FINAL REPORT

7th Quarter Mini Children and Family Services Review

Eastern Service Area

July 11 – 13, 2011

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Executive Summary
Children and Family Services Review
Eastern Service Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report: Child and Family Services Review
Eastern Service Area – July 11th – 13th 2011

This document presents the findings from the 2011 7th Quarter Mini Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the Eastern 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, 2011 and 2012.

The Eastern Service area 7th Quarter Mini CFSR Review was conducted on July 11th through July 13th, 2011. The period under review for the onsite case review was July 1st, 2010 through July 1st 2011. The findings were derived from file reviews of 19 cases (11 foster care and 8 in home services), which were randomly selected from all open child welfare cases at some point in time during the period under review. The reviews also included interviews with parents, children, foster parents, Children and Family Services Specialists (CFSS), Children and Family Outcome Monitors (CFOM) and Family Permanency Specialists (FPS) to assess items 17-20 within the review tool.

In the Eastern Service Area, 14 of the 19 cases were brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) because of abuse/neglect issues. One case was a status offense, one was a dependency and three were juvenile justice cases. All of the reviewed cases were from the Omaha and Papillion Offices.

The review was completed by 8 teams of two reviewers made up of both staff from DHHS and Families Matter providers, KVC & Nebraska Families Collaborative (NFC). 100% of the cases were reviewed by the following second level reviewers: Angela Bredenkamp from NFC and Kathy Anstine from DHHS.

Background Information

The Mini CFSR is modeled after the Federal CFSR reviews and assesses the Service Area's performance on 23 items relevant to seven outcomes.

With regards to outcomes, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items incorporated in the seven outcomes depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the onsite case review. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 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 7th Quarter Mini CFSR identified several areas of high performance in the Eastern 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, the Service Area did achieve overall ratings of Strength (100%) for the individual indicators pertaining to Item 2 repeat maltreatment, Item 3 services to family, Item 5 foster care reentry and Item 11 placing children in close proximity to their parents. This round Item 6 stability of foster care was near the 95% mark: Item 1 timeliness of initiating investigations, Item 12 placement with siblings, and Item 23 Mental/Behavioral Health of the child were all at the 83% mark.

The mini CFSR review also 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 9 percent of the reviewed cases. The lowest ratings within this outcome were for Items 9 and 10, Adoption and Other Planned Living Arrangement, which was rated as Strength in 0% of the 7 applicable cases.

Concerns were identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 2, (Continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children) which was substantially achieved in 18 percent of reviewed cases. Within Permanency Outcome 2, the lowest ratings within this outcome was for Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) which was rated as a Strength in 18% of the cases and Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents) which was rated a s a Strength in 27% of the cases.

Concerns were also identified with regard to Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs), which was substantially achieved in 37 percent of the cases reviewed. The lowest ratings were for Item 17 (Needs and services to child, parents, and foster parents), which was rated as a Strength in 42 percent of the reviewed cases; Item 18 (Child and family involvement in case planning) was rated as a Strength in 47 percent of the reviewed cases; and Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parent (s)) was rated as a Strength in 32 percent of the reviewed cases.

Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their education needs) was substantially achieved in 69 percent of reviewed cases. Well-Being Outcome 3 (Children receive

adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs) was substantially achieved in 56 percent of reviewed cases.

KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

I. SAFETY

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

Status of Safety Outcome S1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	5	83.33%
Partially Achieved:	0	0.00%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	16.67%
Not Applicable:	13	68.42%

Reviewer Comments S1:

- Contact with the victim needs to occur according to Priority. Reasons for the delays were not documented within the case file and/or the documented reason for the delay was not considered to be beyond the control of Agency.
- Delay in completing the assessments within 30-day timeframe.
- Five cases demonstrated that the investigation was initiated in accordance with the Agency's timeframes.

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 Children and Family Services Specialist within 0 to 5 days from the time the intake is received and Priority 3 has a response time of 0-10 days.

Review Findings:

- Six of the 19 cases reviewed were applicable to the Item.
- Five (83.33%) cases of the six were rated as a Strength.
    - One foster care case and four in home cases were rated as a strength.
- One (16.66%) cases of the six were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
    - The one case rated as an area needing improvement was an in home case.

Strength:

- DHHS successfully initiated and completed the assessments according to required timeframes on five of the six applicable cases.

Area Needing Improvement:

- In one case the investigation was not initiated within the priority response timeframe specified in policy and there was no reason for the delay documented. This was a priority two which requires contact to be made within 5 days and contact was made in 7 days.

Item 2. <u>Repeat maltreatment</u>

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 maltreatment report. Cases were considered not applicable for assessment if the child or family had never had a substantiated maltreatment report during the reporting period.

Review Findings:

- Two of the 19 cases reviewed were applicable to the Item.
- Both (100.00%) of the two cases were rated as a Strength.
  - One foster care case and one in home case were rated as a strength.

Strength:

- Both of the cases with a substantiated report of maltreatment during the period under review did not have a report received in a 6-month period before or after the maltreatment report.

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

<u>Status of Safety Outcome S2</u>

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	13	68.42%
Partially Achieved:	4	21.05%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	10.53%
Not Applicable:	0	0.00%

Reviewer Comments S2:

- Informal and formal Safety Assessments are not occurring at appropriate times in the case, particularly when a child goes home and at case closing.
- In some cases, children remaining in the home were not assessed by the Agency.

Item 3. <u>Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal</u>
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. Five of the 19 cases were excluded from the assessment because there were no substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed maltreatment reports or identified risks of harm to children in the home during the period under review, the target child entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home who were at risk of maltreatment or the target child was reunified during the period under review and the reviewer determined there were no safety concerns.

Review Findings:

- Thirteen of the 19 cases reviewed were applicable to the Item.
- All thirteen (100%) cases were rated as a Strength.
    - Five foster care cases and eight in home cases were rated as a strength.

Strength:

- Services were implemented for both parents and children in order to safely maintain the child (ren) in the home.
- In instances that children were removed from the home, removal was necessary to ensure child safety and or was due to the child's need for higher level of care.
- Services were implemented in order to ensure safety during reunification.

Area Needing Improvement:

- None noted.

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 of the nineteen cases were applicable to the Item.
- Thirteen (68.42%) of the 19 cases were rated as a Strength.
    - Seven of the thirteen cases were foster care cases and six were in home cases.

- Six (31.58%) of the 19 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
  - Four of the six cases were foster care cases and two were in home cases.

