

# **Northern Service Area**

## **Initial Assessment 1<sup>st</sup> Round - Safety Model QA Review**

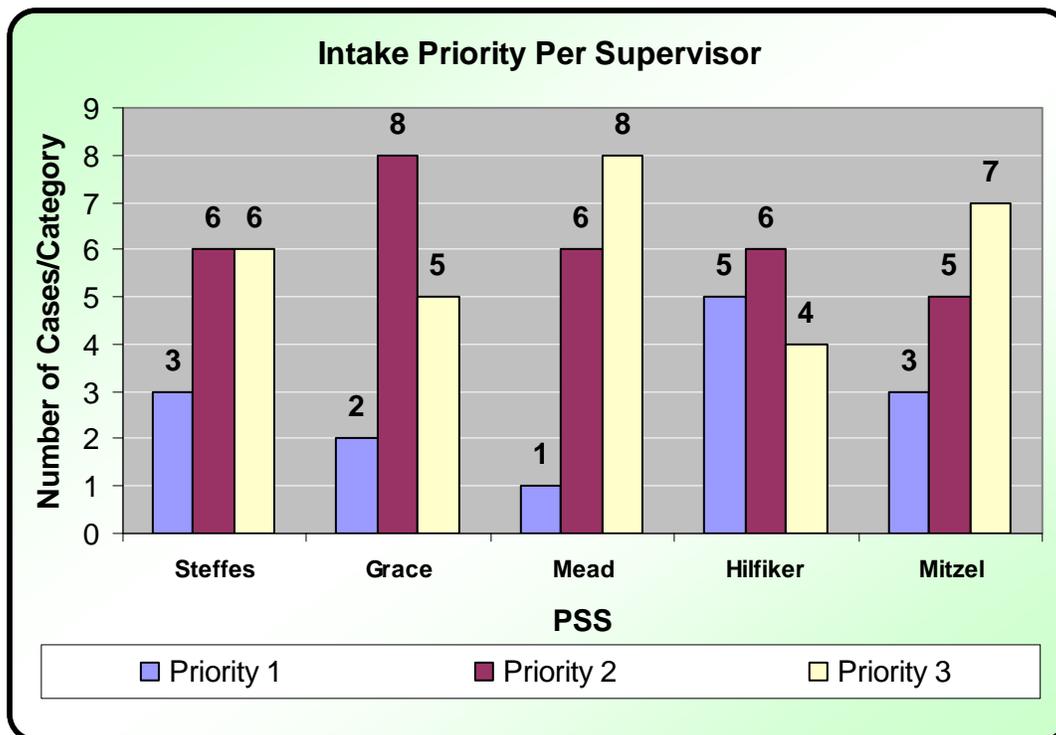
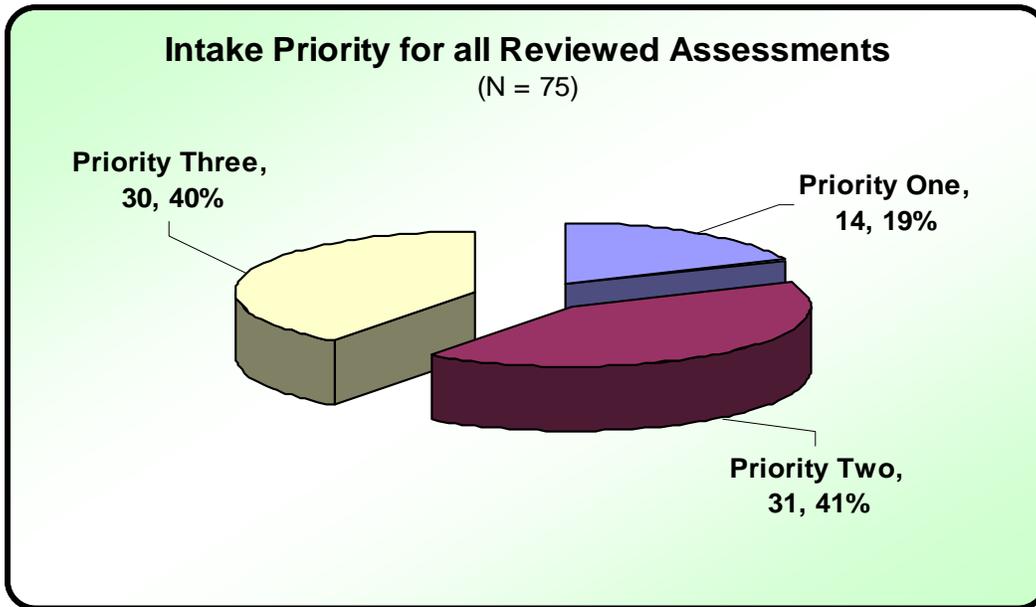


**Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Quality Assurance**

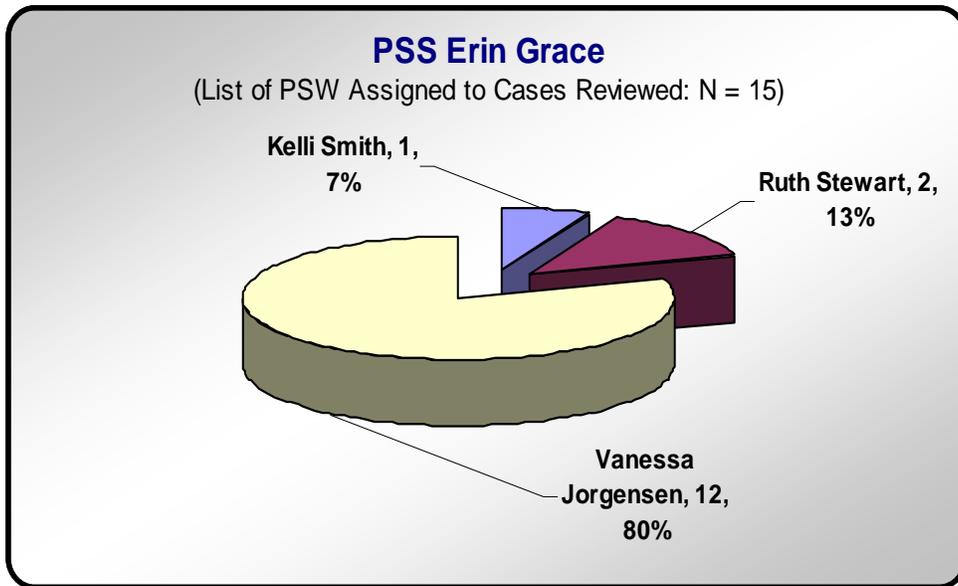
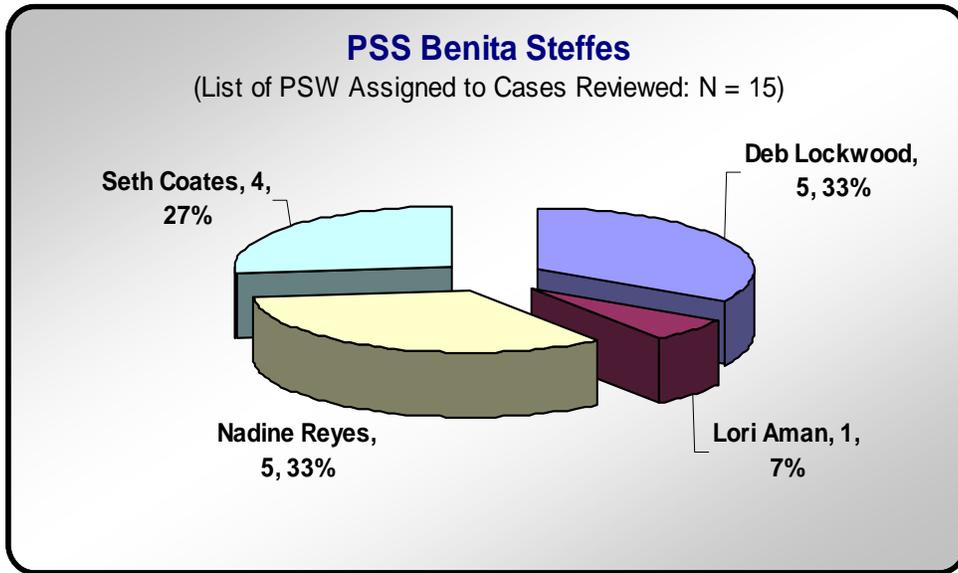
**July 2008**

The Quality Assurance Team completed the first round of reviews of Initial Assessment cases for the Northern Service Area (NSA) in April 2008. A total of 75 finalized assessments were submitted to QA staff from five Protection and Safety Supervisors (PSS) in NSA. The reviews consisted of fifteen cases each from Benita Steffes, Erin Grace, LaDonna Mead, Tami Hilfiker, and Tony Mitzel.

