

# **FINAL REPORT**

## **8th Mini Children and Family Services Review**

### **Northern Service Area**

**(October 18<sup>th</sup>-20th, 2011)**

## **Executive Summary Children and Family Services Review (Northern Service Area)**

A mini CFSR was held in Norfolk on October 18-20th, 2011. 14 cases were reviewed. The period under review was October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 through October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011. 8 cases were foster care cases and 6 were in home cases. Nine cases were abuse/neglect and four were juvenile offender cases. The offices where the cases were reviewed from were Columbus, Dakota City, Fremont, Pierce and Norfolk. There were 5 review teams that conducted this review. Second level review was completed by Quality Assurance worker Leslie Schlecht.

### **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 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 service area did not achieve substantial conformity on any of the seven outcomes. The 8<sup>th</sup> Mini CFSR identified four areas of high performance in Northern Service Area with regard to achieving desired outcomes for children. The service area did achieve overall ratings of strength for the individual indicators pertaining to timeliness of initiating investigations of maltreatment (item 1), services to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care (item 3), foster care re-entry (item 5), reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives (item 8), other planned living arrangement (item 10), proximity of foster care placement (item 11), placement with siblings (item 12), and mental/behavioral health of the child (item 23).

The mini CFSR review identified key areas of concern with regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. Concerns were identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 1 (children have permanency and stability in their living situations), which was substantially achieved in only 50 percent of the cases reviewed. The lowest rating within this outcome was for item 7 (permanency goal for child), which was rated as a strength in 63 percent of the cases reviewed. Permanency Outcome 2 (the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children) received the lowest rating of the seven outcomes. Permanency Outcome 2 was rated a strength in only 38 percent of the cases. Items 13 (visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) and 16 (relationship of child in care with parents) received the lowest ratings within Permanency Outcome 2. Both items were rated as strengths in only 29 percent of the cases.

Concerns were also identified with regards to Well Being Outcome 1 (families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs), which was substantially achieved in only 43 percent of the cases reviewed. Item 17 (needs and services of the child, parents, and foster parents) and 18 (child and family involvement in case planning) were rated as strengths in only 43 percent of the cases. Item 20 (caseworker visits with parents) was rated as a strength in only 46 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:	4	80.00%
Partially Achieved:	1	20.00%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	9	64.29%

#### **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:*

\*Five of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.

\*5 (100%) cases were rated as strengths

\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement

\*9 cases were not applicable

\*All five cases that were rated as strengths for this item were out of home cases.

*Strengths: In all the cases timeframes of initiating the investigation within the designated time frame were met. Two intakes were priority 1, one intake was opened as a dependent child and had no priority, three intakes were priority 2, and the last intake was a priority 3.*

*There were no cases found to be needing improvement on this item.*

#### **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:**

**\*Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*2 (67%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*1 (33%) case was rated as area needing improvement**

**\*11 cases were not applicable**

**\*The two cases rated as a strength on this item were out of home cases. The one case rated as area needing improvement on this item was an out of home case.**

*Strengths: In these cases, there was only 1 intake that was received on the family during the period under review and during the life of the case.*

*Area Needing Improvement: This case was a child abuse case. In this case the mother had left the state of Nebraska and went to pick up her child in the state of Utah, who was residing with a relative. The mother returned with her child to the state of Nebraska and moved back in with the child’s abuser. The child was then removed from the mothers care.*

*S1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases that were found to be substantially achieved for this outcome, the intakes received by the Department were investigated within the set time frames and face to face contact with the alleged victim was made within the timeframes.*

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

**Status of Safety Outcome S2**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	13	92.86%
Partially Achieved:	1	07.14%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

**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:**

**\*Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.**

**\*6 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*8 cases were not applicable**

**\*Four of the cases rated as strengths for this item were out of home cases and the other two were in home cases.**

*Strengths: In three cases, it was noted that there were numerous services in place to prevent removal/re-entry into foster care. Those services ranged from intensive outpatient treatment to family support in the home. Other services were tracker, family therapy, transportation assistance, and intensive family preservation. In two cases, there was domestic violence issues that lead to our involvement. In three cases, the child had to be removed from the home due to safety concerns that were unable to be controlled within the home.*

