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AUDITOR GENERAL

STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

WILLIAM THOMSON
DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL

July 19, 2005

The Honorable Robert Blendu, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

The Honorable Laura Knaperek, Vice Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Dear Senator Blendu and Representative Knaperek :

Our Office has recently completed a 24-month followup of the Department of Economic Security, Division of Children, Youth, and Families, Child Protective Services—Foster Care Placement Stability and Foster Parent Communication regarding the implementation status of the 11 audit recommendations (including sub-parts of the recommendations) presented in the performance audit report released in July 2003 (Auditor General Report No. 03-05). As the attached grid indicates:

- 11 recommendations have been implemented.

Unless otherwise directed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, this report concludes our followup on the Department's efforts to implement the recommendations resulting from the July 2003 performance audit.

Sincerely,

Debbie Davenport
Auditor General

DD:Acm
Attachment

cc: David A. Berns, Director
Department of Economic Security

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Division of Children, Youth, and Families
Child Protective Services—Foster Care Placement Stability and
Foster Parent Communication
24-Month Follow-Up Report To
Auditor General Report No. 03-05

FINDING I: Foster care placement stability can be improved

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
1. The Division should continue to implement its federally mandated Program Improvement Plan, including increasing the number of homes available for older and other difficult-to-place youth, better preparing and supporting foster families, continuing to work to improve the accuracy of foster care data, and continuing other efforts to improve placement stability.	Implemented at 18 months	
2. The Division should revise its policy to clarify that substitutes be allowed to replace case managers in the required monthly face-to-face visits with foster children only under rare circumstances.	Implemented at 18 months	
3. The Division should use its peer review process to ensure that policy changes are having the desired effect of increasing placement stability.	Implemented at 6 months	

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FINDING I: Foster care placement stability can be improved (concl'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
<p>4. As Arizona considers the future of child protective services, the Division should evaluate the benefits of adopting innovative practices other states used to increase placement stability, such as single family-group placements and a decreased use of shelter care.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Implemented at 18 months</p>	

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FINDING II: Foster parents report good communication, but improvements can be made

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
<p>1. The Division should ensure that case managers provide all known medical and behavioral information about the child to the foster parents. To do so, the Division should form a work group, including foster parents, to review the type of information that should be contained in the placement packet and how best to ensure the information is provided in a timely manner and updated regularly.</p>	<p>Implemented at 12 months</p>	
<p>2. The Division should ensure that foster parents are aware of their right to attend court hearings by informing them during case manager visits and ensuring that this information is covered in foster parent training.</p>	<p>Implemented at 12 months</p>	

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FINDING II: Foster parents report good communication, but improvements can be made (cont'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
3. The Division should ensure that foster parents receive adequate information about its complaint/grievance processes including the Family Advocacy Office, the client complaint/grievance process, and the foster child removal appeal process through means such as foster parent training or information provided on the Division's Web site.	Implemented at 24 months	
4. The Division should continue its plans to improve foster parent training. When improving the training, the Division should continue to seek input from foster parents about what their training needs are and how those needs can best be met.	Implemented at 18 months	
5. The Division should enhance an existing survey mechanism or implement a new one to solicit more comprehensive input from foster parents.	Implemented at 24 months	

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FINDING II: Foster parents report good communication, but improvements can be made (concl'd)

Recommendation	Status of Implementing Recommendation	Explanation for Recommendations That Have Not Been Implemented
6. The Division should ensure that all foster parents in Arizona have an opportunity to participate in support groups, mentoring, and respite care systems by organizing foster homes into clusters, or developing another method.	Implemented at 12 months	
7. The Division should update its Web site to include information that would be useful to Arizona foster parents, such as links to pertinent portions of the Division's policy manual, state statutes, administrative rules, and information about foster parent support groups and training classes.	Implemented at 18 months	