Of the 75 cases reviewed, 14 were priority 1 cases, 31 were priority 2 cases, and 30 were priority 3 cases.

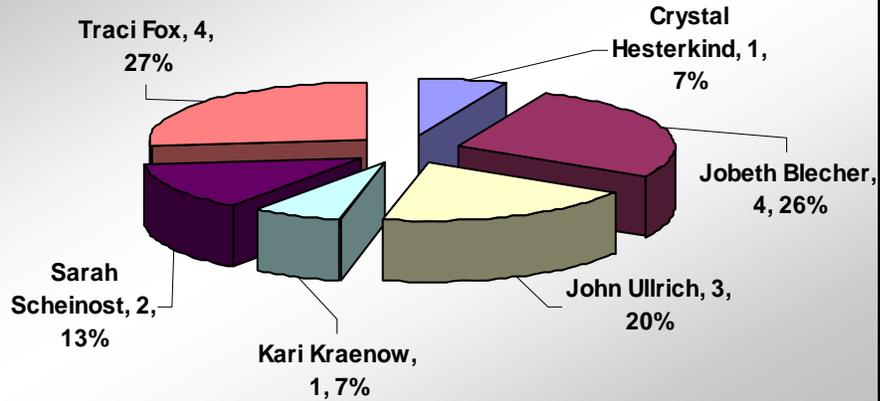


The following charts contain a breakdown of cases per worker for each Protection and Safety Supervisor:



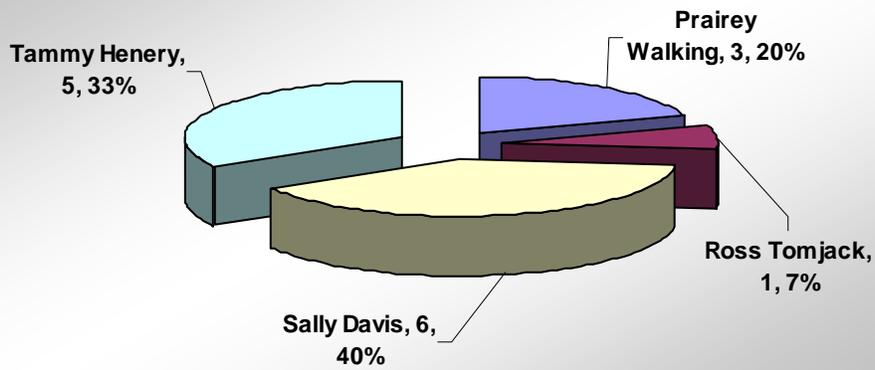
### PSS LaDonna Mead

(List of PSW Assigned to Cases Reviewed: N = 15)



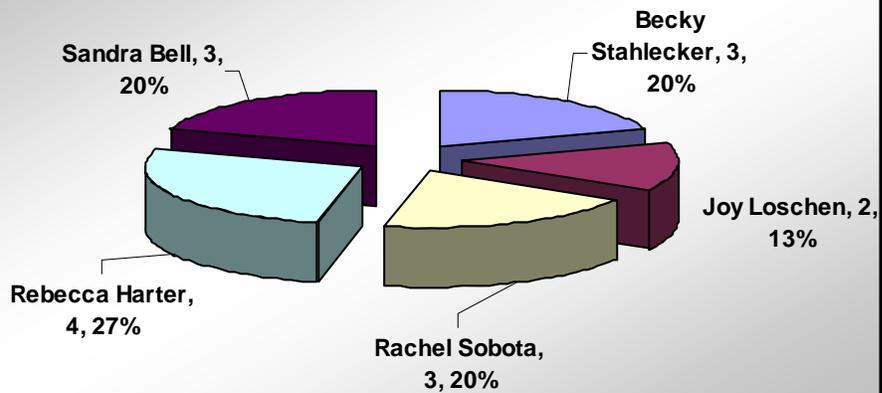
### PSS Tami Hilfiker

(List of PSW Assigned to Cases Reviewed: N = 15)



