FINAL REPORT

3rd Mini Children and Family Services Review

Central Service Area

(July 26th-28th, 2010)

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

This document presents the findings from the 3rd 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 third mini CFSR review from July 26th through July 28th, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review was July 1st, 2009 through July 31st, 2010. The findings were derived from file reviews of 14 cases (9 foster care and 5 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, CFS 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 DHHS for juvenile justice services. The cases were from the following area offices: Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, and Broken Bow.

The review was completed by 5 teams of two reviewers made up of both staff from DHHS, Families Care, and Out of Home Reform providers (Boys and Girls Home). 100% of the cases were reviewed by the following second level reviewers: Kayl Dahlke (DHHS), Leslie Schlecht (DHHS), and Michelle Martin (Boys and Girls Home).

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 95 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 3rd 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 with any of the seven CFSR outcomes, they did achieve overall ratings of Strength for the individual indicators pertaining to repeat maltreatment (item 2), services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care (item 3), foster care re-entries (item 5), proximity of foster care placement (item 11), placement with siblings (item 12), and physical health of child (item 22). These items were strengths in 100 percent of the applicable cases reviewed.

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 Permanency 1, (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) which was substantially achieved in only 22 percent of the cases reviewed. Within Permanency 1, Central Service area's lowest rating was for item 7 (permanency goal for child), which was rated as a Strength in 22 percent of the cases reviewed. Well-Being 1(Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs) was only substantially achieved in 43 percent of the cases. Within Well-Being 1, both item 17(needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents) and item 20 (caseworker visits with parents) were rated a Strength in 57 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:	2	67%
Partially Achieved:	1	33%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	11	79%

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*:**

- ***2 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item.***
- ***1(50%) case was rated a strength. This was an out-of-home case.***
- ***1(50%) case was rated an area needing improvement. This was an out-of-home case.***

Strengths: For the case rated a strength, reviewers found documentation that the face-to-face contact with the child was occurring during the established timelines. One intake was a Priority 3 and the other was a Priority 1.

Areas needing improvement: For the case rated as an area needing improvement, reviewers found that two different intakes were done on the same safety assessment. They were over thirty days apart and should have been done separately. They were both priority 2.

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*:**

- ***1 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***1(100%) case was rated a strength. This was an out-of-home case.***
- ***0 cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In the case rated a strength, there were no additional reports of maltreatment outside of the two intakes 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 in most cases and there did not appear to be any concerns with maltreatment occurring.
On the case that was partially achieved reviewers found no reasoning in the file why two different intakes were addressed in the same safety assessment when they appeared to be over a month apart.

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

Status of Safety Outcome S2

	Total Number	**Total Percentage**
Substantially Achieved:	8	57%
Partially Achieved:	1	7%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	5	36%
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:

- ***4 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***4 (100%) cases were rated as strengths. 1 was an in-home case and 3 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***0 cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In one of the cases the agency did not provide services before the child was removed, but it was necessary to ensure the safety of the child. In the three other cases rated as strengths reviewers did see agency efforts in arranging for appropriate services. Some of the services included substance abuse counseling, random U/A's, and family support services.

In the ten 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. <u>Risk of harm to child</u>

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***
- ***8 (57%) cases were rated as strengths. 4 were in-home cases and 4 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***6 (43%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 1 was an in-home case and 5 were out-of-home cases.***

Strengths: Three of the cases were rated as strengths because reviewers determined there was no risk of harm to the child. In the other cases rated as strengths the agency conducted initial and ongoing assessments. Reviewers noted ongoing assessments done for reunification planning and case closure. A Protective Capacity Assessment was also noted in one of the cases. Reviewers also identified that risk assessments were being done informally through family team meetings in two of the cases.

Areas needing improvement: In the cases found to be needing improvement reviewers saw a lack of ongoing assessments being done. These included reunification planning and changes in visitation. There was also a lack of assessing other children in the home for one of the in-home cases.

S2. Outcome Review Comments: On the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved reviewers commented that they saw services being implemented, such as drug/alcohol counseling and family support. They also saw ongoing safety assessments being done for reunification and case closure. They also noted good documentation of safety being assessed during family team meetings.

On the cases that were partially or not achieved reviewers saw a lack of documentation of ongoing assessments being completed when case circumstance showed that they should have been. Reviewers commented that some of the case files appeared to be missing a lot of information so they did not know if assessments were not being done or just not in the file.