Strength:

- Safety Assessments included all family members.
- Safety Assessments and/or risk assessments were completed prior to case closure and at the birth of a new child.
- Safety Assessments and safety plans were updated as needed.
- Informal assessment of safety for all children within the home.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Ongoing Safety Assessments were not completed as needed (reunification, case closure).
- Safety Plans were not completed and/or not updated as needed by the Agency.
- Safety Plans were not monitored by the Agency.
- Assessment of safety did not occur on all children residing in the family.

II. PERMANENCY

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

<u>Status of Permanency Outcome P1</u>

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	1	09.09%
Partially Achieved:	10	90.91%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	00.00%
Not Applicable:	8	42.11%

Reviewer Comments P1:

- There were no foster care re-entries.
- One foster care case was Substantially Achieved-the case plan was completed 2 weeks after case opening and was updated every three months.
- Permanency goals/case plans need to be established and updated in a timely manner.
- Placements were stable and/or change of placement occurred to achieve or move towards permanency goal.
- Case files did not contain documentation for an exception or a compelling reason for not filing TPR.
- Court was a barrier in moving child to an adoptive home.

Item 5. <u>Foster care re-entries</u>

Reviewers rated this assessment as 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:

- Four of the eleven cases were applicable to this Item.
- All four cases were (100.00%) rated as a Strength.

Strength:

- Children were placed with a relative home and/or child specific placement during the period under review; there were no prior history of foster care placements.

Area Needing Improvement:

- None noted.

Item 6. <u>Stability of foster care placement</u>

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:

- All of out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- Ten (90.91%) out of eleven cases were rated as Strength.
- One (09.09%) of the ten cases was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- Child remained in the same foster/relative placement, sibling was placed with this youth at birth so siblings were able to stay together and are being adopted.
- Placement change reflected the agency efforts to achieve permanency of adoption for the target child.
- Placement change was due to youth's mental health/behavioral health needs that required higher level of care.
- Child was placed in a relative home that was well equipped to meet the child's medical needs.

Area Needing Improvement:

- The child experienced several placements during the period under review; including detention, relatives, child specific and home with parents; need to assess and support the placement providers to maintain placement stability.

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 permanency goals were not changed in a timely manner to reflect current case circumstances, when it was apparent that reunification was unlikely to happen, termination of parental rights was not filed when the child had been in 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:

- All eleven out of home cases reviewed were applicable to the Item.
- Two (18.18%) of the eleven cases were rated as a Strength.
- Nine (81.82%) of the eleven cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
- In cases applicable to this item, the ESA had the following:

<u>Primary Permanency Goals:</u>

Reunification – 6 cases
Adoption -2 cases
Family Preservation – 1 case

<u>Concurrent Goals:</u>

No concurrent goal - 3 cases
Adoption – 4 cases
Independent Living – 2 cases

Strength:

- Primary and concurrent permanency goals were established and achieved in a timely manner.

Area Needing Improvement:

- In a majority of cases that was rated as an area needing improvement, the permanency goal was not appropriate to meet the child's current needs or was not updated in a timely manner to address the child's current needs.
- In two cases, permanency goals were not established within the 60 day timeframe set by DHHS.
- Case files did not include documentation of an exception or a compelling reason for not filing for TPR.

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:

- Eight of the eleven out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- Four (50.00%) of the eight cases were rated as a Strength.
- Four (50.00%) of the eight cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- Child had intensive psychiatric needs preventing a timely reunification. The file contained evidence that indicated the Agency was actively working to help youth develop coping skills necessary to reside at home.
- In one case, reunification occurred within nine months.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Reunification has exceeded twelve months; children have been in foster care for 23 months despite the fact that the court had ordered a concurrent goal of guardianship by the 5th month the children were in care.
- Child was in relative care for approximately 2 years before reunification with a parent; relative not willing to provide permanency.
- The children were in care for 28 months with the mother's rights terminated, but father's rights not addressed and his whereabouts are known.

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:

- Six of the eleven out of home cases reviewed were applicable to the Item.
- None (00.00%) of the six cases were rated as Strength.
- Six (100.00%) of the two cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- None noted.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Case file documentation does not support that the Agency is making concerted efforts to achieve the permanency goal of adoption by:
  - Not addressing fathers/mothers rights timely
  - Not changing the goal to adoption timely
  - Court refusal to allow the move of a child from a relative who refuses to provide permanency despite there being a fos-adopt home available.

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:

- One of the eleven out of home cases was applicable to the Item.
- No (00.00%) case was rated as a Strength.
- One (100.00%) case was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- None noted.

Area Needing Improvement:

- The one applicable case was a concurrent goal of Independent Living. The youth was placed at the YRTC and there was no documentation located within the case file that any program was involved with the youth to prepare him for independence.

Outcome P2: Continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children.

Status of Permanency Outcome P2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	2	18.18%
Partially Achieved:	9	81.82%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0.00%
Not Applicable:	8	42.11%

Reviewer Comments P2:

- Staff makes all efforts to place youth in their communities and near their families.
- No concerted efforts to locate and involve non-custodial fathers.
- Relative placements were utilized in some instances.
- Need to document how we are preserving family connections.
- Relatives are identified but documentation does not reflect that we are contacting them for placement.
- Need to ensure sibling visitation is occurring as well as with parents.
- Need to make more efforts to promote the relationships of families (i.e. attendance at school activities, medical appointments, sporting events etc.)

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:

- Ten of the eleven out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- All (100.00%) of the cases were rated as Strengths.

Strength:

- Majority (8 of 10) of the placements were within the same community as the children's parent.
- Two of the youth were placed outside the community based on their behavioral/treatment needs, but it was close enough to allow for frequent visitation.

Area Needing Improvement:

- None noted.

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:

- Six of the eleven out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- Five (83.33%) of the six cases were rated as a Strength.
- One (16.67%) of the six cases was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- Target child and his sibling were separated due to their high behavioral health needs.
- In four cases, target child was able to be placed with their sibling (s).

Area Needing Improvement:

- There was no case file documentation to indicate the reason why siblings were separated.

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 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:

- All of the eleven out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- Two (18.18%) of the eleven cases were rated as a Strength.
- Nine (81.82%) of the eleven cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- The case file indicated that the Agency was making concerted efforts for the children to have regular visitation with their parents and siblings.
- Visits were sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship as the visits were occurring in the parental home, allowed for morning and evening routines to be followed, and the sibling that was placed elsewhere was also in attendance.