### PSS Tony Mitzel

(List of PSW Assigned to Cases Reviewed: N = 15)



**The following is a summary of data from ALL 75 reviews. Charts for these overall data can be found in the attached excel file: NSA Safety QA Report.CHARTS.Overall.**

***Initial Response/Contact Information (Chart 1):***

- Initial contact with child victim was made within required time frame in 84% of the Safety Assessments (63 out of 75 instances).
- Other children in the household were present in 22 of the 75 (29%) reviewed assessments. Other children in the household were interviewed in 11 out of 22 instances (50%). The reviewers were only able to find explanations to reasonably justify the lack of contact with other children in the household in 2 out of 11 (18%) of these cases.
- 17 of the reviewed assessments had a non-maltreating caregiver listed in the intake. The non-maltreating caregiver was interviewed in 88% or 15 out of 17 instances.
- Other adults were present in 14 of the reviewed assessments. 29% or 4 out of 14 of these adults were interviewed by workers.
- Interview with the maltreating caregiver occurred in 91% or 68 out of 75 assessments where a maltreating caregiver was identified.
- Interview protocol was followed in 61% or 45 out of 74 assessments. For those assessments that did not follow protocol reviewers were able to find documentation to indicate the reason for the deviation from protocol in 20% or 6 out of 29 cases. *Please note that there was one case in which the PSW was unable to locate the child and family. The interview protocol was not assessed in this case.*

***Present Danger (Chart 2):***

- Worker identified present danger at the initial contact with the child victim and/or family in 8 of the 75 reviewed Safety Assessments (11%). *Statewide, it appeared early in the reviews that workers were identifying present danger when the situation did not meet the present danger criteria. National Resource Center indicates that Present Danger occurs in 8-10% of cases.*
- 72 out of 75 (96%) of the time the reviewers agreed with the worker's assessment of Present Danger.
  - There was one instance in which the worker identified present danger and the reviewer disagreed with the worker's conclusion.
  - There were two instances in which the worker did NOT identify present danger but the reviewers felt there was enough information in the assessment to suggest that there was in fact present danger.
- 8 Safety Assessments had an Immediate Protective Action (IPA) taken.
  - Reason for the protective action was explained to the parent/caregiver in 6 out of 8 of the IPA's taken (75%).
  - Protective Action included a provision for oversight in all IPA's taken. However, oversight requirement was sufficient to assure that the Protective Action was implemented in accordance with expectation and assured child safety in only three out of the eight IPA's taken. (38%).
  - Six out of eight Protective Actions contained parent's willingness to cooperate (75%).
  - Protective Action contained a description of the persons responsible for the protective action in 4 out of the 8 IPA's taken. (50%).
  - Protective Action contained confirmation of person responsible for Protective Action (trustworthiness, reliability, commitment, availability, alliance to plan) in 4 out of the 8 IPA's taken (50%).

- Description of how Protective Action will work was reflected in 4 out of the 8 IPA's taken. (50%).
- Timeframes of the Protective Action was documented one out of the 8 IPA's taken. (13%).
- Overall, one out of eight (13%) of the Protective Action Plans was judged to be sufficient by Reviewers.