*There were no cases found to be needing improvement on this item.*

#### **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 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.**

**\*13 (93%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*1 (7%) case was rated as area needing improvement**

**\*0 cases were not applicable**

**\*Seven cases rated as strengths for this item were out of home cases; the other six were in home. The one case that was rated as area needing improvement for this item was an out of home cases.**

*Strengths: In the thirteen cases substantially achieved, there were either no safety concerns found on the target child or services were implemented to address safety concerns found through initial/ongoing assessments. In these cases, informal assessments were occurring on an ongoing basis through family team meetings. Safety plans were updated and found in the case file.*

*Areas needing improvement: In the one case rated as needing improvement it was noted that there were concerns regarding the potential abuse to a newborn in the family. The identified child in this case was removed from the home that the perpetrator resides in. The newborn resides in the home of the perpetrator and the county attorney refused to file a petition on this newborn child.*

*S2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved reviewers had a variety of comments. They ranged from the child's placements being appropriate to meet the child's needs, ongoing assessments being completed through family team meetings, and there being no safety concerns or issues in the facility or home. Reviewer's comments on the case found to be partially achieved was that the case file did not contain information in regards to the safety concerns of the other child (newborn) residing in the home. In this case the Mother's live in boyfriend had physically abused the identified child and was removed from the home. The Mother then had another baby, which was never removed from her care, despite noted concerns that physical abuse could occur again. DHHS requested the county attorney to file a juvenile petition on this newborn but the county declined to do so.*

**II. PERMANENCY**

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

**Status of Permanency Outcome P1**

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	4	50.00%
Partially Achieved:	4	50.00%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	6	42.86%

**Item 5. Foster care re-entries**

Reviewers rated this assessment 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:***

- \*Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*6 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*8 cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: The child entered and remained in the same foster home throughout the period under review.*

*There were no files rated as needing improvement for this item.*

#### **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:*

**\*Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*7 (88%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*1 (12%) case was rated as area needing improvement**

**\*6 cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In seven cases, the target child had only one placement during the period under review. In two cases the target child resided in a relative placement, and remained there during the entire period under review.*

*Area Needing Improvement: In the only case rated as needing improvement for this item, the first foster family asked that the target child be removed from their home because they felt that he/she would hinder their desire to have placement of a younger child who may be more adoptable.*

#### **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:*

**\*Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*5 (63%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*3 (37%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*6 cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In all five cases reviewed that were rated as strengths for this item, the permanency goals were established within the 60 day timeframe.*

*Areas needing improvement: In two cases needing improvement on this item, it was noted that while the permanency goal established was appropriate, it was not established within the 60 day timeframe. In one case, it was noted that there was no case plan/court report found in the file. Therefore, there were no dates found to establish when permanency was 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:*

**\*Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*7 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*7 cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In all the cases rated as a strength for this item, it was noted that active and concerted efforts were being made to achieve the permanency goal of reunification. The case file documentation within the case plan and court report reflects these efforts are being made via family team meetings and monthly contacts. In two cases, the youth was placed in a relative foster home.*

*There were no files rated as needing improvement for this item.*

#### **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:*

**\*Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*2 (67%) cases were rated as a strength**

**\*1 (33%) case was rated as area needing improvement**

**\*11 cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In the two cases rated as a strength for this item it was noted in the case file that relatives were seeking adoption. Active efforts were documented that the concurrent goal of adoption was being worked on while the child resided in the relative foster home.*

*Areas Needing Improvement: There was no information found in the case file to suggest that active efforts were being made to pursue the concurrent goal of adoption in this case.*

#### **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:**

- \*One of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*1 (100%) case was rated as a strength**
- \*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*13 cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: Independent living was the concurrent goal for the youth and an independent living outcome was found in the case plan/court report. It was also noted in this case that the youth’s placement (treatment facility) was working with the youth on building independent living skills.*

*There were no files rated as needing improvement for this item.*

*P1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers comments on the cases found to be substantially achieved were that permanency goals were established within the set time frames and services helped to support and maintain the stability of the placements in these cases. In three cases rated as partially achieved, it was noted that the permanency goal was not established within the 60 day requirement. In another case rated as partially achieved, it was noted that the foster parents requested the identified youth be removed from their home because they felt he/she was not a good match for their family and having him/her placed with them may hinder any future adoptive placements they could get.*