II. PERMANENCY

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

Status of Permanency Outcome P1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	2	22%
Partially Achieved:	7	78%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	5	36%

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%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***0 cases were rated as area needing improvement***

Strengths: In the two cases that were rated as strengths there was not a re-entry into foster care after being discharged from foster care during 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*:**

- ***9 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***7 (78%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***2 (22%) 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. One of these was a relative placement. In the other three cases rated as strengths the child's moves were based on safety concerns or in helping meet their permanency goal of adoption or guardianship.

Areas needing improvement: In one of the cases rated as needing improvement the youth was moved from one foster home to another at the request of the foster home. This did not appear to be planned and reviewers found no reasoning for it. In the other case needing improvement the reviewers determined that the placement change was not based on permanency or best interest of the child. The child was placed back at a previous foster home instead of assessing the father for placement.

Item 7. <u>Permanency goal for child</u>

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*:**

- ***9 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***2 (22%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***7 (78%) cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths the original goal of reunification was established in a timely manner. The agency made efforts in achieving this goal but it was appropriately changed to adoption when no progress was being made. The parents relinquished their rights in both of these cases.

Areas needing improvement: In four of the cases found to be needing improvement the permanency goal was not established in a timely manner. In one of the other cases TPR was filed on 7-9-07 and the child appears to have been waiting for permanency through adoption since that time. Another child has been in the same foster home for three years with the plan

of guardianship. Reviewers found delays in this due to a disagreement between the agency and the foster parents regarding the subsidy amount and also the child's willingness to be in a guardianship home. Reviewers also noted two cases in which the child had been out of home over fifteen months and they found no exception for not filing for termination of parental rights.

Item 8. <u>Reunification, Guardianship or Permanent Placement with Relatives</u>
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*:**

- ***6 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***4 (67%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***2 (33%) cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In the four cases rated as strengths, the reviewers determined that the agency was making or made efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Efforts included increasing visitation, family therapy, and family support services. Reunification did occur within twelve months in one of the cases.

Areas needing improvement: In one of the cases needing improvement the youth has been in a foster home for three years with the plan of guardianship. The agency now appears to also be working towards possible reunification due to the Judge ordering visitation, even though that was not a goal on the case plan. In the other case the child has been in foster care for thirty-two months without guardianship occurring.

Item 9. <u>Adoption</u>
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 (67%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***1 (33) case was rated an area needing improvement***

Strengths: In the two cases rated as a strength reviewers found that the agency was making active efforts in achieving the permanency goal of adoption in a timely manner. In both cases termination or relinquishment of parental rights has just happened recently and the children are in homes that are willing to adopt.

Areas needing improvement: In the case rated as needing improvement reviewers found that the goal of adoption was not occurring in a timely manner. The child has been in foster care for thirty-eight months. The reviewers did note some barriers, including termination of parental rights being appealed, but still felt that the agency could have made more efforts earlier in the case.

Item 10. <u>Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement</u>
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*:**

- ***0 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***

Strengths: No cases were applicable for this item.

Areas needing improvement: No cases were applicable to this item.

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. The agency established permanency goals in a timely manner and were actively working with the family towards them. Family team meetings were also seen to be occurring on a regular basis in these cases. In the cases rated as being partially achieved, reviewers noted that placements were not stable and this correlated with a lack in permanency planning. They also saw that permanency goals were not established timely. Reviewers also noted poor documentation and a lack of communication between the worker and parents in some of the cases.

<u>Status of Permanency Outcome P2</u>

	Total Number	**Total Percentage**
Substantially Achieved:	5	56%
Partially Achieved:	4	44%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	5	36%

Item 11. <u>Proximity of foster care placement</u>
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*:**

- ***8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***8 (100%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***0 cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In the 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. Four of the placements were in the same community. The other four were in different counties, but reviewers saw that this was not having a negative effect on parent-child visitation

Areas needing improvement: No cases were found to need improvement.

Item 12. <u>Placement with siblings</u>
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*:**

- ***2 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***2 (100%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***0 cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In one of the cases rated as strengths the child was placed with their siblings who were also in foster care. They have been in the same home together since removal. In the other case rated as a strength the child was not placed with siblings due to the sibling needing to be placed in a higher level of care.