Area Needing Improvement:

- In one case, case file documentation did not indicate Agency efforts to encourage sibling visitation.
- One case which was an OJS case with the child placed in YRTC there was no documentation that the Department offered monthly visitation, there was no visitation plan, and no information regarding visitation between the youth and siblings.
- Six cases did not have a plan to involve the father in visitation with the child.

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:

- All eleven of the out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- Four (36.36%) of the eleven cases were rated as a Strength.
- Seven (63.64%) of the eleven cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- Child was able to be maintained in the same child care.
- Extended family connections were maintained for the child.
- Relative placement and relative visitation was sought out for the child.
- Sufficient inquiry was conducted by the Agency to determine eligibility for membership in an Indian Tribe.

Area Needing Improvement:

- File documentation did not indicate the Agency made sufficient inquiry to determine eligibility for tribal membership/and or create a cultural plan when ICWA did apply.
- Agency did not promote contact with siblings.
- Agency did not promote contact with extended family members.

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.

Review Findings:

- Nine of the eleven out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- Four (44.44%) of the nine cases were rated as a Strength.
- Five (55.56%) of the nine cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- Child was placed in relative care.
- In two cases youth placed in relative care with siblings, one of which intended to adopt them.

Area Needing Improvement:

- In three cases the file did not contain documentation of a paternal relative search.
- One case the file did not contain an adequate relative search for either maternal or paternal relatives.
- Relatives were identified in the case file, but there was no documentation that they were ever contacted regarding 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:

- All of the eleven out of home cases were applicable to the Item.
- Three (27.27%) of the eleven cases were rated as a Strength.
- Eight (72.73%) of the eleven cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- Family team meetings and services were in place to encourage and promote a positive bond between the child and parents.
- Parents in three cases were involved in medical and dental appointments and/or were active in school enrollment and providing transportation for their child while they were in out of home care.

Area Needing Improvement:

- In six cases the agency did not make concerted efforts to encourage the father's participation.
- In two cases the agency did not make concerted efforts to encourage either parents participation.

III. WELL-BEING

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

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	7	36.84%
Partially Achieved:	9	47.37%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	3	15.79%
Not Applicable:	0	0.00%

Reviewer Comments WB1:

- No concerted efforts to locate and/or involve the non-custodial fathers in case planning.
- Child (ren), family and foster parents' needs were not consistently assessed and addressed by the Agency.
- Worker contact with the youth and parents needs to occur monthly, documentation of these visits should reflect the worker is discussing safety, permanency and wellbeing in order to promote the achievement of case plan outcomes.
- Needs, services and case planning were addressed at the Family Team Meeting and during required contacts.
- In home cases need to assess and visit all children residing in the home.

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 cases were applicable to the Item.
- Eight (42.11%) of the 19 cases were rated as a Strength.
  - Three foster care cases and five in home cases were rated as strength.
- Eleven (57.89%) of the 19 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
  - Eight foster care cases and three in home case were rated as area needing improvement.

Strength: Separating out Items 17A, B, and C.

- Sixteen of 19 cases were rated as strengths for assessing the needs and services to the children (17A).
    - Assessments; Formal and informal assessments were utilized during the period under review. Formal assessments included; Safety Assessment, Ansell Casey, Pretreatment Assessment, Early Development Assessments, Youth Level of Services Inventory (YLSI), Psychological and Psychiatric Evaluations.
    - Identified needs; Communication skills, relationship building with family members, independent living skills, positive role modeling and supervision.
    - Services to child (ren); family support, family therapy, sibling visitation, wrap-around services, child care, electronic monitoring, juvenile tracker, reporting center, mentoring and independent living services.
- Nine of 19 applicable cases were rated as strengths for assessing the needs and services to the parents (17B).
    - Assessments; Formal and informal assessments were utilized during the period under review. Formal assessments included; Pretreatment Assessment, Mediation Services, Psychological Evaluation and Chemical Dependency Evaluation.
    - Identified needs; Develop age appropriate rules and expectations/consequences, skills to parent child with special needs, family relationships, transportation, communication, budgeting, mental health, housing, substance abuse and employment.
    - Services to parent (s); Family support, visitation, individual and family therapy, transportation services, anger management, domestic violence, psychiatric, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment and drug screening services.
- Four of eight applicable cases were rated as strengths for assessing the needs and services to the foster parents (17C).
    - Assessments; Informal assessment was utilized during the period under review.
    - Identified needs; Child care, respite and transportation.
    - Services to foster parent (s); Day care assistance, overnight respite and strategies to address transportation barrier.

Area Needing Improvement: Separating out Items 17A, B, and C.

- Three of 19 applicable cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement for assessing the needs and services to children (17A).
    - Reviewers were unable to locate a formal or informal needs assessment for child.
    - Needs were identified but not addressed by the Agency. One case the caregiver stated she requested services of respite, sibling visitation, and increased therapeutic services that were not provided.
    - In home cases, other children residing in the home were not assessed by the Agency.

- Ten of 19 applicable cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement for assessing the needs and services to the parents (17B).
    - No concerted efforts to locate the father. Seven of the ten cases the mothers needs were assessed but not the fathers.
    - Reviewers were unable to locate a formal or informal needs assessment for parents.
- Four of eight applicable cases were rated as an area needing improvement for assessing needs and services to foster parents (17C).
    - Foster parents stated their needs were never assessed.
    - Payment issues were left unresolved.
    - Respite services requested by grandmother were not provided.

Item 17	**Child**	**Parent**	**Foster Parent**
Strength:	16	9	4
ANI:	3	10	4
NA:	0	0	11

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:

- 19 out of 19 cases were applicable to the Item.
- Nine (47.37%) of the 19 cases were rated as a Strength.
    - Four foster care cases and five in home cases were rated as strength.
- Ten (52.63%) of the 19 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
    - Seven foster care cases and three in home cases were rated as area needing improvement.

Strength:

- Case plan involvement was occurring through family team meetings, treatment team meetings and required contacts with youth and families.
- Documentation indicated concerted efforts to involve the father and father's response to the Agency's efforts.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Lack of documentation to show that attempts were made by the Agency to discuss the case plan at the family team meetings and/or during required contacts.
- Documentation did not indicate the key family members (child, mother, father) were involved in case planning.
- Case file did not demonstrate concerted efforts to locate/involve fathers.

