

FINAL REPORT

8th Mini Children and Family Services Review

Central Service Area

(October 17th-19th, 2011)

Executive Summary Children and Family Services Review (Central Service Area)

This document presents the findings from the 8th mini Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the Central Service Area. The Nebraska CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) team has identified the mini CFSR review as an important activity for assessing the performance of each service area and the state as a whole with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and their families. Mini CFSR reviews are scheduled to take place in each service area once every quarter in year 2010 and 2011.

The Central Service Area had its eighth mini CFSR review from October 17th through October 19th, 2011. The period under review for the onsite case review was October 1st, 2010 through October 1st, 2011. The findings were derived from file reviews of 14 cases (8 foster care and 6 in home services) which were randomly selected from all open child welfare cases at some time during the period under review. The reviews also included interviews with parents, children, foster parents, Child and Family Service Specialists, and other service providers to assess items 17-20 within the review tool.

In the Central Service Area, one of the 14 cases was brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Human Services for a status offense, four were OJS cases, and nine were abuse/neglect cases. The cases were from the following area offices: Grand Island, Hastings, Broken Bow and Kearney.

The review was completed by 5 teams of two reviewers made up of mainly DHHS staff. We had one reviewer who formerly worked for CASA and one who works for Families Care, two of our external stakeholder partners. 100% of the cases were reviewed by the following second level reviewer: Kayl Dahlke (DHHS).

Background Information

The mini CFSR is modeled after the Federal CFSR reviews and assesses the service area's performance on 23 items relevant to seven outcomes.

With regards to outcomes, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items incorporated in the seven outcomes depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the onsite case review. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as Strength. Performance ratings for each of the seven outcomes are based on item ratings for each case. A service area may be rated as having "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," or "not achieved" the outcome. The determination of whether a service area is in substantial conformity with a particular outcome is based on the percentage of cases that were determined to have substantially achieved that outcome. In order for a service area to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. The standard for substantial conformity is based on the standard set for the Federal CFSR.

The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be acceptable. The focus of the CFSR process is on continuous quality improvement; standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to the goal of achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being.

A service area that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must work with their local CQI team to develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

The 8th Mini CFSR identified several areas of high performance in the Central Service Area with regard to achieving desired outcomes for children. Although the service area did not achieve substantial conformity in any of the seven CFSR outcomes, Well-Being 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs) was substantially achieved in 91.67 percent of the cases. Permanency 2 (the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children) was substantially achieved in 87.50 percent of the cases.

Individual indicators that achieved an overall rating of Strength included: repeat maltreatment (item 2), services to family (item 3), foster care re-entries (item 5), stability of foster care placements (item 6), reunification and guardianship (item 8), other planned permanent living arrangement (item 10), proximity of foster care placement (item 11), placement with siblings (item 12), relative placement (item 15). These were all rated as strengths in 100.00 percent of the applicable cases. Item 21 (educational needs of the child) was rated a strength in 91.67 percent of the cases.

The mini CFSR review also identified key areas of concern with regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. Concerns were identified with regards to Well-Being 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs) which was only substantially achieved in 50.00 percent of the cases. Within Well-Being 1, item 17 (needs and services), item 18 (child and family involvement in case planning), and item 20 (caseworker visits with parents) were all rated as strengths in only 50.00 percent of the cases. Permanency 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was only substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of the cases. Within Permanency 1, items 9 (adoption) was rated a Strength in only 66.67 percent of the cases and item 7 (permanency goal for child) was rated a Strength in 75.00 percent of the cases.

KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

I. SAFETY

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Status of Safety Outcome S1

| | Total Number | Total Percentage |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Substantially Achieved: | 5 | 83.33% |
| Partially Achieved: | 1 | 16.67% |
| Not Achieved or Addressed: | 0 | 0.00% |
| Not Applicable: | 8 | 57.14% |

Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with child welfare agency policy. A new intake tool was implemented in 2003 which is based upon a priority response model with Priority 1 calling for a response by the worker within 24 hours of the time that the report is received by DHHS. Priority 2 designated reports are to have face to face contact with the alleged victim by Protection and Safety within 0 to 5 days from the time the intake is received and Priority 3 has a response time of 0-10 days. Data is generated monthly to ensure compliance with the response times.

Review Findings:

- *4 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *3 (75.00%) cases were rated as strengths. One was an in-home case and two were out-of-home cases.*
- *1 (25.00%) case was rated as needing improvement. It was an in-home case.*

Strengths: In the three cases rated as strengths, reviewers determined that face-to-face contact with the child occurred during established timelines. These were all Priority 2 intakes.