**Status of Permanency Outcome P2**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	3	37.50%
Partially Achieved:	5	62.50%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
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:**

- \*Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*7 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*7 cases were not applicable**

*Strengths: In five of the cases, the family lives close enough to the child to facilitate visits at least a few times per month as well as attending the child’s family team meetings that are*

*being held on a monthly basis. In two cases, the child was placed outside the community only due to the child's extenuating mental/behavioral needs.*

*There were no files rated as needing improvement for this item.*

**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:***

**\*Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*3 (100%) cases were rated as a strength**

**\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*11 cases were not applicable**

***Strengths: In all of these cases the children and siblings were placed in the same home.***

*There were no files rated as needing improvement for this item.*

**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:***

**\*Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*2 (29%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*5 (71%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*7 cases were not applicable**

***Strengths: In both cases the youth was placed in a treatment level facility and visits with siblings/parents (mother and father) were supported and set up at least monthly by the caseworker to ensure visitation occurred.***

***Area needing improvement: In all five cases rated as needing improvement on this item, there was no contact occurring between the youth and the father. There was no evidence found in the case file that attempts were made by the worker to locate and/or involve the father in visitation. In one case there was no evidence found in the case file to indicate visits between siblings were set up and occurring. Visits were occurring with the mothers in these cases.***

#### **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:***

- \*Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*3 (38%) cases were rated as strengths**
- \*5 (62%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*6 cases were not applicable**

***Strengths: In all three of the cases, connections were maintained through extended family visits and/or holiday celebrations. ICWA was addressed in all of the cases. In two of the cases the child was placed with relatives, which helps to maintain important connections.***

***Areas needing improvement: In two cases, there was no documentation found in the case file to indicate that the child's connections to their community were maintained. In four cases there was no evidence found in the case file to show that ICWA was addressed with the family.***

#### **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:***

- \*Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
- \*4 (67%) cases were rated as a strength**
- \*2 (33%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
- \*8 cases were not applicable**

***Strengths: In two cases, documentation did indicate all children were placed with a relative and remained with that relative. In two cases relative placement was in the process of being approved and established at the time of this review.***

*Areas needing improvement: In both cases, there was no documentation found to indicate that paternal placement was sought by the caseworker. In one case it was noted that while maternal relatives names were listed in the case file, there did not appear to be any efforts found to reflect efforts being made to seek them out for possible placement.*

**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:*

\*Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item

\*2 (29%) cases were rated as a strength

\*5 (71%) cases were rated as area needing improvement

\*7 cases were not applicable

*Strengths: Documented concerted efforts were found in the case file that the agency made efforts to support the child's relationship with the Mother and Father by including them in the child's educational/extra-curricular activities.*

*Areas needing improvement: In all five cases, it was noted that there was no documentation found in the case file to show that concerted efforts were made to locate, promote and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his/her father.*

*P2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: In the cases where this outcome was determined to be substantially achieved, reviewers commented that visitation was occurring on a regular basis (at least monthly). It was also noted that ICWA was addressed in these cases. In the cases where this outcome was only partially achieved the reviewers commented that there were no documented efforts found to show that the DHHS worker made concerted efforts to locate/involve the fathers in four of those cases. In another case there was no evidence found in the case file that the DHHS worker had made efforts to determine ICWA eligibility.*

### 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:	6	42.86%
Partially Achieved:	7	50.00%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	07.14%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

#### **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 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*6 (43%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*8 (57%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*0 cases were not applicable**

**\*Two of the cases rated as strengths were in home cases and four were out of home cases. Four of the cases rated as area needing improvement were in home cases and four were out of home cases.**

*Strengths: Because 17 is broke down into parts A, B, and C. This item will be broken out into three pieces.*

#### **CHILDREN**

*17a. Strengths: All fourteen cases were rated as a strength on this item. The child's needs and services were both informally and formally assessed and addressed through initial assessments, ongoing assessments, case management and family team meetings. Some of the services provided to address the identified needs were behavioral assessments, Developmental Disabilities assessments, Electronic Monitoring, Family Support, individual and family therapy and tracker services.*

*17a. Areas needing improvement: There were no files rated as needing improvement for this item.*