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 cases were applicable to the Item.
- Fourteen (73.68%) of the 19 cases were rated as a Strength.
  - Eight foster care cases and six in home cases were rated as strength.
- Five (26.32%) of the 19 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
  - Three foster care cases and two in home cases were rated as area needing improvement.

Strength:
- Children and Families Services Specialist and/or Family Permanency Specialist had a pattern of monthly visitation with the child (ren). Case file documentation indicated that the visits were private and were of quality by discussing such things as needs, services, case planning, permanency, visits, behaviors, and education.

Area Needing Improvement:
- Visits between worker and child did not occur monthly.
- Case file indicated that the worker visited monthly with the child, but the documentation was not sufficient to address issues pertaining to safety, permanency and well-being.
- Visits were primarily occurring outside of the child's residence at court.
- Documentation did not reflect that visits between worker and child were private.

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 if: (1) Agency contact with the mother or father was determined to be contrary to a child's safety or best interests (and this is documented in the case file), (2) the location of the parent was unknown during the entire period under review, despite documented concerted Agency efforts to locate her or him, (3) the parents' parental rights were terminated before the period under review and she or he is not involved in the child's life, or (4) during the entire period under review, the parent was not involved in the child's life or in case planning in any way despite Agency efforts to involve her or him.

Review Findings:
- All of the 19 cases were applicable to the Item.
- Six (31.58%) of the 19 cases was rated as a Strength.
  - Two foster care cases and four in home cases were rated as a strength.
- Thirteen (68.42%) of the 19 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

- Nine foster care cases and four in home cases were rated as area needing improvement.

Strength:

- Agency met monthly with parents. Documentation and/or interviews indicated that the visits were high quality, discussing progress toward outcomes and often discussing topics of safety, permanency and well-being.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Contacts were not occurring monthly.
- Documentation needs to reflect that issues of safety, permanency and well-being are being discussed between the worker, mother and father.
- Face to face contact occurred with one parent on a monthly basis, no regular contact with the other parent. Efforts to contact the other parent were not always documented within the case file.
- Concerted efforts to locate and involve the father were not documented within the case file.

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

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	9	69.23%
Partially Achieved:	0	0.00%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	4	30.77%
Not Applicable:	6	31.58%

Reviewer Comments WB2:

- In some instances, case files contained Individualized Education Plans.
- Child was being assessed and services were being implemented by Early Development Network as needed.
- Documentation of school performance was contained within the case file.
- In home cases that presented with educational issues, not all children in the home were assessed to determine if they had similar education needs.
- If educational needs were identified, Agency did not always assist in addressing the child's educational needs through appropriate service intervention.

Item 21. <u>Educational needs of the child</u>

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:

- 13 of the 19 cases were applicable to the Item.
- Nine (69.23%) of the 13 cases were rated as a Strength.
  - Eight foster care cases and one in home cases were rated as strength.
- Four (30.77%) of the 13 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
  - Three foster care cases and one in home cases were rated as area needing improvement.

Strength:

- Services such as tutoring, occupational therapy, and speech therapy were implemented to meet the child's educational needs.
- File contained documented discussions of the child's progress in school.
- Child was assessed by the Early Development Network and services were implemented to address the child's educational needs.
- Other children in the home appeared to be assessed and educational needs were being met based on those assessments.

Area Needing Improvement:

- There was a lack of documentation in the case file regarding the child's education as the case plan indicated that the child wanted to obtain his GED yet there was no information as to what we did to help him obtain an education.
- Agency did not assess/address the youth's educational needs.
- CCAA completed on youth indicated that the youth qualified for special education services but there was not documentation in the file to indicate that the YRTC was providing special education services.
- Agency did not address the educational needs of the other children in the home.

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

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB3

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	9	56.25%
Partially Achieved:	5	31.25%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	12.50%
Not Applicable:	3	15.79%

Reviewer Comments WB3:

- The cases rated as strengths had documentation that medical examinations, dental examinations and mental health assessments were completed accordingly.
- Documentation indicated that services were provided to address identified medical, dental and mental health needs.
- Cases identified as area needing improvement lacked documentation of ongoing assessment of the youth's physical, dental and mental health needs, primarily dental assessments.

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:

- Thirteen of the 19 cases were applicable to the Item.
- Seven (53.85%) of the thirteen cases were rated as a Strength.
    - Six foster care cases and one in home case were rated as strengths.
- Six (46.15%) of the thirteen cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
    - Five foster care cases and one in home case were rated as area needing improvement.

Strength:

- Cases contained documentation of routine health and dental examinations and services provided to meet any identified needs.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Routine immunizations were noted to need updating but was not documented in the file that it was completed
- Child is overdue for dental examinations or had been seen by a dentist but no results were documented in the file.

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, either initially or ongoing, of the child's mental health and implemented appropriate mental health services based upon those needs. In-home services cases are not applicable for an assessment of this Item if the reviewer determines that there is no reason to expect that, during the period under review, the Agency would address mental/behavioral health issues for any children in the family, given the reason for Agency involvement or the circumstances of the case.

Review Findings:

- Twelve of the nineteen cases were applicable to the Item.
- Ten (83.33%) of the twelve cases were rated as a Strength.
  - Seven foster care cases and three in home cases were rated as strength.
- Two (16.67%) of the twelve cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement
  - One foster care case and one in home case were rated as area needing improvement.

Strength:

- Cases contained formal assessments of mental health needs, services provided to meet those needs and documentation in the file to show progress. Evaluations included; psychological/psychiatric evaluations, substance abuse evaluations and mental status exams.
- Services were implemented based upon the child's identified mental health needs.
- Therapy and medication summaries were located in the file.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Mental health assessments were completed for the child. Case file documentation did not indicate that services were provided to address the behavioral concerns identified in the assessment.
- Mental health assessments were not completed for all children residing in the home.