Areas needing improvement: In the case rated as needing improvement, reviewers were unable to locate an assessment in the file to determine if timeliness was achieved.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether there had been at least one substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed maltreatment report during the period under review, and if so, whether another substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed report occurred within a 6 month period before or after the report identified. Cases were considered not applicable for assessment if the child or family had never had a maltreatment report.

Review Findings:

- 3 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.
- 3 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths. Two were in-home cases and one was an out-of-home case.
- 0 cases were rated as needing improvement.

Strengths: In the cases rated as strengths, there were no additional reports of maltreatment during the period under review or within a 6 month period besides the report that opened the case.

Areas needing improvement: There were no cases rated as needing improvement.

S1. Outcome reviewer comments: On the cases that were substantially achieved, reviewers commented that it appeared investigation timelines were being met and there did not appear to be any concerns with maltreatment occurring.

On the case that was partially achieved, reviewers noted a lack of documentation in the file and were unable to determine if policy was followed in regards to the intake.

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Status of Safety Outcome S2

| | Total Number | Total Percentage |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Substantially Achieved: | 10 | 71.43% |
| Partially Achieved: | 4 | 28.57% |
| Not Achieved or Addressed: | 0 | 0.00% |
| Not Applicable: | 0 | 0.00% |

Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal

For this item, reviewers were to assess whether in responding to a substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent removal of children from their homes while at the same time ensuring their safety.

Review Findings:

- 8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.
- 8 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths. 3 were in-home cases and 5 were out-of-home cases.
- 0 cases were rated as needing improvement.

Strengths: In the eight cases rated as strengths, reviewers did see agency efforts in arranging for appropriate services. Some of the services included: Drug/alcohol counseling and treatment, family support, Family Drug Court, parenting classes, U/A's, and AA/NA classes. There were three cases in which immediate removal was necessary to ensure child safety. In the six cases that were not applicable, reviewers determined that there were no safety concerns during the period under review or the child entered foster care before the period under review and remained in foster care the entire period under review and there were no safety concerns with other children in the home.

Areas needing improvement: There were no cases rated as needing improvement.

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

The assessment of Item 4 required reviewers to determine whether DHHS had made, or was making, diligent efforts to reduce the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if the agency terminated the child's parent's rights as a means of decreasing risk of harm for the child (for example, a termination of parental rights would prevent a child from being returned to a home in which the child would be at risk) and has taken action to minimize other risks to the child (for example, preventing contact with individuals who pose a risk to the child's safety). If a case is/was open for services for a reason other than a court substantiated, inconclusive, petition to be filed or unfounded report of abuse or neglect, or apparent risk of harm to the child(ren) (for example, a juvenile justice case), reviewers were to document this information and rate the item as not applicable. Note, however, that for a child(ren) noted as a "child in need of supervision" or "delinquent", reviewers were to explore and determine whether there was a risk of harm to the child, in addition to the other reasons the case may have been opened, prior to rating it as not applicable. Cases were not applicable for assessment of this item if there was no current or prior risk of harm to the children in the family.

Review Findings:

- *All 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *10 (71.43%) cases were rated as strengths. 4 were in-home cases and 6 were out-of-home cases.*
- *4 (28.57%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 2 were in-home cases and 2 were out-of-home cases.*

Strengths: In the ten cases rated as strengths, reviewers determined that the agency was conducting ongoing assessments for the risk of harm to child or it was determined that there was no risk of harm, such as the juvenile justice cases. Reviewers noted assessments being done informally in many of the cases. This included family team meetings and visits with the youth/family. Formal assessments being completed were also noted. Examples included: YLS's, OJS evaluations, initial assessments, psych evaluations, and ongoing assessments for visitation and reunification.

Areas needing improvement: In the four cases rated as needing improvement, reviewers noted a lack of documentation of ongoing assessments being completed. Assessments not being updated for reunification and changes in visitation were examples of this.

S2. Outcome Review Comments: On the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved, reviewers commented that they saw services such as family support being implemented to keep children in the home. They also noted good documentation of safety being informally assessed during family team meetings and face-to-face contacts and formally through ongoing safety assessments, safety plans, and visitation plans.

On the cases that were partially achieved, reviewers saw a lack of documentation of ongoing safety assessments and safety plans being completed when case circumstance showed that they should have been. A lack of visits and team meetings were also noted in these cases.