#### *Domains (Chart 5):*

- **Maltreatment** – Sufficient information was collected in 59% (44 out of 75) of the assessments.
  - *Reviewer Comments: Much of the information that should have been listed under maltreatment was found under the Nature Section. Need to include information from and about everyone listed as perpetrators. Include findings/conclusions and evidence to support findings, address all areas of concern in the intake.*
- **Nature** – Sufficient information was collected in 49% (37 out of 75) of the assessments.
  - *Reviewer Comments: Information contained in domain is evidence and goes to supporting the finding, therefore should be contained in maltreatment. Include analysis of events/factors surrounding the abuse and neglect. Include pattern of why the abuse and neglect is occurring in the home.*
- **Child Functioning** – Sufficient information was collected in 72% (54 out of 75) of the assessments.
  - *Reviewer Comments: Need to assess all children living in the home, State what conclusions can be drawn from the worker's contact with all parties regarding the child's behavior and development? Worker uses description of overarching statements surrounding child's development or behavioral difficulties (i.e. appear to be lower functioning) – need to provide more details or provide additional information to support overarching statements. .*
- **Disciplinary Practices** – Sufficient information was collected in 56% (42 out of 75) of the assessments.
  - *Reviewer Comments: Include situations and detailed information about the purpose and implementation of discipline for all the children involved, include future discipline plans in assessments involving infants, children's statements of discipline in home, patterns of discipline with older children.*
- **General Parenting** – Sufficient information was collected in 49% (37 out of 75) of the assessments.
  - *Reviewer Comments: Provide information about daily routines within the home, include past parenting of children that may have been relinquished or terminated, family activities, parental roles, include parenting for all individuals living in the home if they take role in caring for the children.*
- **Adult Functioning** – Sufficient information was collected in 45% (34 out of 75) of the assessments.
  - *Reviewer Comments: What supports does the mother have in the community? Need to include all adults living in the home, community or family supports, Mental Health, Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse information. Talk about the nature of adult relationships within the home (marriage and other relationships).*

### ***Collateral Source (Chart 5):***

- 57 out of the 75 assessments indicated that information should have been collected from a collateral source. Collateral information was collected in 51% or 29 out of 57 cases.
  - *Reviewer Comments: Incorporate the information gained from collaterals into the assessment. Many times a contact is recorded on the contact sheet but the information gained is not incorporated into the assessment. Suggest workers utilize the narrative portion in the contact sheet to document the family's relationship to the contact.*

### ***Maternal/Paternal Relatives (Chart 5):***

***Please note that during this review period – the reviewers rated the cases based on the directive that maternal and paternal relatives had to be identified in ALL of the maltreatment cases and not just those in which a child was determined to be UNSAFE.***

- Maternal relatives were identified in 41% of the cases (31 out of 75).
- Paternal relatives were identified in 25% of the cases (19 out of 75).
  - *Reviewer Comment: Documentation needs to contain at a minimum of first name, last name, and location (city & state).*

### ***ICWA (Chart 5):***

- Information regarding ICWA was obtained in 68% of the cases (51 out of 75).
  - *Reviewer Comments: Workers need to utilize the kinship narrative and include a statement as to how ICWA information was obtained by PSW. For example, ICWA does not apply to family or N/A. Need to include statement of how the worker learned that it did not apply.*
  - *Examples:*
    - *Per mother/name and father/name there were no ICWA affiliations.*
    - *Father was asked about enrollment or qualification he may meet in Native American Tribe in which he denied eligibility for him or his son.*
    - *According to (parents/name), no ICWA affiliations.*

### ***Impending Danger (Chart 4 & 6):***

**Impending Danger at the initial contact with the youth and/or family (Chart 4):** The worker identified impending danger at the initial contact with the child or family in 23% or 17 out of the 75 cases reviewed. **The reviewer agreed with the worker's decision in 79% or 59 out of the 75 cases reviewed.**

- There reviewer disagreed with the worker in 16 of the cases, where the worker indicated that there was NO impending danger at the initial contact with the youth and family. The reviewers determined that there was either enough information in the documentation to indicate impending danger at the worker's initial contact with the youth and/or family or that there was limited information in the assessment and not enough to accurately assess whether or not there was impending danger at the initial contact with the child and/or family.

**Impending Danger at the end of the Initial Assessment (Chart 6):** The worker identified impending danger at the end of the initial assessment in 13 out of the 47 cases reviewed (28%).

