

Department of Health and Human Services

**OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**REVIEW OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS
UNDER TITLE IV-E**

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN
AND FAMILY SERVICES**



**JUNE GIBBS BROWN
Inspector General**

FEBRUARY 1996
A-05-95-00053



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

REGION V
105 W. ADAMS ST
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 606036201

February 28, 1996

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

SUBJECT: Letter Report on Review of Foster Care
Placements Under the Title IV-E Program
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
Springfield, Illinois
Common Identification No. A-05-95-00053

TO: Jess McDonald, Director
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
406 East Monroe Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701

This letter report provides you with the Results of our Review of Foster Care Placements made under the Title IV-E program. Our primary objective was to determine whether relative foster homes are approved based on the same licensing standards that are used for non-relative homes. The review covered the period April 1, 1994 through March 31, 1995.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Section 472(c)(1) of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act defines an eligible foster family home as:

. . .a foster family home for children which is licensed by the State in which it is situated or has been approved, by the agency of such State having responsibility for licensing homes of this type, as meeting the standards established for such licensing

In Illinois, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is the State agency responsible for administering foster care placements under Title IV-E. Relative foster family homes are approved by licensed child welfare agencies under contracts with the DCFS. Non-relative foster family homes are licensed by DCFS local offices.

For the period April 1, 1994 through March 31, 1995, payments to relative and non-relative foster family homes amounted to approximately \$57.3 million (Federal share \$28.65 million).

SCOPE OF REVIEW

Our review was performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. To accomplish our objectives, we: (i) reviewed the DCFS' written approval and licensing policies and procedures for compliance with Federal requirements and (ii)

verified that relative foster care family homes are required to meet the same licensure standards as non-relative homes. Our review focused on the internal control procedures designed to ensure that approved relative foster family homes meet the DCFS requirements for licensure of non-relative homes.

Our field work was conducted at the DCFS central office and local offices in Springfield and at various child welfare agencies during the period July through October 1995.

RESULTS OF REVIEW

Our review disclosed that the DCFS has established policies and procedures requiring relative foster family homes to meet the same licensing standards that apply for non-relative foster homes.

Relative Home Approval Standards

The DCFS' licensing and approval standards for relative foster homes and the standards for non-relative homes are essentially the same. The approval/licensing application standards include the following elements: background checks; compliance evaluations; medical histories; health and safety surveys; food and nutrition requirements; social histories; and physical facility requirements.

The licensing/approval records are maintained at DCFS local offices and various child welfare agencies in Illinois. Compliance monitoring is done at least annually. Periodic re-inspections are also conducted upon request from DCFS foster care case workers or to follow up on tips from the State child abuse hotline. The licensure process for non-relative homes is essentially the same as for relative homes.

Our examination disclosed that the licensing and approval files contained sufficient evidence and documentation to satisfy Federal/State requirements. The forms used to document relative home compliance with State licensing standards and requirements were substantially the same as the forms used for non-relative compliance. We apprised DCFS officials of the results of our review.

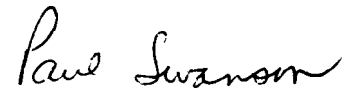
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It should be recognized that the conclusions in this report represent the findings and opinions of the Office of Inspector General. Final determinations on all matters reported will be made by authorized officials of the HHS operating division. Should you have any questions or comments concerning the matters commented on in this report, please direct them to the Administration for Children and Families, Region V.

In accordance with the principles of the Freedom of Information Act (Public Law 90-23), Office of Inspector General audit reports issued to the Department's grantees and contractors are made subject to exemptions in the Act, which the Department chooses to exercise (See 45 CFR Part 5).

To facilitate identification, refer to Common Identification No. A-05-95-00053 in all correspondence relating to this report.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Swanson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Paul Swanson
Regional Inspector General
for Audit Services