II. PERMANENCY

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Status of Permanency Outcome P1

| | Total Number | Total Percentage |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Substantially Achieved: | 5 | 62.50% |
| Partially Achieved: | 3 | 37.50% |
| Not Achieved or Addressed: | 0 | 0.00% |
| Not Applicable: | 6 | 42.86% |

Item 5. Foster care re-entries

Reviewers rated this assessment a Strength if during the period under review a child did not have an entry into care within a 12-month period from being discharged from another entry into foster care. Reviewers also rated this item as a Strength if a re-entry was an isolated incident during which the agency did what was reasonable to manage the risk following reunification but the child re-entered care for another reason (for example, the death of a parent). Reviewers rated this item as an Area Needing Improvement if re-entries occurring within a 12-month period were due to the same general reasons or same perpetrators. Reviewers rated this item as Not Applicable if : (1) the child entered foster care before, and remained in foster care during, the period under review; or (2) the child entered foster care before, and exited foster care during, the period under review and there was not another entry into foster care during the period under review.

Review Findings:

- 2 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.***
- 2 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths.***
- 0 cases were rated as area needing improvement.***

Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths, the child entered foster care during the period under review, but this was not a re-entry into foster care within the previous twelve months.

Areas needing improvement: There were no cases that were rated as needing improvement.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement changes during the period under review, and if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs.

Review Findings:

- *8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *8 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *0 cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Strengths: *In four of the cases rated as strengths, the child remained in the same stable foster placement during the entire period under review and this placement was meeting their needs. In the other four cases rated as strengths, the child had more than one placement setting but the moves were based on the child's needs or in helping meet their permanency goals.*

Areas needing improvement: *No cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether DHHS had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner, including filing for termination of parental rights when relevant. Reviewers examined the appropriateness of a goal that ultimately rules out adoption, guardianship, or return to family. Reviewers assessed whether the child's best interests were thoroughly considered by DHHS in setting a goal of other planned living arrangement, and that such a decision is /was continually reviewed for ongoing appropriateness. Cases were assigned a rating of Strength for this item when reviewers determined that DHHS had established an appropriate permanency goal in a timely manner. Cases were assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement when goals of reunification were not changed in a timely manner when it was apparent that reunification was unlikely to happen, termination of parental rights was not filed when the child had been foster care for 15 of the past 22 months and no compelling reasons were noted in the file, or the goal established for the child was not appropriate. Cases were identified as Not Applicable if the child was not in foster care.

Review Findings:

- *8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *6 (75.00%) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *2 (25.00%) cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Strengths: *In the six cases rated as strengths, the child's permanency goals were established in a timely manner and reviewers determined that they were appropriate.*

Areas needing improvement: *In the two cases rated as needing improvement, reviewers determined that the permanency goals of the child were not established within 60 days of entering foster care. Both took around 90 days to be established.*

Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship or Permanent Placement with Relatives

In assessing these cases reviewers determined whether DHHS had achieved children's goals of reunification, guardianship or placement with relatives in a timely manner. If the goals had not been achieved in a timely manner reviewers determined whether DHHS had made diligent efforts to achieve the goals.

Review Findings:

- *8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *8 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *0 cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Strengths: In the eight cases rated as strengths, reviewers determined that the agency was making or made efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Efforts included family support, therapy, supervised visitation, parenting classes, chemical dependency assessment, drug/alcohol testing, locating a guardianship home, transportation assistance, and agency communication with Family Drug Court.

Areas needing improvement: No cases were rated as needing improvement.

Item 9. Adoption

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether appropriate and timely efforts (within 24 months of the most recent entry into foster care) had been or were being made to achieve finalized adoption.

Review Findings:

- *3 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *2 (66.67%) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *1 (33.33%) case was rated an area needing improvement.*

Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths, reviewers found that the agency made or was making active efforts in achieving the permanency goal of adoption in a timely manner. Adoption was the concurrent plan in both cases and it appeared that the agency had inquired about the relative home being willing to adopt.

Areas needing improvement: In the case rated as needing improvement, reviewers were unable to find that the agency had made any efforts in working towards the permanency goal of adoption. This was also a case in which adoption was the concurrent goal.

Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

Reviewers determined whether the agency had made or was making diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to other planned permanent living arrangements (Independent Living, Self-Sufficiency or Family Preservation).