ESA Results

Case Sample: 3rd - *Mini CFSR Review – July2011*
Type of Review: 3rd Quarter *Mini CFSR* **Report Type:** *Eastern Service Area Mini CFSR*
Number of Reviews: *19* **Review Period:** *July 1st, 2010 – July1st, 2011*

PERFORMANCE ITEM RESULTS

Performance Item		Item Ratings (#)			Item Ratings (%)		
		S	ANI	N/A	S	ANI	N/A
Item 1:	Timeliness of initiating investigations	5	1	13	83.33%	16.66%	68.42%
Item 2:	Repeat maltreatment	2	0	17	100.00%	0.00%	89.47%
Item 3:	Services to family	13	0	6	100.00%	0.00%	31.58%
Item 4:	Risk assessment and safety management	13	6	-	68.42%	31.58%	-
Item 5:	Foster care re-entries	4	0	15	100.00%	0.00%	78.95%
Item 6:	Stability of foster care placement	10	1	8	90.91%	09.09%	42.11%
Item 7:	Permanency goal for child	2	9	8	18.18%	81.82%	42.11%
Item 8:	Reunification, guardianship etc	4	4	11	50.00%	50.00%	57.89%
Item 9:	Adoption	0	6	13	0.00%	100.00%	68.42%
Item 10:	Other planned permanent living arrangement	0	1	18	0.00%	100.00%	94.74%
Item 11:	Proximity of foster care placement	10	0	9	100.00%	0.00%	47.37%
Item 12:	Placement with siblings	5	1	13	83.33%	16.67%	68.42%
Item 13:	Visiting with parents and siblings	2	9	8	18.18%	81.82%	42.11%
Item 14:	Preserving connections	4	7	8	36.36%	63.64%	42.11%
Item 15:	Relative placement	4	5	10	44.44%	55.56%	52.63%
Item 16:	Relationship of child in care with parents	3	8	8	27.27%	72.73%	42.11%
Item 17:	Needs and services	8	11	-	42.11%	57.89%	-
Item 18:	Child and family involvement in case planning	9	10	-	47.37%	52.63%	-
Item 19:	Caseworker visits with child	14	5	-	73.68%	26.32%	-
Item 20:	Caseworker visits with parent(s)	6	13	-	31.58%	68.42%	-
Item 21:	Educational needs of the child	9	4	6	69.23%	30.77%	31.58%
Item 22:	Physical health of the child	7	6	6	53.85%	46.15%	31.58%
Item 23:	Mental/behavioral health of the child	10	2	7	83.33%	16.17%	36.84%

OUTCOME RESULTS

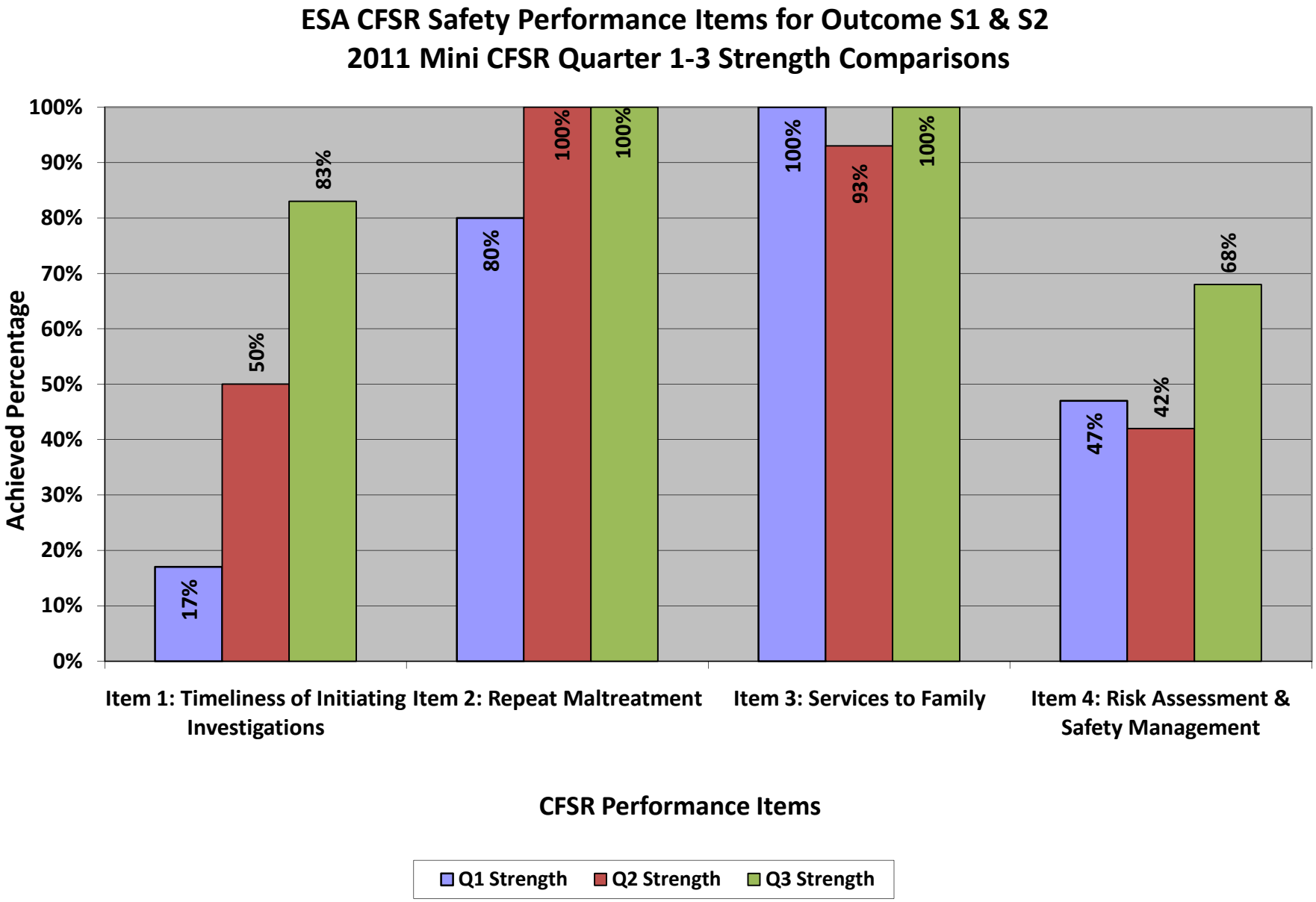
	COUNTS (#)				PERCENTAGES (%)			
Performance Outcome	*SA*	*PA*	*NACH*	*N/A*	*SA*	*PA*	*NACH*	*N/A*
Safety 1 (Items 1-2)	5	0	1	13	83.33%	0.00%	16.67%	68.42%
Safety 2 (Items 3-4)	13	4	2	0	68.42%	21.05%	10.53%	-
Permanency 1 (Items 5-10)	1	10	0	8	09.09%	90.91%	0.00%	42.11%
Permanency 2 (Items 11-16)	2	9	0	8	18.18%	81.82%	0.00%	42.11%
Wellbeing 1 (Items 17-20)	7	9	3	0	36.84%	47.37%	15.79%	-
Wellbeing 2 (Item 21)	9	0	4	6	69.23%	0.00%	30.77%	31.58%
Wellbeing 3 (Items 22-23)	9	5	2	3	56.25%	31.25%	12.50%	15.79%