## PARENTS

*17b. Strengths: It was noted that the worker did a good job assessing both parents' needs by conducting informal/formal assessments. Informal assessments were completed through face to face contact and family team meetings. Comprehensive Family Assessments were also completed. Some of the services offered to address the identified needs were transportation assistance, drug/alcohol treatment, family support services, parenting classes and therapy.*

*17b. Areas needing improvement: In six cases it was noted that the father's needs had not been assessed. In one case, it was noted that there was no information found to indicate that the mother's needs were assessed. In another case, it was noted that while both parents (mother and father) needs were assessed, there was no evidence to indicate services were implemented regarding these needs.*

## FOSTER PARENTS

*17c. Strengths: In the cases reviewed rated as strengths, it was noted that the foster parent's needs were assessed by the worker discussing with the foster parent's their concerns/needs. Needs were also assessed through monthly family team meetings. Services provided were foster care payments, respite care and parenting assistance in dealing with children that have behavioral issues.*

*17c. Areas needing improvement: In the one case rated as needing improvement on this item it was noted that while the foster parents needs were assessed and identified, the service has not been implemented to address the need. The foster parents are in need of respite and have not been given a respite provider.*

## **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 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*6 (43%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*8 (57%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*0 cases were not applicable**

**\*In the six cases rated as strengths, one was an in home case and five were out of home cases. In the eight cases that were rated as area needing improvement five were in home cases and the other three were out of home cases.**

***Strengths: In the six cases that were rated as strengths for this item, it was specifically noted that both parents and child (when old enough) participated in the case planning process through monthly family team meetings as well as through monthly face to face contact with the case worker.***

*Areas needing improvement: In six cases rated as needing improvement for this item, it was noted that there was no documentation found in the case file to indicate that the father was involved in the case planning. In one case, there was no case plan located in the case file. In the last case the mother was not involved in the case planning process.*

**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 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*11 (79%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*3 (21%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*0 cases were not applicable**

**\*Five of the cases rated as a strength for this item were in home cases and six were out of home. One of the cases rated as area needing improvement was an in home case and the other two were out of home cases.**

*Strengths: There was found to be at least private monthly contacts between the worker and the child occurring. The quality of those narratives addressed permanency, safety and well being issues.*

*Areas needing improvement: In all three cases, the child was seen monthly but the narrative in the case file lacked supporting information that the issues around safety, permanency and well being were addressed during the visits.*

**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 if there is 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:*

**\*Thirteen of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*6 (46%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*7 (54%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*1 case was not applicable**

**\*Three of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases and the other three were out of home cases. Three of the cases rated as area needing improvement for this item were in home cases and four were out of home cases.**

*Strengths: Visits between worker and parents (mother and father) were occurring at least monthly, in a location conducive to supporting quality interaction between the worker and parents. The quality of the contact narratives was noted to be very good and addressed the safety, permanency, and well being of the child.*

*Area needing improvement: In five cases, it was noted that there was little to no contact made with the father. In one case, it was noted that there was no documentation found to indicate that the worker visited with the mother on a monthly basis. In one case, it was noted that monthly contact was not being made with both parents (mother and father) in the case.*

*WB1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved that extensive efforts were made by the Department to ensure the families had the capacity to provide for their children’s needs and were assessed formally and informally through ongoing assessments and mental health assessments. Families participated in therapy, family support, utilization of respite care when needed, communication during visits with caseworkers, and involvement in the case planning process. Families got involved in the case planning process through monthly contacts with the DHHS worker and through family team meetings.*

*In the cases where this outcome was found to be partially achieved reviewers commented that in four cases the father’s needs were not assessed. In one case the foster parents expressed that they were in need of respite but that service was never provided to them. In the one case rated as not achieved, reviewers commented that there was no information found to support that the fathers needs were continually being addressed. In this case there was also no information found to support a continuing assessment of the identified child’s needs because face to face visits between caseworker and child did not occur for three months during the period under review.*

**Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2**

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	11	91.66%
Partially Achieved:	1	08.33%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
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:**

**\*Twelve of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*11 (92%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*1 (8%) case was rated as area needing improvement**

**\*2 cases were not applicable**

**\* Four of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases and seven were out of home cases. The one case rated as area needing improvement for this item was an out of home case.**

*Strengths: Educational needs of the child were assessed and addressed by the case worker by providing educational testing and monitoring at the schools they attended. Services provided to address the needs ranged from IEP's to ESU referrals. Grade/report cards, current IEP's and ESU reports were found in the case files.*

