



County of Orange  
California

**Thomas G. Mauk**  
County Executive Officer

June 27, 2006

Bette Flick, Foreperson  
FY 05/06 Grand Jury  
Superior Court of California  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Subject: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report: "Improving  
Child Abuse Response"

Dear Ms. Flick:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 993, enclosed please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. If you have any questions, please contact Theresa Stanberry at (714) 834-3727 in the County Executive Office who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas G. Mauk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "M".

Thomas G. Mauk  
County Executive Officer

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**Orange County Grand Jury Report 2005 – 2006**  
**“Improving Child Abuse Response”**  
**Response to Findings and Recommendations**

**Responses to Findings 6.1 - 6.3**

**6.1 Field Response Protocol developed:** To effectively explore placement alternatives, the SSA developed an enhanced protocol to improve cooperation between social workers and law enforcement officers responding to child abuse calls. As a result of the protocol trial in Santa Ana and Tustin, fewer children were taken away from their homes and taken to a public facility.

*Response: Agrees with finding*

**6.2 Expansion of the enhanced protocol is planned:** Once social worker capacity is increased, SSA will propose to expand the use of protocol to OCSO as well as the following cities: Brea, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, Laguna Beach, La Habra, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Orange, Placentia, Seal Beach, and Westminster.

*Response: Agrees with finding*

**6.3 Law enforcement agency procedures and training on child abuse response:** OCSO and other law enforcement agencies that have not been approached by SSA on the enhanced protocol, have not included protocol in their procedures nor trained its officers of its use.

*Response: Agrees with finding*

**6.4 SSA budget request for additional social worker units to support the enhanced protocol:** The SSA 2006-2007 budget request includes additional funds to open and staff three new social worker units to be responsive to the anticipated increase in demand from law enforcement agencies.

*Response: Agrees with findings*

**Response to Recommendation 7.1 and 7.3**

**7.1 Law enforcement agency acceptance of SSA Field Response Protocol:** All Orange County law enforcement agencies should consider agreeing to the SSA enhanced protocol as social worker capacity is increased to support law enforcement needs. (See Findings 6.1 and 6.2)

*Response: Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.*

The effectiveness of the Field Response Protocol is dependent on staffing resources. It requires an Emergency Response (ER) social worker to respond to a law enforcement officer's request within 30 minutes. At the present time SSA has agreements with Tustin, Anaheim, and Santa Ana police departments. Expanding the program to other jurisdictions will necessitate additional State and Federal funding. As funding becomes available SSA will offer the program to other law enforcement agencies.

**7.3 Increase SSA budget:** The Board of Supervisors should consider the SSA request for funds to support three new social worker units. (See Finding 6.4)

***Response: The recommendation has been implemented.***

The 2006-2007 budget request from SSA included an augmentation for 21 new positions. If the Board approves of the budget, SSA will designate 3 of the 21 positions for new social worker units.