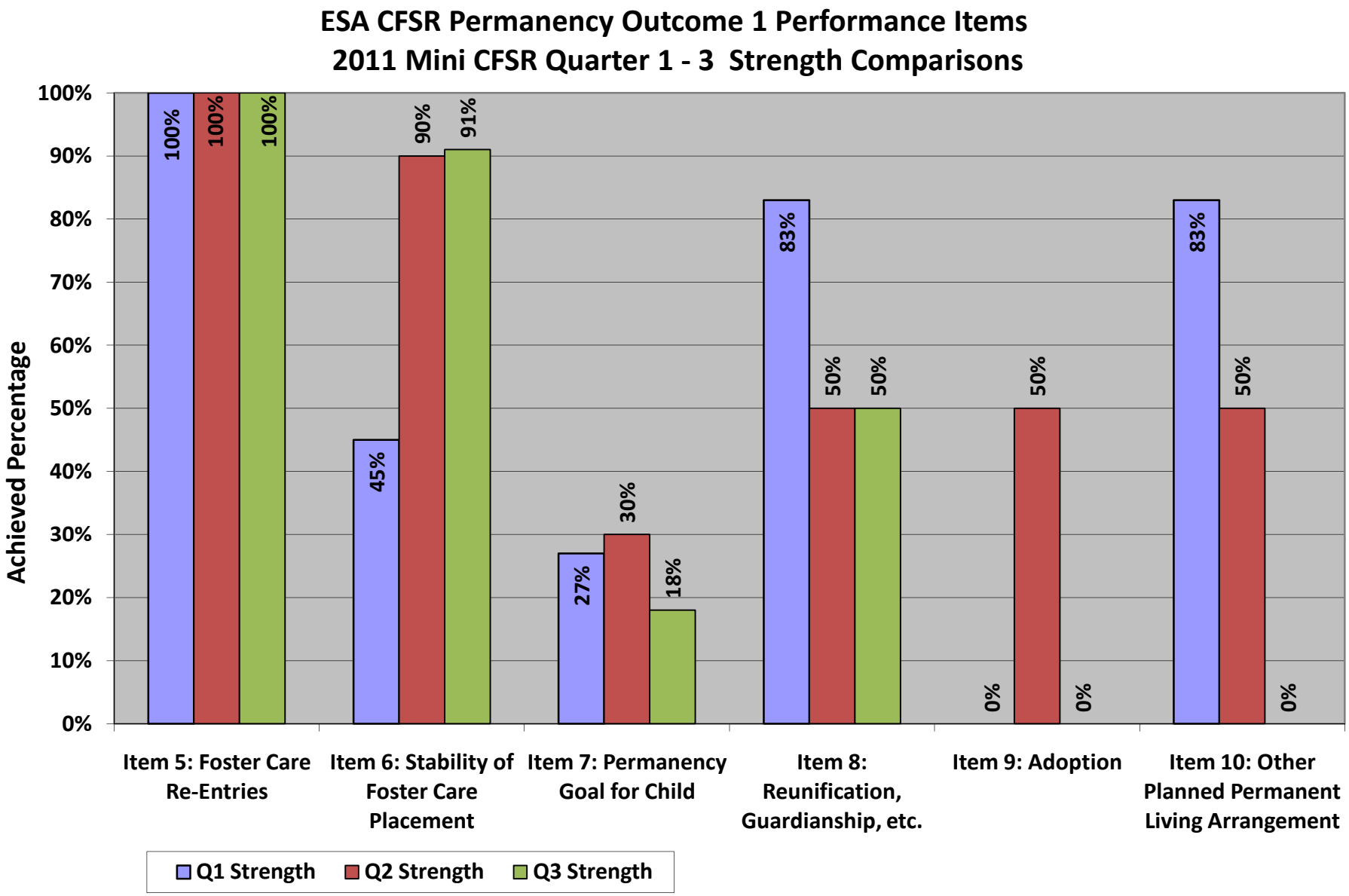
KEY:
N/A = Not Applicable ***PA = Partially Achieved*** ***NACH = Not Achieved***
S = Strength ***SA = Substantially Achieved*** ***ANI = Area Needing Improvement***

