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Ventura County Children and Family Services

A stated goal of Ventura County Children & Family Services is to “partner with children and families to empower them to be active participants in their case planning”. The 2016-2017 Ventura County Grand Jury opened an investigation to determine if CFS has been successful in fostering the kind of communication that develops effective partnerships with the families they serve.

Child welfare social work can be a very stressful and emotionally demanding job. The Grand Jury found that the Ventura County CFS staff are committed to providing the best possible case management services to families.

It was also found that some of the social workers have excessive caseloads affecting their ability to do a thorough and comprehensive job. With no definitive standards, the number of cases assigned to each social worker can be too heavy to be able to devote the time each child requires and to effectively establish a partnership with each family.

The Grand Jury made recommendations that would improve the provision of case management services. These include setting reasonable limits on caseloads, developing a family-friendly grievance procedure, and allowing families the opportunity to express feedback once their case is closed. In addition the Grand Jury recommended CFS explore options with the Ventura County Board of Supervisors for the funding of additional substance abuse treatment programs.

The complete report may be accessed at www.ventura.org/grand-jury; click on the Annual Reports tab and select “Fiscal Year 2016-2017.”