Areas needing improvement: No cases were found to need improvement.

Item 13. <u>Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care</u>
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 sever 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:

- ***8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***5 (63%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***3 (38%) cases were 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 the relationship with parents and siblings. In one of these cases the father was incarcerated and the team facilitated phone contact between him and the child. In another case the youth had a sibling at YRTC who they were able to visit when possible.

Areas needing improvement: In one of the cases needing improvement there was no documentation in the file regarding visitation between the child and their parents. Another case was lacking in specifying the quality of the visitation. There was nothing consistent with the visitation between child and parents in the other case needing improvement.

Item 14. <u>Preserving connections</u>

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*:**

- ***9 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***6 (67%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***3 (33%) cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In the six cases rated as strengths, efforts were made to maintain the child's important connections. This included children having visits with grandparents and other extended family in three of the cases. A child attended the same school, church, and 4H in one of the cases. Another case included a child having contact with their mother after relinquishment.

Areas needing improvement: In two cases needing improvement reviewers determined that ICWA was possibly applicable and the tribe was not provided timely information in relation to this. In one of these cases the tribe had asked for more information and reviewers could not determine if this was ever followed up on.

Item 15. <u>Relative placement</u>

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*:**

- ***9 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***

- ***5(56%) cases were rated as strengths***
- ***4 (44%) cases were rated as areas needing improvement***

Strengths: In four of the cases rated as strengths the child is/was placed with a relative and the placement is/was stable and appropriate. In the other case rated as a strength the child was not placed with relatives but the agency did make efforts.

Areas needing improvement: In the four cases rated needing improvement there was a lack of documentation to determine efforts to identify and assess relatives for placement.

Item 16. <u>Relationship of child in care with parents</u>
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*:**
- ***8 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***6(75%) were rated as strengths***
- ***2 (25%) were rated as areas needing improvement***

Strengths: In the six 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: getting parents involved in school activities, helping parents with transportation to visits, encouraging family therapy, a foster parent encouraging letter writing between child and parent, and facilitating contact between a child and father who was incarcerated.

Areas needing improvement: In the two cases needing improvement there was a lack of documentation on what the agency was doing to facilitate and encourage a positive relationship between the child in foster care and their mother and father.

P2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases where the outcome was substantially achieved, reviewers noted frequent visitation between the child and their parents and siblings. They noted that genograms were located in the files, which helped to determine efforts for relative placements. Reviewers also saw good involvement of fathers in cases. They also noted that the agency made efforts to involve parents who were incarcerated.
In the cases that were partially achieved reviewers noted a lack of effort in locating relatives for placement and encouraging positive parent and child interaction. They also noted inadequate information in relation to ICWA being applicable. Poor or minimal documentation in the file was also noted in these cases.

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	43%
Partially Achieved:	6	43%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	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 14 of the cases were applicable for this item***
- ***8 (57%) cases were rated as strengths. 3 were in-home cases and 5 were out-of-home.***
- ***6 (43%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 2 were in-home cases and 4 were out-of-home.***

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

A. Child
Strengths: In twelve out of the fourteen cases reviewers felt that the child's needs were assessed and services were provided to meet these needs if necessary. Four were in-home cases and eight were out-of-home. Reviewers saw needs being assessed informally through family team meetings and visits and also in a more formal manner such as a family assessment. Services provided included therapy to help with family relationship, improving social skills, Independent living skills, and involvement in school activities. There were many cases in which the child/youth was assessed but no needs were identified other then mental or behavioral health which are captured in other items.

Areas needing improvement: Two out of the fourteen cases were found to need improvement. In one of the cases needing improvement reviewers did not find any type of assessment on a sibling in the home. This was an in-home case. In the out-of-home case needing improvement reviewers found some needs that were not addressed. This included Independent living skills and a need to build the relationship between the youth and step-mother.

B. Parents
Strengths: In nine out of the fourteen cases reviewers felt that the parent's needs were assessed and services were provided to meet those needs if necessary. Three were in-home cases and six were out-of-home. Reviewers saw that needs were assessed informally through family team meetings and visits and formally through family assessments. Services provided included individual and family therapy, U/A's, family support, domestic violence classes, parenting class, and drug treatment.

