

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

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**Name of Facility:** Laura Dester Emergency Children's Shelter  
**Date of Visit:** October 19, 2005  
**Oversight Person:** Chris Fiesel, Oversight Specialist  
**Purpose of Visit:** Unannounced Biannual Visit, 2005  
**Date:** April 20, 2006

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**Introduction**

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on October 19, 2005, at the Laura Dester shelter in Tulsa. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities. The facility consists of three buildings that house residents of specific age groups:

- Girls, eleven to seventeen years of age, resided at Big House.
- Boys, eleven to seventeen years of age, resided at Middle House.
- Children, from birth to ten years of age, resided at Little House.

At the time of the oversight visit, children who were three or younger were residing at Little House, and children who were from four to ten years old were temporarily residing in a section of Big House, due to overcrowding at Little House. The census on the day of the oversight visit was forty-two, with eighteen of the residents residing at Little House.

Persons Interviewed

- Two staff members
- Four residents

Documents Reviewed

- Two personnel files
- Files on four residents
- Inspection report, dated January 3, 2005, by the Oklahoma State Department of Health
- Inspection report, dated June 1, 2005, by the Division of Child Care of the Department of Human Services (DHS)

- Inspection report, dated May 14, 2004, by the Office of the State Fire Marshal
- Quarterly incident reports for June through September 2005 by the DHS Office of Client Advocacy

### Areas Toured

- Three resident dormitories
- Main kitchen in Big House
- Outside play and recreation areas of Big House, Middle House, and Little House
- Common playground centrally located on the grounds

### **Overview**

#### Resident Interviews

Four residents were interviewed. No concerns were noted.

#### Staff Interviews

Two direct care staff members were interviewed. Both stated that morale was high and the mandatory overtime policy that had been reported as problematic during previous oversight had been addressed. The staff interviewed reported the need for additional training in behavior management and special medical conditions; the OJSO relayed the request to the Shelter Director during the exit conference.

#### Review of Personnel Files

Two personnel files were reviewed. The OJSO did not note any concerns. During the previous oversight visit, a problem with availability of criminal record background checks was identified. It appeared the issue was resolved with the hiring of a new support staff person and the review of policies regarding filing and retention of employee records.

#### Review of Resident Files

The files on four residents were reviewed. The only concern noted was that a primary DHS worker had not contacted a resident who was on the worker's caseload. This information was relayed to the Shelter Director during the exit conference.

#### Observational Tour

There were no major health or safety concerns noted; however, the following items needed repair:

- Middle House: On the second floor, in the north bathroom, two shower curtains needed replaced. One had mold, the other was torn.

- Middle House: In the first bedroom on the south hall, the ceiling fixture needed a light cover.
- Big House: In the girls' bathroom, the toilet stall door needed repair.

## **Summary**

The Laura Dester shelter had recently hired a certified preschool teacher to assist in developing and supervising activities with residents of Little House. The activity observed during the oversight visit was a group reading session. Further, due to overcrowding, administrators were working with the DHS to locate and fund a new facility.

## **Findings**

1. Two shower curtains in Middle House needed replaced. Department of Human Services licensing standards, Section 157, Physical facility and equipment, (h), Bathrooms, states, "Bathrooms are maintained in a clean and sanitary condition . . . ."
2. The ceiling fixture's light cover in Middle House needed replaced. Department of Human Services licensing standards, Section 157, Physical facility and equipment, (k), Furnishings and décor, (3), states, "Broken, defective, or recalled furnishing and equipment are repaired or replaced."
3. The toilet stall door in the girls' bathroom in Big House needed repaired, in accordance with DHS licensing standards, Section 157, Physical facility and equipment, (k), Furnishings and décor, (3), cited above.

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