Review Findings:

- *2 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *2 (100.00) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *0 cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Strengths: *In the two cases rated as strengths, reviewers found that the agency was making active efforts in achieving the permanency goal of independent living. Services included: transportation, budgeting skills, connections with informal supports, cooking, and post high-school education. One youth was currently living independently.*

Areas needing improvement: *No cases were rated as needing improvement.*

P1. Outcome reviewer comments: *Reviewer comments on the cases that were substantially achieved were that the children’s placements were stable with no unplanned moves unless it was due to the child’s behavior. The agency established permanency goals in a timely manner and were actively working with the family towards them. Family team meetings were occurring on a regular basis in these cases.*

In the cases rated as being partially achieved, reviewers noted that permanency goals and actual permanency were not being established in a timely manner.

Status of Permanency Outcome P2

| | Total Number | Total Percentage |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Substantially Achieved: | 7 | 87.50% |
| Partially Achieved: | 1 | 12.50% |
| Not Achieved or Addressed: | 0 | 0.00% |
| Not Applicable: | 6 | 42.86% |

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

Reviewers were to determine whether the child’s foster care setting was in close proximity to the child’s parents or close relatives. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which termination of parental rights had been completed prior to the period under review, or in which contact with parents was not considered to be in the child’s best interest.

Review Findings:

- *6 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *6 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *0 cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Strengths: *In the six cases rated as strengths, reviewers determined that the child’s placement was in close enough proximity to their parent’s home to encourage face-to-face contact between child and parent. This included two cases in which the child was placed in the same community.*

Areas needing improvement: *No cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Item 12. Placement with siblings

Reviewers were to determine whether siblings were or had been placed together and if not, was separation necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children.

Review Findings:

- *4 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *4 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *0 cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Strengths: In the four cases rated as strengths, reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings when appropriate. There was one case where the siblings were not able to be placed together due to sexual abuse by one of the siblings.

Areas needing improvement: No cases were rated as needing improvement.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

In assessing this item reviewers determined whether DHHS had or was making diligent efforts to facilitate visitations between children in foster care and their parents and siblings. Reviewers also determined whether these visits typically occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the children and families. Non applicable cases were those where the child had no siblings in foster care, if the parents could not be located, and/or if visitation with the parents was considered not in the best interests of the child. Reviewers rated this item for the period under review based on the individual needs of the child and family, rather than on the DHHS policy regarding visitation. The DHHS visitation guidebook recommends a minimum of one visit every two weeks between child and parent unless it would not be in the child's best interest because the parent is the perpetrator of severe physical abuse or sexual abuse. DHHS Policy requires that siblings placed separately must have a minimum of one visit per month. Other forms of communication including phone calls and letters are strongly encouraged.

Review Findings:

- *6 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *5 (83.33%) cases were rated as strengths.*
- *1 (16.67%) case was rated as needing improvement.*

Strengths: In the five cases that were rated as strengths, reviewers determined that the child was having sufficient frequency of visits to promote their relationship with parents and/or siblings. Reviewers noted at least weekly visits in three of the cases. Reviewers noted a case in which the child was having phone calls with their father who was incarcerated.

Areas needing improvement: In the case rated as needing improvement, reviewers noted a lack of efforts in involving the father in any type of visitation or communication.

Item 14. Preserving connections

Reviewers determined whether DHHS had or was making diligent efforts to preserve the child's primary connection and characteristics while in foster care. Reviewers had to make a professional judgment about the child's primary connections and then explore whether those connections have been preserved through case planning and service delivery.

Review Findings:

- 8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.
- 5 (62.50%) cases were rated as strengths.
- 3(37.50%) cases were rated as needing improvement.

Strengths: *In the five cases rated as strengths, reviewers found that the agency was making efforts to preserve the child's important connections. Visits with extended family and siblings who were not in foster care were noted in two of these cases. A child being placed in the same community was noted in two of the cases. The agency also tried to set up visitation between a youth and his former foster parents in one of the cases. His parents' rights had been terminated quite some time ago. Reviewers found that the agency was inquiring about possible tribal affiliations in these cases also.*

Areas needing improvement: *In the three cases rated as needing improvement, reviewers noted a lack of documentation on efforts made by the agency to preserve the child's important connections. A case in which the tribe was not notified in a timely manner was noted in one of the cases.*