Areas needing improvement: Five out of the fourteen applicable cases for parents' needs being assessed were rated areas needing improvement. Two were in-home cases and three were out-of-home. Reviewers saw a lack of documentation and effort in assessing the needs of parents in these cases. They also noted a lack of family team meetings or contact with the parents in these cases.

C. Foster Parents
Strengths: Six out of the nine applicable cases for assessing foster parents needs were rated as strengths. Reviewers saw that needs were being assessed informally through family team meetings or visits with the foster parents. Transportation, therapy, and food stamps were some of the identified services provided.

Areas needing improvement: In the three cases needing improvement, reviewers found that the foster parents' needs were not assessed. One foster mother reported that she needed help with transportation and daycare listings but was told there was no assistance for her. Another foster mother said that she was not given the paperwork needed to get medical or daycare help.

Item 18. <u>Child and family involvement in case planning</u>
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*:**

- ***13 of the 14 of cases were applicable for this item***
- ***9 (69%) cases were rated as strengths. 4 were in-home cases and 5 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***4 (31%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 1 was an in-home case and three were out-of-home cases.***

Strengths: In the cases rated as strengths reviewers found that the family was involved in the case planning process through family team meetings and visits. Reviewers noted one case in

which the worker visited the father, who was incarcerated, to keep them involved in case planning. In eight of the cases the child was too young to be involved in case planning. In another case the mother lived in California but was involved in the court hearings and some other meetings by phone.

Areas needing improvement: In the four cases needing improvement, reviewers saw a lack of documentation showing involvement of the child and parent in the case planning process. One father said that the agency made decisions without him and made it hard for him to attend family team meetings because of short notice.

Item 19. <u>Worker visits with child</u>
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***
- ***11 (79%) cases were rated as strengths. 4 were in-home cases and 7 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***3 (21%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 1 was an in-home case and 3 were out-of-home cases.***

Strengths: In the eleven cases that were rated 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. Many of 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 provider in these cases. The reviewers saw that many visits took place at the child's home or placement.

Areas needing improvement: The three cases needing improvement included 1 case in which the quality of the visits was unknown because the file narrative did not state if visits were private or what was discussed. In the other two cases the visits were less then monthly. In one of these cases only three visits were documented during the eight months the child was placed out of home.

Item 20. <u>Worker visits with parents</u>
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*:**

- ***All 14 cases were applicable for this item***

- ***8(57%) cases were rated as strengths. 4 were in-home cases and 4 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***6 (43%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 1 was an in-home case and 5 were out of home cases.***

Strengths: In the eight cases that were rated as strengths reviewers noted monthly contact between the worker and parent. 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 and child/parent needs.

Areas needing improvement: The six cases needing improvement included two cases in which no efforts were made to contact and involve the father. Reviewers also noted a lack of visit frequency with the mother in two of the cases and a lack of frequency with both parents in the other two cases.

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 knew what was happening with their case and were actively involved in it. The foster parents were also actively involved in the out-of-home cases. They also saw good assessments of needs were being done. Many were during family team meetings or visits with the child/parent. Visits were taking place in the child's placement or parental home.

In the cases that were not achieved or partially achieved reviewers noted a lack of assessments being completed. Reviewers commented that some of the workers had a hard time describing how children or parents were assessed. They also saw that children, parents, and foster parents were not involved in case planning in these cases. Reviewers noted that there was poor documentation in these cases also.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2

	Total Number	**Total Percentage**
Substantially Achieved:	9	90%
Partially Achieved:	0	0%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	10%
Not Applicable:	4	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*:**

- ***10 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***9 (90%) cases were rated as strengths. 1 was an in-home case and 8 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***1 (10%) case was rated as needing improvement. It was an in-home case.***

Strengths: In the nine cases that were strengths for this item, it was noted that educational needs were assessed and no services were needed. These included informal assessments during family team meetings and assessment by the early development network in three of the cases. Updated school records were also in the files.

Areas needing improvement: In the case rated as needing improvement reviewers could not find that any type of assessment had been done on a sibling in the home.

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 saw good communication between the school and parents, foster parents, and worker. They noted that referrals were being done for young children to be assessed.
In the cases that were rated as not achieved, reviewers noted that there was basically no information in the file on the sibling in the home.