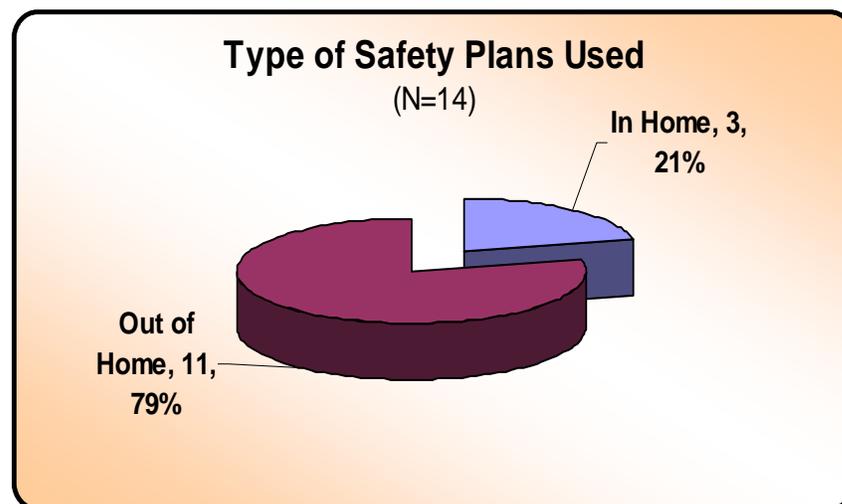
- 41 out of 75 (55%) of the reviewed assessments contained sufficient information to provide a reasonable understanding of family members and their functioning.
- 48 out of 75 (64%) of the reviewed assessments contained sufficient information to support and justify decision making.

- 38 out of 75 (51%) of the reviewed assessments contained sufficient information in the six domains to accurately assess the 14 factors.
- Safety threats were identified in 13 of the reviewed assessments.
  - In 92% or 12 out of 13 of the instances the reviewer agreed with the worker on all of the safety factors identified “yes”.
  - Within the safety factors identified “yes”, 12 out of 13 (92%) contained threshold documentation for identification/justification of impending danger.
- In 67% or 50 out of 75 assessments, the reviewer agreed with the worker on all of the safety factors identified “no”.
- Safety Assessment Conclusion:
  - The worker determined that the child was UNSAFE at the conclusion of the safety assessment in 13 out of 75 (17%) of the reviewed assessments. The reviewer agreed with the worker’s decision that the child was UNSAFE in all 13 assessments (100%).
  - The worker determined that the child was SAFE in 62 out of 75 (83%) of the assessments reviewed. The reviewer agreed with the worker’s decision that the child was SAFE in 44 out of the 62 assessments (71%). The reviewer determined that the child was unsafe or that the information in the assessment was not sufficient to make a determination of safe or unsafe in 18 out of the 62 (29%) cases in which the worker determined the child to be SAFE.

**Safety Plan (Charts 7 & 8):**

The worker determined that the child was unsafe in 13 out of the 75 (17%) cases reviewed, however, a safety plan was established at the conclusion of the safety assessment in 14 out of 75 (19%) of the reviewed assessments.

- 21% or 3 out of 14 of the safety plans were in home safety plans. Reviewers agreed that the worker used the appropriate safety plan in these cases where an in-home safety plan was used.
- 79% or 11 out of 14 of the safety plans were out of home safety plans. A reviewer indicated in one of the cases in which an out of home safety plan was used that the worker should have considered using a combination safety plan.