Item 15. Relative placement

Reviewers had to focus on the title IV-E provision that requires States to consider giving preference to placing the child with relatives, and determine whether the State considered such a placement and how (for example, seeking out and evaluating the child's relatives). Relatives include non-custodial parents, such as fathers not in the home, if applicable to the case. Reviewers had to determine the extent to which the agency identified relatives who had some reasonable degree of relationship with the child and with whom the child might reside. There did not need to be in the case record a formal evaluation of relatives with whom the child might reside, but for reviewers to have answered "yes" evidence must exist, through either the case documentation or the case interviews, that relatives were evaluated and considered. Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if (1) the agency assessed the child's needs and determined that he/she required special services *and* (2) the agency assessed potential relative placements and determined that the relative placements did not have the capacity to meet the child's needs. Reviewers rated this item as a Strength unless no efforts were made to locate or identify relatives for placement, or placement with a family known to the child. Reviewers rated this item as not applicable if (1) the agency determined upon the child's initial entry into care that his/her needs required residential treatment services and a relative placement would be inappropriate, or (2) if relatives were unable to be identified despite the agency's diligent efforts to do so, or in situations such as abandonment in which the identity of the parents and relatives remains unknown despite efforts to identify them. Reviewers were to check not applicable if the child was placed with relatives.

Review Findings:

- 7 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.
- 7 (100.00%) cases were rated as strengths.
- 0 cases were rated as needing improvement.

Strengths: *In three of the cases rated as strengths, reviewers determined that the child was currently or formerly placed with a relative. In three of the cases relatives were determined to be inappropriate for possible placement. A child being placed with someone known to the family was also noted in one of the cases.*

Areas needing improvement: *No cases were rated as needing improvement.*

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

In assessing this item, reviewers determined if there was evidence of a strong, emotionally supportive relationship between the child in foster care and the child’s parents during the period under review. Reviewers assigned a rating of Strength for this item when there was evidence of regular visitation between parent and child. Reviewers assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement when they determined the agency had not made diligent efforts to support the child’s relationship with the father or mother. A case was considered not applicable if a relationship with the child’s parents was contrary to the child’s safety or best interest during the period under review.

Review Findings:

- 6 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.
- 5 (83.33%) cases were rated as strengths.
- 1 (16.67%) case was rated as needing improvement.

Strengths: *In the five cases rated as strengths, the agency did make efforts to promote the relationship between the child in foster care and both the mother and the father. This included: encouraging family holidays together, the mother going to the child’s medical appointments, family therapy, and phone calls with an incarcerated father.*

Areas needing improvement: *In the case needing improvement, there was a lack of effort by the agency in facilitating and encouraging a positive relationship between the child in foster care and the father.*

P2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: *In the cases where the outcome was substantially achieved, reviewers noted frequent visitation between the child and their parents and siblings. Reviewers noted good efforts with ICWA. Proximity of foster care placements and preserving the child’s important connections were also noted as strengths. Placement with relatives and siblings was occurring when appropriate.*

In the case that was partially achieved, reviewers commented on a lack of documentation of identifying the child’s important connections and involving a father in visitation.

III. WELL-BEING

Outcome WB1: *Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.*

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB1

| | Total Number | Total Percentage |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Substantially Achieved: | 7 | 50.00% |
| Partially Achieved: | 6 | 42.86% |
| Not Achieved or Addressed: | 1 | 7.14% |
| Not Applicable: | 0 | 0.00% |

Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

In assessing item 17, reviewers were to determine whether DHHS adequately assessed the needs of children, parents and foster parents AND provided the services to meet those needs. Reviewers rated item 17 as a strength if (1) a needs assessment was conducted for the child(ren), parents, and foster parents, and (2) appropriate services were provided in relation to the identified needs of the target child in foster care cases, or for all children in in-home cases. Education and physical or mental health services to the target child were not rated for this item (these are rated in items 21, 22, and 23). Reviewers had to document whether these services were provided to parents.

Review Findings:

- *All 14 of the cases were applicable for this item.*
- *7 (50.00%) cases were rated as strengths. 4 were in-home cases and 3 were out-of-home cases.*
- *7 (50.00%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 2 were in-home cases and 5 were out-of-home cases.*

The following is a breakdown for child, parent, and foster parent:

A. Child

Strengths: Reviewers saw needs being assessed informally through family team meetings and visits with the child. They also saw more formal assessments being completed such as OJS evaluations and Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI, and Early Development Network Evaluations.

Needs identified included: independent living skills, supervision, improving family relationships, impulse control, a backup placement, and conflict resolution.

Services provided included: family support, tracker, and a Preparation for Adult Living coordinator. This individual helped with job finding, cooking, and budgeting.

Areas needing improvement: Reviewers noted a case in which there were no ongoing assessments completed and an in-home case in which other siblings living in the home were not assessed.

B. Parents

Strengths: Reviewers saw needs being assessed through family team meetings, visits, family assessments, and drug/alcohol assessments.