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

<u>Status of Well-Being Outcome WB3;</u>

	Total Number	**Total Percentage**
Substantially Achieved:	10	77%
Partially Achieved:	1	8%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	15%
Not Applicable:	1	7%

Item 22. <u>Physical health of the child</u>
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***
- ***10 (100%) cases were rated as strengths. 1 case was an in-home and the other 9 were out-of-home.***
- ***0 (0%) cases were rated as needing improvement***

Strengths: In the ten cases that were rated as strengths for this item reviewers found that medical/dental needs were assessed by annual checkups and services were provided when needed. A child needing sealant on their molars was the only need and service identified and provided in the cases.

Areas needing improvement: No cases were found to need improvement.

Item 23. <u>Mental health of the child</u>
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*:**
- ***10 of the 14 cases were applicable for this item***
- ***7 (70%) cases were rated as strengths. 2 were in-home cases and 5 were out-of-home cases.***
- ***3 (30%) cases were rated as needing improvement. 2 were in-home cases and 1 was an out-of-home case.***

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 or formally through evaluations, such as mental status exams. Services provided included individual and family counseling.

Areas needing improvement: In one of the cases needing improvement, there were no assessments done on other children in the home. In another case, reviewers found that therapy discontinued when a child was reunified and reviewers determined it should not have. In the last case, there were no assessments done under the period under review.

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 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 why therapy was occurring or had discontinued. Also, there was no information on siblings in an in-home case.

Case Sample: *Mini CFSR Review – July 2010*
Type of Review: *3rd Mini CFSR* **Report Type:** *Central Service Area*
Number of Reviews: *14* **Review Period:** *July 1st, 2009 – July 31st, 2010*

PERFORMANCE ITEM RESULTS

Performance Item		Item Ratings (#)			Item Ratings (%)		
		S	ANI	N/A	S	ANI	N/A
Item 1:	Timeliness of initiating investigations	1	1	12	50	50	86
Item 2:	Repeat maltreatment	1	0	13	100	0	93
Item 3:	Services to family	4	0	10	100	0	93
Item 4:	Risk assessment and safety management	8	6	0	57	43	0
Item 5:	Foster care re-entries	2	0	12	100	0	86
Item 6:	Stability of foster care placement	7	2	5	78	22	36
Item 7:	Permanency goal for child	2	7	5	22	78	36
Item 8:	Reunification, guardianship etc	4	2	8	67	33	57
Item 9:	Adoption	2	1	11	67	33	79
Item 10:	Other planned permanent living arrangement	0	0	14	0	0	100
Item 11:	Proximity of foster care placement	8	0	6	100	0	43
Item 12:	Placement with siblings	2	0	12	100	0	86
Item 13:	Visiting with parents and siblings	5	3	6	63	38	43
Item 14:	Preserving connections	6	3	5	67	33	36
Item 15:	Relative placement	5	4	5	56	44	36
Item 16:	Relationship of child in care with parents	6	2	6	75	25	43
Item 17:	Needs and services	8	6	0	57	43	0
Item 18:	Child and family involvement in case planning	9	4	1	69	31	7
Item 19:	Caseworker visits with child	11	3	0	79	21	0
Item 20:	Caseworker visits with parent(s)	8	6	0	57	43	0
Item 21:	Educational needs of the child	9	1	4	90	10	29
Item 22:	Physical health of the child	10	0	4	100	0	29
Item 23:	Mental/behavioral health of the child	7	3	4	70	30	29

OUTCOME RESULTS

	COUNTS (#)				PERCENTAGES (%)			
Performance Outcome	*SA*	*PA*	*NA*	*N/A*	*SA*	*PA*	*NACH*	*N/A*
Safety 1 (Items 1-2)	2	1	0	11	67	33	0	79
Safety 2 (Items 3-4)	8	1	5	0	57	7	36	0
Permanency 1 (Items 5-10)	2	7	0	5	22	78	0	36
Permanency 2 (Items 11-16)	5	4	0	5	56	44	0	36
Wellbeing 1 (Items 17-20)	6	6	2	0	43	43	14	0
Wellbeing 2 (Item 21)	9	0	1	4	90	0	10	29
Wellbeing 3 (Items 22-23)	10	1	2	1	77	8	15	7

KEY:
N/A = Not Applicable ***PA = Partially Achieved*** ***NACH = Not Achieved***
S = Strength ***SA = Substantially Achieved*** ***ANI = Area Needing Improvement***