- 10 out of 14 (71%) safety plans contained a contingency plan; reviewer judged the contingency plan to be appropriate in 5 out of 14 (36%) of the reviewed assessments.
  - *Example of sufficient contingency plan;*
    - 1) *If foster parents are unable to provide care for the child, they will contact case manager, supervisor or CPS Hotline, to notify so that alternative foster care placement can be arranged.*
    - 2) *If father is unable to participate in plan as outlined, caseworker will have meeting and make modifications accordingly.*
    - 3) *If foster parent is unable to ensure that the child is safe the caseworker will be notified immediately and an alternate placement will be found.*
    - 4) *If relative, is no longer able to provide care for children, then alternative placement into licensed foster care will be located.*
  - *Example of insufficient contingency plan;*
    - 1) *The placement unit will need to find another placement.*
    - 2) *Child will be made a state ward and placed into foster care.*
    - 3) *This is an out of home safety plan and there is not a need for a backup plan.*
    - 4) *The assigned caseworker should be contacted.*
    - 5) *Their designee will take over.*
    - 6) *None.*
- Suitability of the safety plan participant(s) was completed in 10 out of 14 (71%) of the assessments.
  - Reviewer judged that there was sufficient information to support the decision made with regards to the suitability of the safety plan participants in 10 out 14 (71%) of the safety plans.
    - *Reviewer Comments: Need to ensure suitability is completed for all participants including two-parent foster families, providers and informal supports. Include background checks on suitability.*
- 11 out of 14 (79%) safety plans addressed who was going to make sure the child was protected.
- 10 out of 14 (71%) safety plans addressed what action is needed.
- 12 out of 14 (86%) safety plans addressed where the plan and action are going to take place.
- 5 out of 14 (36%) safety plans addressed when the action will be finished.
- 8 out of 14 (57%) safety plans addressed how it is all going to work and how the actions are going to control for safety.
- 4 out of 14 (29%) safety plans contained caregiver promissory commitments. (*Reverse Scale: Lower number is better as we do not want the safety plans to contain caregiver promissory commitments*).
- 3 out of 14 (21%) safety plans involved in home services.
- 13 out of 14 (93%) safety plans contained a plan for oversight.
  - Reviewers determined that the oversight requirements were sufficient to assure that the safety plan was implemented in accordance with expectation and was assuring child safety in 9 out of 13 (69%) of the safety plans that contained a plan for oversight.
- 10 out of 14 (71%) safety plans adjusted as threats increased or decreased.
  - *Reviewer Comments: For the 29% safety plans that did not adjust, reviewers did not feel that the safety plan contained clear information about strategies or timeframes to know if and when it was adjusted.*
- Overall, 29% (4 out of 14) Safety Plans were judged to be appropriate by Reviewers.

**Reviewer’s Overall Analysis and Conclusion of the Work:**

For the purpose of a case review, the reviewer assessed the following information based on their review of the case. This part of the review contains the same information as those included in the Supervisory Review of Nebraska Safety Assessment.

Category	NSA	Steffes	Grace	Mead	Hilfiker	Mitzel
The Nebraska Safety Assessment Instrument was completed correctly and completely	29%	0%	47%	40%	53%	7%
Documentation is on N-FOCUS	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Required Time Frames were met	84%	73%	93%	73%	87%	93%
A reasonable level of effort was expended given the identified safety concerns.	76%	80%	86%	73%	87%	53%
Safety of the child/youth was assured during the assessment process.	93%	93%	86%	100%	100%	87%
Sufficient information was gathered for informed decision making	60%	67%	60%	67%	80%	27%
Available written documentation was obtained from law enforcement and others as approp.	73%	100%	100%	43%	100%	50%
ICWA information was documented	64%	20%	87%	87%	93%	33%
Information was obtained about non-custodial parent, relatives, and other family support.	53%	33%	80%	40%	73%	40%
An Immediate Protective Action was appropriately implemented to assure child safety.	90%	100%	75%	100%	100%	100%
A Safety Plan was appropriately completed and implemented to assure child safety.	44%	25%	50%	67%	0%	50%
A Safety Assessment was documented in accordance with required practice.	39%	8%	54%	60%	43%	29%
A Protective Action was documented in accordance with required practice.	50%	0%	50%	100%	50%	100%
A Safety Plan was documented in accordance with required practice.	38%	0%	50%	67%	0%	50%
The family network and others were appropriately involved in the gathering of information.	60%	54%	57%	67%	80%	38%
The family networks and others were appropriately involved in developing Safety Plans.	71%	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%
Policy and procedures related to safety intervention were followed.	61%	50%	50%	67%	60%	73%
Safety plan is sufficient to protect child from threats of severe harm.	59%	50%	60%	67%	100%	50%
Efforts to coordinate with law enforcement were documented.	83%	78%	92%	89%	80%	75%
Interview protocols were followed or reason for deviation were documented.	69%	87%	47%	87%	87%	36%
The appropriate definition was used in making the case status determination.	83%	80%	80%	73%	80%	100%
The finding was correctly documented in N-FOCUS	99%	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Factual information supports the selected finding.	86%	86%	87%	73%	93%	93%
Proof of certified notice to the alleged perpetrator is located in the file. (QA does not review at this time)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A