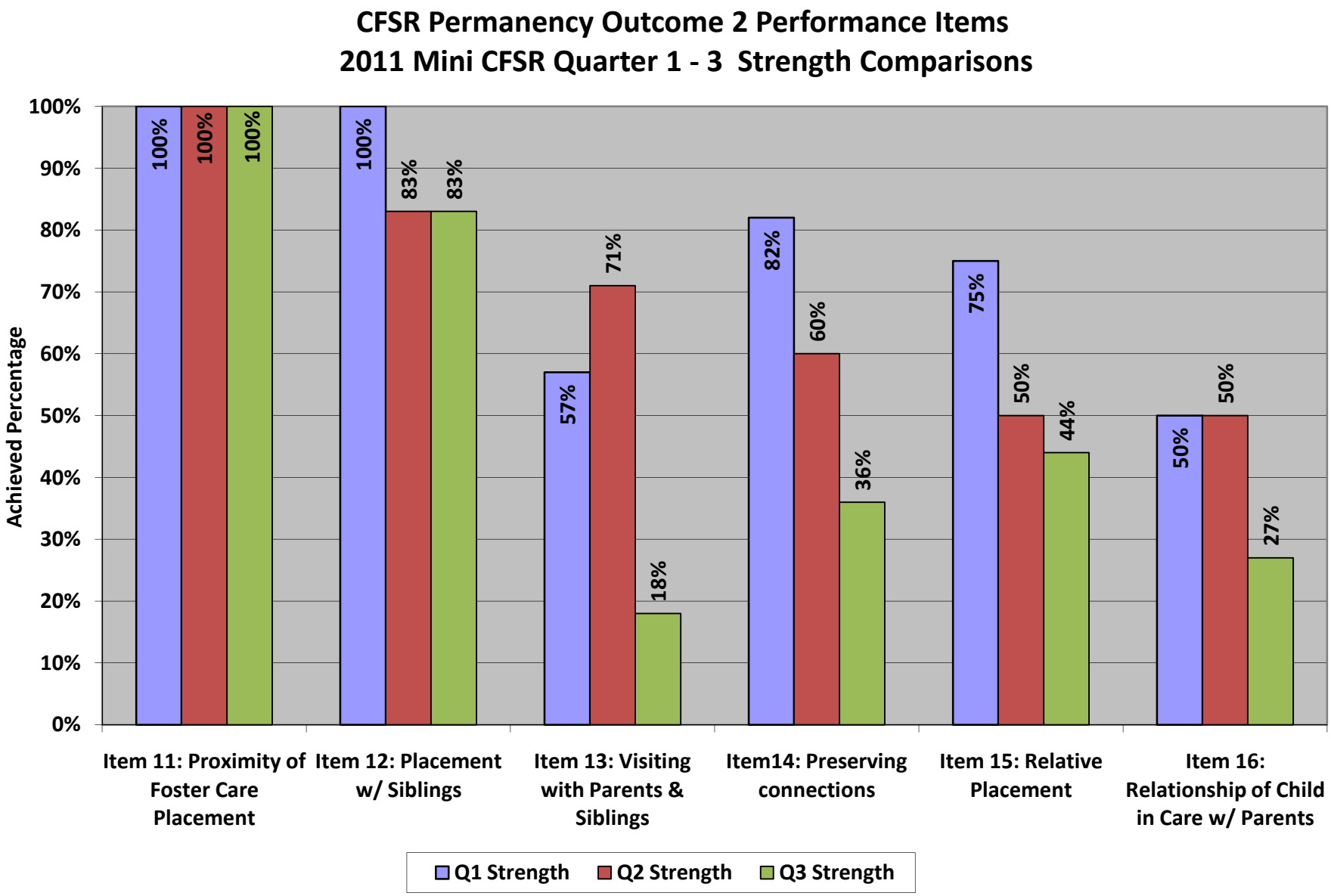
ESA 2010-2011 Mini CFSR Quarterly Comparisons