*Areas needing improvement: In the one case that was rated as needing improvement, it was noted that the youth was referred to a speech pathologist but there was no information found in the case file to indicate that the service was ever provided.*

*WB2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: All but two of the cases reviewed received a substantially achieved rating for this outcome. Reviewers comments on the outcomes found to be substantially achieved were that the children received appropriate services to meet their educational needs. Grade reports were also found in the case files. In the one case found to be partially achieved, the reviewer commented that there was no information found in the file that the worker followed through with ensuring that the child's identified educational needs were met. The identified child was referred to go to a speech pathologist and there was no information found in the case file to indicate that the service was provided.*

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

**Status of Well-Being Outcome WB3:**

	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Substantially Achieved:	11	91.66%
Partially Achieved:	1	08.33%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
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:***

**\*Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*7 (88%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*1 (12%) case was rated as area needing improvement**

**\*6 cases were not applicable**

**\* In the seven cases rated as a strength for this item, all were out of home cases. The one case rated as area needing improvement for this item was an out of home case.**

***Strengths: Medical/dental needs were assessed, services were provided when needed and it was documented in the case file.***

***Areas needing improvement: There were no updated physical/dental exams found in the case file.***

**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:***

**\*Eleven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**

**\*11 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**

**\*0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**

**\*3 cases were not applicable**

**\* In the eleven cases rated as a strength for this item four were in home cases and seven were out of home cases.**

***Strengths: Initial and ongoing formal/informal assessments were being conducted on the child ranging from the Youth Level of Service evaluation to the Comprehensive Family Assessment. Informal assessments were completed by the DHHS worker through monthly family team meetings and face to face contacts with the youth.***

***Areas Needing Improvement: There were no files rated as needing improvement for this item.***

***WB3. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the outcomes found to be substantially achieved that mental health needs were assessed and if there were needs identified that they were also addressed. There was also medical/dental/mental health***

*documentation found in the case file. In one case found to be partially achieved there was no physical exam/dental information found in the case file.*

## NSA Results

**Case Sample:** *Mini CFSR Review –October 2011*

**Type of Review:** *8th Mini CFSR*

**Report Type:** *Northern Service Area*

**Number of Reviews:** *14*

**Review Period:** *October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010-October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011*

### **Performance Item Results**

Report Results--Northern CFSR October 2011

S = Strength

ANI = Area Needing Improvement

N/A = Not Applicable

Performance Item	S	ANI	N/A	S (%)	ANI (%)	N/A (%)	Total
Number of Submitted Review:							14
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5	0	9	100	0	64	14
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	2	1	11	67	33	79	14
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	6	0	8	100	0	57	14
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	13	1		93	7		14
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	6	0	8	100	0	57	14
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	7	1	6	88	13	43	14
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	5	3	6	63	38	43	14
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	7	0	7	100	0	50	14
Item 9: Adoption	2	1	11	67	33	79	14
Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement	1	0	13	100	0	93	14
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	7	0	7	100	0	50	14
Item 12: Placement with siblings	3	0	11	100	0	79	14
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	2	5	7	29	71	50	14
Item 14: Preserving connections	3	5	6	38	63	43	14
Item 15: Relative placement	4	2	8	67	33	57	14
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	2	5	7	29	71	50	14
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	6	8		43	57		14
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	6	8	0	43	57	0	14

Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	11	3		79	21		14
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parent(s)	6	7	1	46	54	7	14
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	11	1	2	92	8	14	14
Item 22: Physical health of child	7	1	6	88	13	43	14
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	11	0	3	100	0	21	14

SA = Substantially Achieved (%)

PA = Partially Achieved (%)

NACH = Not Achieved (%)

N/A = Not Applicable

Performance Outcome	SA	PA	NACH	N/A	SA (%)	PA (%)	NACH (%)	N/A (%)	Total
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	4	1	0	9	80	20	0	64	14
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	13	1	0	0	93	7	0	0	14
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	4	4	0	6	50	50	0	43	14
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	3	5	0	6	38	63	0	43	14
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	6	7	1	0	43	50	7	0	14
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	11	1	0	2	92	8	0	14	14
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	11	1	0	2	92	8	0	14	14