Needs identified included: support system, substance abuse treatment, budgeting, clean housing, transportation and communication skills.

Services provided included: family therapy, supervised visitation, Family Drug Court, U/A's, family support, and drug treatment.

Areas needing improvement: Reviewers saw a lack of documentation and effort in assessing the needs of the mother and/or father in five of the cases. It was noted that it appeared therapy was needed for the mother in one of these cases and domestic violence issues were not addressed with the father in another case.

C. Foster Parents

Strengths: Reviewers saw foster parents' needs being assessed through family team meetings and visits.

Needs and services identified included: transportation, car repair, and child care.

Services provided included: Gas vouchers, car repair assistance, and child care provider names.

Areas needing improvement: Reviewers determined that the foster parent's needs were not assessed in two of the cases.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

In assessing this item reviewers were to determine whether the agency actively involved the parent(s), guardian, child(ren) and other people identified by the family in the case planning activities relevant to the current case plan. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent (guardian) and the child (older than 8 and not incapacitated) had actively participated in identifying the services and goals for the case plan.

Review Findings:

- ***All 14 cases were applicable for this item.***
- ***7 (50.00%) cases were rated as strengths. 1 was an in-home case and 6 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***7 (50.00%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 5 were in-home cases and 2 were out-of-home cases.***

Strengths: In the seven cases rated as strengths, reviewers found that the family was involved in the case planning process through family team meetings and visits. Reviewers noted parents and children stated during interviews that they felt their caseworker listened to their input in case planning.

Areas needing improvement: In four of the cases needing improvement, reviewers saw a lack of documentation showing involvement of the father in the case planning process. Two of the cases showed a lack of involving the mother and the father. One case noted a lack of involving the child in case planning.

Item 19. Worker visits with child

Reviewers were to determine the typical pattern of visits between the worker and child and if these visits were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well being. Reviewers were also to determine whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and achievement of the goals.

Review Findings:

- ***All 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***12 (85.71%) cases were rated as strengths. 5 were in-home cases and 7 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***2 (14.29%) cases were rated as needing improvement. One was an in-home case and one was an out-of-home case.***

Strengths: In the twelve cases that were rated as strengths, reviewers noted at least monthly contact between the child and the worker. They also saw and heard during interviews that these visits were good quality in that they discussed issues related to case planning, safety, permanency, and well-being of the child. In cases where the children were too young to discuss topics around safety, permanency, and well-being, workers documented observations of the child and discussions with the parent or providers. The reviewers saw that many visits took place at the child's home or placement.

Areas needing improvement: In one of the cases rated as needing improvement, reviewers noted other children in the home not being visited. In the other case, reviewers saw a lack of documentation in the file on visits during the last five months of the period under review.

Item 20. Worker visits with parents

Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker had sufficient face to face contact with parents to encourage attainment of their children's permanency goal while ensuring safety and well being. Cases that were considered not applicable were those when there was no plan for further involvement between the parents and the agency or the parents and the child, and the child is not in a permanent home.

Review Findings:

- *12 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *6 (50.00%) cases were rated as strengths. 2 were in-home cases and 4 were out-of-home cases.*
- *6 (50.00%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 4 were in-home cases and 2 were out-of-home cases.*

Strengths: In the six cases that were rated as strengths, reviewers noted monthly contact between the worker and parent(s). Reviewers also saw that these contacts were of sufficient quality in that pertinent information relating to the case was discussed during the visits. Examples were conversations around case planning, safety, and child/parent needs.

Areas needing improvement: Two of the cases rated as needing improvement involved lack of monthly contact with the father, one involved lack of contact with the mother, and three involved a lack of monthly contact with either parent.

WB1. Outcome reviewer comments: Reviewer comments around the cases that were substantially achieved were that there was a lot of contact and involvement between the worker and the family. This included family team meetings occurring on a regular basis. The parents and the child were actively involved in case planning. The foster parents were also actively involved in the out-of-home cases. Reviewers saw good assessments of needs being done. Many were during family team meetings or visits with the child/parent. They also saw that appropriate services were being provided to meet those identified needs. Visits were taking place in the child's placement or parental home.

In the cases that were partially or not achieved, reviewers noted a lack of assessments being completed on children, parents, or foster parents. Reviewers also saw that one or both parents were not involved in case planning. Infrequent family team meetings and visitation between the worker and the parent was also noted in these cases.

