

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

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**Name and Location of Facility:** Oaks Indian Mission  
Oaks, Oklahoma

**Dates of Visit:** September 18 and October 8, 2008

**Oversight Reviewer:** Cliff A. Aldridge, Oversight Specialist IV

**Subject:** Oversight Visit and Complaint Investigation, 2008

**Date:** March 23, 2009

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**Introduction**

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) initiated an unannounced visit to the Oaks Indian Mission on September 18, 2008. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility policy and procedures and to investigate the allegations of a complaint regarding the facility. The OJSO returned to the facility for a scheduled visit on October 8, 2008, to complete the visit and to provide technical assistance to the new administration. The Oaks Indian Mission is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and serves children of Native American ancestry. The facility was licensed for fifty-eight residents by the division of Oklahoma Child Care Services (OCCS) of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS). On the day of the OJSO visit, the census was twenty-eight.

It should be noted that the executive director's position had been vacant since the death of the former director in February 2006, until the appointment of the current director in July 2008. The new child care director had only been on duty for approximately two weeks at the time of the unannounced OJSO visit.

**Interviews Conducted**

- Entry conference with the Child Care Director on September 18, 2008
- Seven residents
- Entry conference and private interview with the Executive Director on October 8, 2008
- Three individual house parents
- Informal interviews with additional staff members
- Exit conference with the Executive Director and the Child Care Director on October 8, 2008

## **Documents Reviewed**

- Three resident case records
- Four house parent personnel files and training records
- OKDHS OCCS inspection report dated July 30, 2008
- Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal report dated January 25, 2007
- Oklahoma State Department of Health Food Inspection report dated May 13, 2008
- OKDHS OCCS Residential Child Care Facility License
- Facility resident information sheets (by cottage)
- Facility staff contact information
- Facility website: <http://www.oaksindianmission.org/>

## **Areas Toured**

- Two residential cottages
- Dining hall

## **Findings**

### Resident Interviews

Residents were interviewed on both days of the oversight visit. Overall, the residents gave favorable answers to interview questions pertaining to their safety and quality of life in the facility's program; however, some uncertainty was evident in their responses. It appeared that some of the residents were grieving over the departure of some of the former staff members; although, some of their unease appeared to predate the arrival of the new administration. No consistent themes of concern were identified from the resident interviews.

### Staff Interviews

Three individual house parents were interviewed relative to their familiarity with program policies and the care and supervision they provided to the children assigned to their cottages. The house parents interviewed each described appropriate care for the residents. It appeared that the house parents were also adjusting to the new administration. Some of the interview responses indicated that conditions in the facility had improved, but there was some uncertainty about other things. No specific issues of concern were reported to or identified by the OJSO from the house parent interviews.

Informal conversations with other staff members indicated dissatisfaction with the new administration. The dissatisfaction generally appeared to be based on personnel issues rather than on the quality of care provided to the children. Some of the apprehensions reported by the house parents or other staff were too vague to be investigated or involved events that had occurred prior to the hiring of the new executive director.

The executive director was interviewed relative to the current status of the program. The director's responses described efforts to revitalize the Oaks Indian Mission through policy and program reviews and the hiring of an experienced residential care professional as the director of child care.

### Observational Tour

A microwave oven on Cherokee Cottage was observed to be soiled with food spills and some areas of the carpet were dirty. The refrigerator on Vammen Cottage needed to be cleaned. A new walk-in freezer had been installed at the dining hall. No significant maintenance issues were observed.

### Personnel File Review

Four house parent personnel files and training records were reviewed. None of the four files were complete for all of the items reviewed. The four files did not document current job performance evaluations, as required. Two files did not document the 2008 annual requirement of twenty-four hours of training. One file did not document three employment references for the house father; although, the references were documented for the house mother.

### Resident File Review

Three resident files were reviewed. The service plan for a resident who had been in the program for approximately six weeks had not been developed within thirty days of admittance, as required. In another file reviewed, the service plan had not been completed for almost sixty days instead of the thirty-day time frame required. One file documented the development of the individual service plan and the subsequent reviews; however, the signatures were not dated to establish compliance with mandatory time frames. In one file reviewed, the admission assessment of the resident had identified issues that were not addressed in the resident's service plan. The evaluation of progress was minimal in the two service plans that had been reviewed by the staff with the residents. The resident files documented efforts to involve the parents or guardians in participation of service plan development and subsequent reviews.

### Inspection Reports Review

The OCCS inspection report noted that some materials were missing from one resident file. The resident was no longer at the facility. The fire marshal's report did not cite any violations for the five buildings inspected. The health department's inspection report noted that enamelware pots were to be removed from the kitchen; no other concerns were identified from the health department inspection.

## Complaint Investigation

The OJSO received a complaint on August 26, 2008, alleging instances of improper care of the residents. The complaint prompted the initial unannounced oversight visit and the subsequent scheduled visit to the facility. The OJSO closed the complaint without findings of violations by the facility with the issuance of this report. The caller was advised of mandatory abuse reporting requirements and was provided with the telephone number of the OKDHS Office of Client Advocacy to report additional allegations of abuse or neglect. Other allegations in the complaint lacked sufficient details on which to conduct an investigation. Staff and resident interviews conducted during the oversight visit did not identify safety issues or other issues of concern regarding the care of the residents. The allegations in the complaint were discussed with the complainant who was in agreement with the closing of the complaint.

## **Areas of Concern**

1. The signatures on one service plan and subsequent service plan reviews were not dated.
2. The evaluation of progress in the service plan goals was minimal in the two files reviewed with completed service plans and subsequent service plan reviews. Technically, the standard might have been met, but minimal documentation of progress was likely of little value to the residents in understanding his/her growth toward the service plan goals.

## **Violations**

1. Required training hours were not documented for the four house parents whose training files were reviewed. OKDHS Licensing Requirements for Residential Child Care Facilities, OAC 340:110-3-153.1, Personnel, (m), Staff training, (3), Training for child care staff, (A), states, "Full-time child care staff obtain a minimum of 24 clock hours per calendar year of staff development courses. Hours are prorated at two hours per month for staff who have not been employed for a full year."
2. One personnel file reviewed did not document pre-employment references for one of the house parents. OKDHS Licensing Requirements for Residential Child Care Facilities, OAC 340:110-3-153.1, Personnel, (g), Employment requirements, (1), References, in part, states, "The facility obtains a minimum of three references for all staff prior to employment."
3. The four personnel files reviewed did not document current performance evaluations for the staff members. OKDHS Licensing Requirements for Residential Child Care Facilities, OAC 340:110-3-153.1, Personnel, (g), Employment requirements, (3), Performance evaluation, states, "Each employee has a written job performance evaluation at least annually, which is maintained in the employee's personnel record."
4. The initial individual service plan had not been developed within the thirty-day time frame in two resident files reviewed. OKDHS Licensing Requirements for Residential Child Care Facilities, OAC 340:110-3-154, Social services, (b), Service planning, (1), Comprehensive service plan, states, "A written service plan is developed and documented for each resident within 30 days of admission."

## **Summary**

The new administration was responsive to the suggestions of the OJSO for refinements in documentation and program practices. Subsequent telephone conversation with the administration indicated that the citations listed above were being addressed following the oversight visit. The OJSO appreciated the helpfulness of the administration and the staff in arranging the interviews, conducting the observational tour, and providing the necessary materials for the reviews.

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