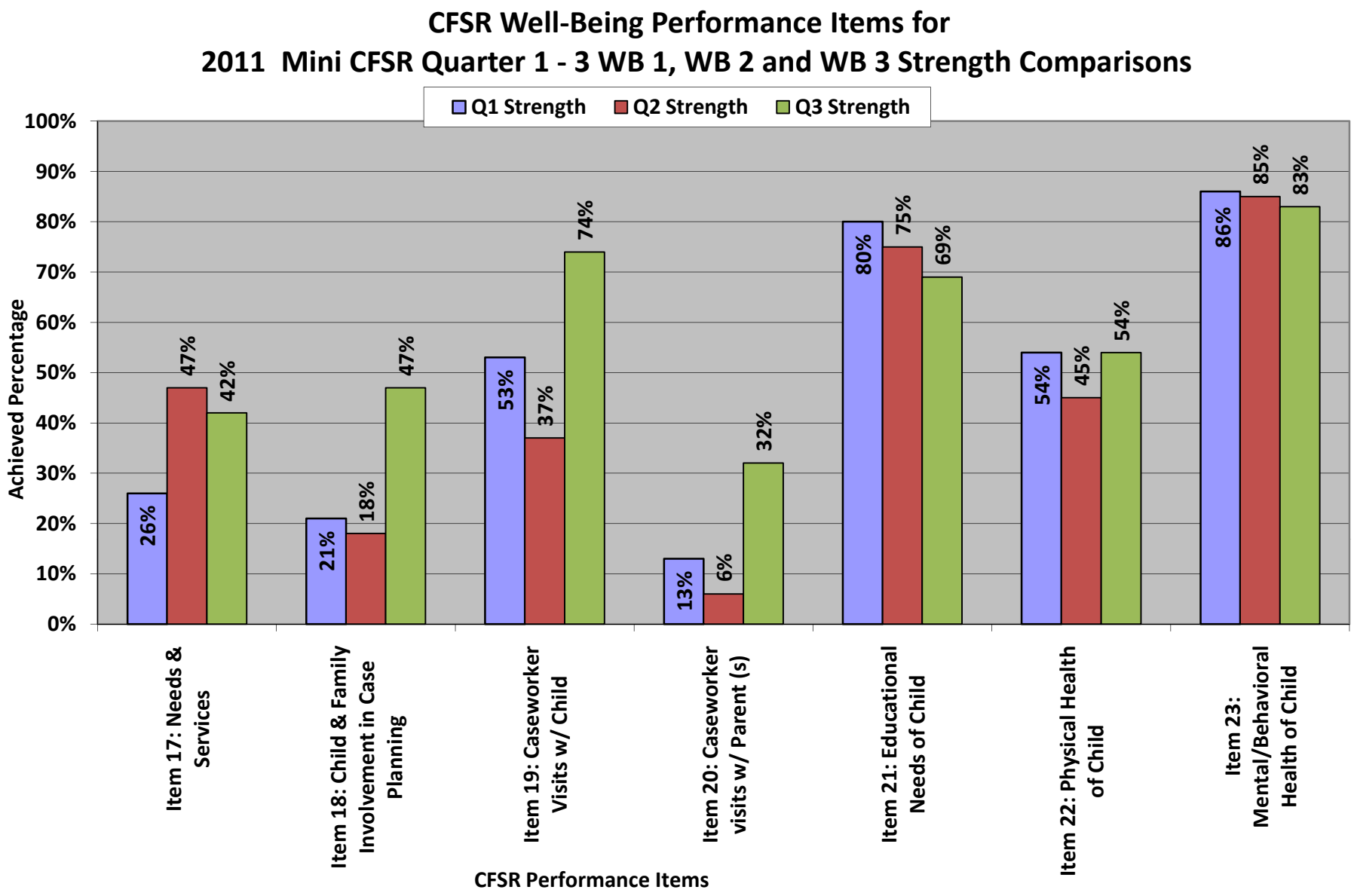
Children and Family Services Reviews

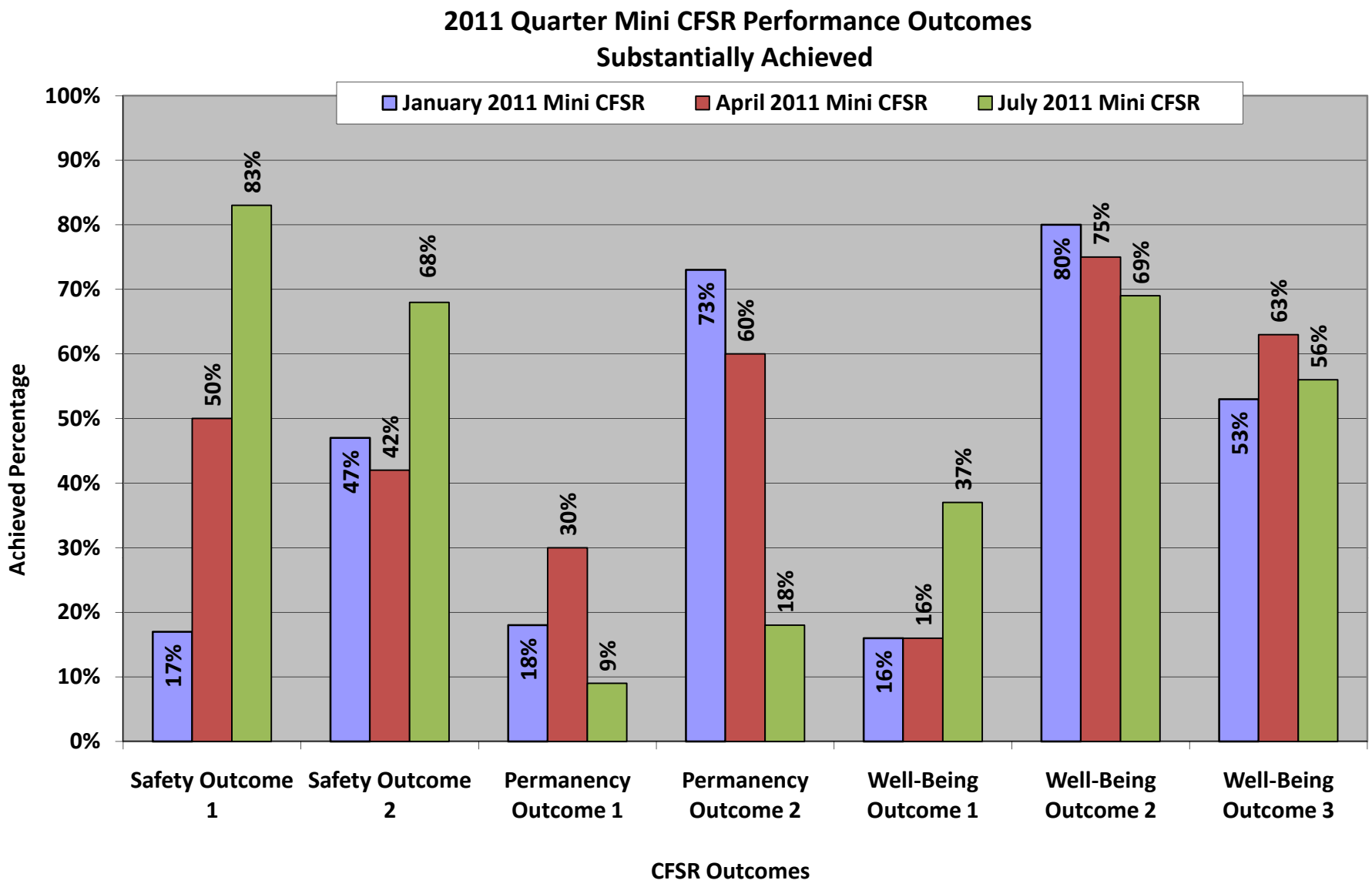
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Jul-11


ESA CFSR Safety Performance Items for Outcome S1 & S2
2011 Mini CFSR Quarter 1-3 Strength Comparisons
Achieved Percentage
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
17%
50%
83%
80%
100%
100%
100%
93%
100%
47%
42%
68%
Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations
Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment
Item 3: Services to Family
Item 4: Risk Assessment & Safety Management
CFSR Performance Items
Q1 Strength
Q2 Strength
Q3 Strength


ESA CFSR Permanency Outcome 1 Performance Items
2011 Mini CFSR Quarter 1 - 3 Strength Comparisons
Achieved Percentage
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
100%
100%
100%
45%
90%
91%
27%
30%
18%
83%
50%
50%
0%
50%
0%
83%
50%
0%
Item 5: Foster Care Re-Entries
Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement
Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child
Item 8: Reunification, Guardianship, etc.
Item 9: Adoption
Item 10: Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
Q1 Strength
Q2 Strength
Q3 Strength


CFSR Permanency Outcome 2 Performance Items
2011 Mini CFSR Quarter 1 - 3 Strength Comparisons
Achieved Percentage
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
100%
100%
100%
100%
83%
83%
57%
71%
18%
82%
60%
36%
75%
50%
44%
50%
50%
27%
Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement
Item 12: Placement w/ Siblings
Item 13: Visiting with Parents & Siblings
Item14: Preserving connections
Item 15: Relative Placement
Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care w/ Parents
Q1 Strength
Q2 Strength
Q3 Strength


CFSR Well-Being Performance Items for
2011 Mini CFSR Quarter 1 - 3 WB 1, WB 2 and WB 3 Strength Comparisons
Q1 Strength
Q2 Strength
Q3 Strength
Achieved Percentage
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
26%
47%
42%
21%
18%
47%
53%
37%
74%
13%
6%
32%
80%
75%
69%
54%
45%
54%
86%
85%
83%
Item 17: Needs & Services
Item 18: Child & Family Involvement in Case Planning
Item 19: Caseworker Visits w/ Child
Item 20: Caseworker visits w/ Parent (s)
Item 21: Educational Needs of Child
Item 22: Physical Health of Child
Item 23: Mental/Behavioral Health of Child
CFSR Performance Items


2011 Quarter Mini CFSR Performance Outcomes
Substantially Achieved
January 2011 Mini CFSR
April 2011 Mini CFSR
July 2011 Mini CFSR
Achieved Percentage
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
17%
50%
83%
47%
42%
68%
18%
30%
9%
73%
60%
18%
16%
16%
37%
80%
75%
69%
53%
63%
56%
Safety Outcome 1
Safety Outcome 2
Permanency Outcome 1
Permanency Outcome 2
Well-Being Outcome 1
Well-Being Outcome 2
Well-Being Outcome 3
CFSR Outcomes