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2

| | Total Number | Total Percentage |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Substantially Achieved: | 11 | 91.67% |
| Partially Achieved: | 0 | 0.00% |
| Not Achieved or Addressed: | 1 | 8.33% |
| Not Applicable: | 2 | 14.29% |

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

When addressing educational issues for families receiving in-home services, reviewers considered whether the educational needs are/were relevant to the reason why the agency is/was involved with the family, and whether the need to address educational issues is/was a reasonable expectation given the circumstances of the agency's involvement with the family. (If not, reviewers rated item 21 as not applicable.) Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if (1) the agency made extensive efforts to address the child's educational needs and the school system was unresponsive, especially if the problems are with a local school or jurisdiction; (2) if the child(ren)'s educational needs were assessed and addressed, including cases where the educational records were missing and the reasons why; or (3) if the agency conducted an assessment of educational issues and determined that there were no problems in that area, nor any need for educational services.

Review Findings:

- *12 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *11 (91.67%) cases were rated as strengths. 5 were in-home cases and 6 were out-of-home cases.*
- *1 (8.33%) case was rated as needing improvement. It was an in-home case.*

Strengths: *In the eleven cases that were rated as strengths, reviewers noted that educational needs were being assessed. This was occurring either informally through family team meetings and visits or formally through an IEP or Early Development testing. Updated school records and grades were also in the files. A school intervention worker was a service noted in one of the cases.*

Areas needing improvement: *In the case rated as needing improvement, reviewers saw a lack of documentation of other children in the home being assessed for educational needs.*

WB2. Outcome reviewer comments: *In the cases that were substantially achieved, reviewers noted that grades and other school reports were in the case file. They noted that referrals were being done to Early Childhood Development for young children to be assessed.*

In the case that was not achieved, reviewers did not find any documentation in the file that other children in the home had been assessed for possible educational needs.

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB3:

| | Total Number | Total Percentage |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Substantially Achieved: | 9 | 75.00% |
| Partially Achieved: | 1 | 8.33% |
| Not Achieved or Addressed: | 2 | 16.67% |
| Not Applicable: | 2 | 14.29% |

Item 22. Physical health of the child

When addressing health issues for families receiving in-home services, reviewers considered whether the physical health needs are/were relevant to the reason why the agency is/was involved with the family and whether the need to address physical health issues is/was a reasonable expectation given the circumstances of the agency's involvement with the family. (If not, reviewers rated this item as not applicable.) For example, if a child became known to the agency and was determined to be in need of in-home services at least partly as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse, then it is reasonable to expect the agency to provide services to ensure that the child receives the appropriate physical health services. Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if the agency conducted an assessment of physical health and determined that there were no problems in that area, nor any need for physical health services.

Review Findings:

- *10 out of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.*
- *8 (80.00%) cases were rated as strengths. All were out-of-home cases.*
- *2 (20.00%) cases were rated as needing improvement. Both were in-home cases.*

Strengths: *In the eight cases that were rated as strengths, reviewers found that medical/dental needs were assessed by annual checkups. Examples of follow up services included: sealants for teeth, diabetes insulin check, and treatment for insomnia and shoulder pain. Vision checkups were also noted in some of the cases.*

Areas needing improvement: *In the two cases rated as needing improvement, reviewers noted a lack of dental assessments being done.*

Item 23. Mental health of the child

Reviewers were to determine whether during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the child(ren). Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if the agency conducted an assessment of the child's mental health and determined that there were no problems in that area, nor any need for mental health services. If there was a need for services then they were offered.

Review Findings:

- 9 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.
- 7 (77.78%) cases were rated as strengths. 2 were in-home cases and 5 were out-of-home cases.
- 2 (22.22%) cases were rated as needing improvement. Both were in-home cases.

Strengths: *In the seven cases rated as strengths, reviewers found assessments being done on the child's mental health needs. These were done informally during family team meetings and visits or formally through evaluations, such as mental status exams or OJS evaluations.*

Needs identified included: *substance abuse, social skills, medication management, anxiety, expressing feelings, accountability, understanding suicidal ideation, and coping skills related to being victim of sexual assault.*

Services provided included: *individual/family counseling, medication checkups, tracker, drug screening, and treatment placement.*

Areas needing improvement: *In the two cases rated as needing improvement, reviewers noted that there was no documentation on why a child was involved in therapy in one case and a lack of any type of assessment being completed on other children in the home in the other case.*

WB3. Outcome reviewer comments: *On the cases that were found to be substantially achieved, the reviewers found up-to-date medical and dental records and good documentation of assessments being done informally or formally for the child's mental health. Reviewers noted good provider reports in the file in some of these cases. Reviewers noted workers asking about the health of young children during visits.*

Reviewer comments on the cases that were partially or not achieved were that there was lacking or minimal information in the file regarding dental and physical health needs being assessed. Reviewers also noted that there was a lack of mental health assessments or therapy notes in the file to determine mental health needs or to assess progress to determine if the service was still appropriate.

