

June 10, 2001

The Honorable Rodney S. Melville
Presiding Judge, Santa Barbara Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93456

William L. Cathey, Grand Jury Foreperson
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Department of Social Services Response to Findings and Recommendations contained
in the 2000-01 Grand Jury Report entitled **Juvenile Probation**

Dear Judge Melville and Grand Jury Foreperson Cathey:

The Department of Social Services works collaboratively with the Probation Department on many programs including the Multi-Agency Integrated System of Care (MISC), CPA 2000, New Vistas as well as others. We do not, however, work with juvenile offenders but with abused and neglected wards of the court. We submit the following in response to the Grand Jury report:

Finding 3: More foster homes and group homes are needed now in Santa Barbara County, and more undoubtedly will be needed in coming years.

DSS Response: Agree.

Finding 4: Many extra-parental placements of juveniles are out-of-County, making family support and reunification harder and denying access to community-based resources.

DSS Response: In accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code, the DSS disagrees. However, this response is solely based on the fact that DSS does not know whether or not this finding is true. The Probation department has the knowledge necessary to respond to this finding.

Finding 5: Many of the issues that lead to delinquent behavior among female offenders – for example, high rates of physical and sexual victimization – are not effectively addressed in coeducational or English-only settings.

DSS Response: In accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code, the DSS disagrees. However, this response is solely based on the fact that DSS does not know whether this is true. The DSS does not work with female juvenile offenders; the Probation Department does and we would defer to their expertise.

Finding 6: More placement and treatment programs – particularly female specific programs – are needed for female juveniles in view of the increased numbers of female juvenile offenders.

DSS Response: In accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code, The DSS disagrees. However, this response is solely based on the fact that DSS does not know if the finding is true. The Probation Department has the knowledge and expertise to respond to this finding.

Recommendation 3a: The Probation Department should continue to share resources with The Social Services Department to recruit additional foster families and host families.

DSS Response: Implemented. DSS has a dedicated staff person assigned to recruiting foster homes. Additionally, DSS, ADMHS and Probation have contracts with community based organizations to develop and support therapeutic foster homes for children with significant problems.

Recommendation 3b: The Probation Department should continue collaborations with the professionals in the County Departments of Public Health, Social Services and ADMHS, as well as County and municipal schools and community based non-profit organizations to develop and enhance female-specific programs.

DSS Response: Implemented. The DSS is committed to working with our county and community partners in support of all the children and families we serve including development of resources for females. The Probation Department, however, has the responsibility for developing treatment and placement resources for female juvenile offenders.

Recommendation 4: In view of the increased numbers of female juvenile offenders the Probation Department should develop more female specific placement and treatment programs.

DSS Response: Not implemented by the DSS. The development of treatment and placement resources for female juvenile offenders is the responsibility of the Probation Department.

The Departments of Social Services, Public Health and ADMHS have a long history of working together and we expect that to continue.

If you have any questions or comments about our response please don't hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

Charlene A. Chase, Social Services Director

c: Sue Gionfriddo, Chief Probation Officer
Lori Norton, Administrative Analyst
Shawn Terris, Administrative Analyst