

# Audit Highlights



Highlights of performance audit report on the Division of Child and Family Services issued on May 4, 2022.

Legislative Auditor report # LA22-14.

## Background

The Division of Child and Family Services' (Division) mission is to provide support and services to assist Nevada's children and families in reaching their full human potential. The Division provides or oversees a continuum of services to support children, parents, and caregivers. The continuum of services includes comprehensive case management, emergency shelter care, foster and relative care, group home care, respite care, residential treatment care, and independent living services.

When the Division identifies a child that is in need of protection due to abandonment or an unsafe home environment, the Division can remove the child from the home and place the child in licensed foster or unlicensed homes.

The Division is responsible for overseeing the home environment and care provided to children in state custody. The Division also provides supplemental payments to support additional needs regarding the care of children in licensed foster homes. Child welfare services are funded primarily by state and federal funds.

## Purpose of Audit

The purpose of the audit was to determine if Division processes ensure foster care and other homes for children in state custody are adequate to ensure the safety and welfare of children. We also evaluated controls over certain payments supporting children and youth to ensure payments were accurate and appropriate. This audit included a review of the Division's activities for the 18-month period beginning July 1, 2020, through December 31, 2021. We also reviewed child and placement monitoring activities back to calendar year 2017.

## Audit Recommendations

This audit report contains 10 recommendations to improve Division oversight of in-home providers who care for children in state custody. The Division accepted the 10 recommendations.

## Recommendation Status

The Division's 60-day plan for corrective action is due on August 1, 2022. In addition, the 6-month report on the status of audit recommendations is due on February 1, 2023.

# Assessment and Safety of Child Placements

## Division of Child and Family Services

### Summary

While overall we found the Division generally complied with requirements associated with child placements, some improvements can be made. Health, safety, and regulatory standards were not always followed for some providers that care for children in state custody. Additionally, there was no evidence that some required background checks and provider assessments were completed, and some inspections and subsequent corrective action of foster homes were not adequately documented. We also found unlicensed homes are not subjected to the same standards of licensed foster homes, but additional measures can help ensure the welfare of children placed in these homes. Improved oversight of child placement providers will assist the Division in ensuring the safety and welfare of children in state custody.

Foster care payments were accurately and appropriately administered by the Division. We reviewed a representative sample of foster care and specialized payments and found payments were made to verified youth placements at licensed facilities. Additionally, specialized payments were supported by corresponding documentation in the Division's records. Accurate and justified foster care payments support the financial health of the Division, the State, and foster care providers.

### Key Findings

Child placement providers did not always comply with health, safety, and regulatory standards. Of 30 homes inspected, 10 or 33% of homes had health and/or safety deficiencies, and 79% of foster placements had at least 1 foster care regulatory violation. (page 7)

Four foster providers assessed did not comply with medication management requirements established in regulation. Foster care providers are required to maintain records detailing provided medication and the date and time administered. Homes evaluated included children on antipsychotic and anti-seizure medications. (page 10)

After conducting reviews of Division files for 11 unlicensed placements selected for inspection, we found the Division did not have evidence required background checks and home assessments were completed for some providers. There was no evidence of home inspection documentation for 27% and no evidence of background checks for 45% of unlicensed placement providers reviewed. In addition, some emergency placements lacked required Division safety assessments, including Emergency Placement Checklists (29%) and Confirming Safe Environment assessments (57%). (page 11)

We also found that the Division did not always complete home inspection documentation and ensure that all residents of foster homes received required health assessments. Fifty-eight percent (14 of 24) of foster home inspection documentation was incomplete, including 2 missing inspection checklists, 7 checklists with inspection criteria not completed, and 10 inspection checklists with missing or incomplete corrective action plans. Of the 24 foster homes, 5 homes (21%) did not have a tuberculosis test completed timely for all the adults in the home, and 1 foster home resident did not have any tuberculosis test on file. (page 12)

The Division has not established a written agreement with unlicensed providers who oversee children in state custody, and home inspection procedures for unlicensed providers are brief or poorly defined. Additionally, the Division does not provide documentation regarding expected home health and safety standards to unlicensed providers. The Division, children in state custody, and providers are at increased exposure to preventable risk due to inadequate oversight of unlicensed placements. (page 13)

Foster care payments were accurately and appropriately administered by the Division. We randomly selected 50 fiscal year 2021 foster care payments of 4,068 total claims and found payments were accurately calculated, payment records in Unified Nevada Information Technology for Youth (UNITY) agreed to the state accounting system, and special payments were supported by medical documentation. (page 18)