CSA Results

Case Sample: *Mini CFSR Review – October 2011*

Type of Review: *8th Mini CFSR*

Report Type: *Central Service Area*

Number of Reviews: *14*

Review Period: *October 1st, 2010 – October 1st, 2011*

PERFORMANCE ITEM RESULTS

| Performance Item | | Item Ratings (#) | | | Item Ratings (%) | | |
|------------------|---|------------------|-----|-----|------------------|--------|--------|
| | | S | ANI | N/A | S | ANI | N/A |
| Item 1: | Timeliness of initiating investigations | 3 | 1 | 10 | 75.00% | 25.00% | 71.43% |
| Item 2: | Repeat maltreatment | 3 | 0 | 11 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 78.57% |
| Item 3: | Services to family | 8 | 0 | 6 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 42.86% |
| Item 4: | Risk assessment and safety management | 10 | 4 | 0 | 71.43% | 28.57% | 0.00% |
| Item 5: | Foster care re-entries | 2 | 0 | 12 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 85.71% |
| Item 6: | Stability of foster care placement | 8 | 0 | 6 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 42.86% |
| Item 7: | Permanency goal for child | 6 | 2 | 6 | 75.00% | 25.00% | 42.86% |
| Item 8: | Reunification, guardianship etc | 8 | 0 | 6 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 42.86% |
| Item 9: | Adoption | 2 | 1 | 11 | 66.67% | 33.33% | 78.57% |
| Item 10: | Other planned permanent living arrangement | 2 | 0 | 12 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 85.71% |
| Item 11: | Proximity of foster care placement | 6 | 0 | 8 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 57.14% |
| Item 12: | Placement with siblings | 4 | 0 | 10 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 71.43% |
| Item 13: | Visiting with parents and siblings | 5 | 1 | 8 | 83.33% | 16.67% | 57.14% |
| Item 14: | Preserving connections | 5 | 3 | 6 | 62.50% | 37.50% | 42.86% |
| Item 15: | Relative placement | 7 | 0 | 7 | 100.00% | 0.00% | 50.00% |
| Item 16: | Relationship of child in care with parents | 5 | 1 | 8 | 83.33% | 16.67% | 57.14% |
| Item 17: | Needs and services | 7 | 7 | 0 | 50.00% | 50.00% | 0.00% |
| Item 18: | Child and family involvement in case planning | 7 | 7 | 0 | 50.00% | 50.00% | 0.00% |
| Item 19: | Caseworker visits with child | 12 | 2 | 0 | 85.71% | 14.29% | 0.00% |
| Item 20: | Caseworker visits with parent(s) | 6 | 6 | 2 | 50.00% | 50.00% | 14.29% |
| Item 21: | Educational needs of the child | 11 | 1 | 2 | 91.67% | 8.33% | 14.29% |
| Item 22: | Physical health of the child | 8 | 2 | 4 | 80.00% | 20.00% | 28.57% |
| Item 23: | Mental/behavioral health of the child | 7 | 2 | 5 | 77.78% | 22.22% | 35.71% |

OUTCOME RESULTS

| Performance Outcome | COUNTS (#) | | | | PERCENTAGES (%) | | | |
|----------------------------|------------|----|------|-----|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | SA | PA | NACH | N/A | SA | PA | NACH | N/A |
| Safety 1 (Items 1-2) | 5 | 1 | 0 | 8 | 83.33% | 16.67% | 0.00% | 57.14% |
| Safety 2 (Items 3-4) | 10 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 71.43% | 28.57% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Permanency 1 (Items 5-10) | 5 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 62.50% | 37.50% | 0.00% | 42.86% |
| Permanency 2 (Items 11-16) | 7 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 87.50% | 12.50% | 0.00% | 42.86% |
| Wellbeing 1 (Items 17-20) | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 50.00% | 42.86% | 7.14% | 0.00% |
| Wellbeing 2 (Item 21) | 11 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 91.67% | 0.00% | 8.33% | 14.29% |
| Wellbeing 3 (Items 22-23) | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 75.00% | 8.33% | 16.67% | 14.29% |

KEY:

N/A = Not Applicable

PA = Partially Achieved

NACH = Not Achieved

S = Strength

SA = Substantially Achieved

ANI = Area Needing Improvement