers is valuable in all the work DHHS-CWS does.

F2. Procedures are in place to allow foster parents to provide child development and safety information at the 6-Month Review Hearing and the 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings. These procedures are not always followed, preventing the court from making fully informed decisions about the status of the foster youth.

Response: DHHS-CWS agrees with this finding. Substitute care providers do not consistently follow the procedures in place that are intended to ensure they provide the court their input at review hearings.

F3. Initial training provided by CWS during the Resource Family Home licensing process is limited in scope and focus, causing new caregivers to sometimes misunderstand their rights to provide input at the 6-Month Review Hearing and the 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings.

Response: DHHS-CWS agrees with this finding. The current training does not cover in detail the purpose and use of the JV-290 information forms.

F4. It is important for CWS social workers to improve communication with foster parents prior to the 6-Month Review Hearing and the 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings in order to facilitate overall communication to the court.

Response: DHHS-CWS agrees with the finding that improved communication with foster parents prior to the 6-Month Review Hearing and the 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings will facilitate overall communication with the court. DHHS-CWS also agrees with the implied finding that poor communication deprives the court of necessary information.

F5. Foster parents are not consistently trained and encouraged by CWS to provide child development and safety information at the 6-Month Review Hearing and the 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings, leading to confusion about the foster parents' role at hearings.

Response: DHHS-CWS agrees with this finding. Inconsistent training and encouragement leads to confusion among foster parents regarding their role at review hearings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Child Welfare Services update its Resource Family Home licensing training to include a handout on the rights

of foster parents to provide input at the 6-Month Review Hearing and the 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings. This handout should include a discussion on Caregiver Information Form (JV-290), and be completed prior to October 1, 2018. **(F3)**

Response: DHHS-CWS will implement this recommendation in full. The Resource Family Approval mandatory pre-service training curriculum will include reference to the JV-290 and discussion of the importance of caregiver input to the court process. There will be a handout summarizing the information covered by the training. Completion date: October 1, 2018.

R2. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Child Welfare Services attach a copy of Caregiver Information Form (JV-290) to each copy of the 6-Month Review Hearing and 12/18-Month Permanency Hearings notification letter sent to foster parents, and encourage their participation. This requirement should be in place by October 1, 2018. **(F1, F2, F4, F5)**

Response: DHHS-CWS will implement this recommendation in full. DHHS-CWS will add the JV290 form, and instructions, to the notification of court hearing dates provided caregivers. Completion date: October 1, 2018.

R3. The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends Humboldt County Child Welfare Services include, during its annual training requirement for social workers, the need for encouraging foster parents to provide child development and safety information to the courts using the Caregiver Information Form (JV-290). This additional training should be in place and documented by December 31, 2018. **(F2, F3, F4, F5)**

Response: DHHS-CWS will implement this recommendation in full. The importance of input and continued communication with caregivers throughout a case, along with the means to do so, will be added as a topic in Social Worker training. Completion date: December 31, 2018.