

FINAL REPORT

1st Mini Children and Family Service Review

Northern Service Area

(February 1-3, 2010)

Executive Summary

Children and Family Services Review

(Northern Service Area)

A mini CFSR was held in Norfolk on February 1st-3rd, 2010. 14 cases were reviewed. The period under review was January 1st, 2009 through January 25th, 2010. 8 cases were foster care cases and 6 were in home cases. Three cases were OJS and four cases were non-court involved. The offices where the cases were reviewed from were Blair, Columbus, Dakota City, Fremont, O'Neill and Norfolk. There were 5 pairs of reviewers that conducted this review and it was a joint effort between Health and Human Services and out of home reform contractors. Second level review was completed by Quality Assurance worker Leslie Schlecht.

Background Information

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

With regards to outcomes, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items incorporated in the seven outcomes depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the onsite case review. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 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 1st Mini CFSR identified several areas of high performance in Northern 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 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-entry (item 5), reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives (item 8), adoption (item 9), placing children in close proximity to their parents (item 11), placement with siblings (item 12), and mental/behavioral health needs of the child (item 23).

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 Safety Outcome 1 (children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect), which was substantially achieved in only 21 percent of the cases reviewed. The lowest rating within this outcome was for item 1 (timeliness of investigations), which was rated as a strength in 21 percent of the cases reviewed.

Concerns were also identified with regards to Well Being Outcome 1 (families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs), which was substantially achieved in only 36% of the cases reviewed. The lowest ratings were for item 17 (needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents) and item 20 (caseworker visits with parent(s), both were rated as a strength in only 43 percent of the cases reviewed.

Item 18 (child and family involvement with case planning) and item 19 (caseworker visits with child) had much higher review ratings for strengths. Item 18 was rated as a strength in 71% of the cases reviewed; item 19 was rated as a strength in 79% of the cases reviewed.

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:	3	60%
Partially Achieved:	1	20%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	20%
Not Applicable:	9	65%

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

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

Review Findings: Five of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 3 cases were rated as strengths, 2 as areas needing improvement, and 9 were not applicable.

Strengths: In one case it was noted that there was only one intake during the life of the case. On three cases it was noted that the face to face contact was met within the designated time frames.

Areas needing improvement: One file was missing the intakes/assessments. Another file reviewed revealed that the intake that was received (priority not listed by reviewer) was not investigated within the designated time frame and there was no reason given as to why this happened.

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: Two of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 2 cases were rated as strengths, 0 as area needing improvement, and 12 were not applicable.

Strengths: In one case reviewed there was no repeat maltreatment found and in the other case there was another intake received within the 6 month period before or after the initial report but it was thoroughly investigated and addressed. There were no cases found to be needing improvement on this item.

S1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases that were found to be substantially achieved for this outcome, the intakes received by the Department were investigated within the set time frames and face to face contact with the alleged victim was made within the timeframes. On the cases that were found to be partially achieved, reviewers commented that either contact was not made with the family within the designated time frame or there was more than one intake received during the period under review. Reviewers commented on the case that was found to not be achieved that while there was an intake found in the case file, there was not an assessment found in the file and they were unable to determine if it was investigated at all.

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

Status of Safety Outcome S2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	11	79%
Partially Achieved:	3	21%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

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

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

Review Findings: Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 7 cases were rated as strengths, 0 as area needing improvement, and 7 were not applicable.

Strengths: In several cases it was noted that there were numerous services in place to prevent removal/re-entry in to foster care. Those services ranged from family support work to in home safety services. In one case it was noted that while there was a safety assessment completed, services would not have prevented the removal of the child. In two cases it was noted that the child remained safe in the home during the PUR with services implemented. There were no cases found to be needing improvement on this item.

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

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

Review Findings: All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 11 cases were rated as strengths, 3 as area needing improvement, and 0 were not applicable.

Strengths: In the 11 cases substantially achieved there were no safety concerns found on the target child. Numerous cases revealed that the whole family was involved in the IA/Ongoing safety planning process. There was also mention of OJS and YLS assessments being completed and implemented. In four of the cases reviewed it was noted that risk was assessed and there was found to be no risk of maltreatment.

Areas needing improvement: In the three cases found to be needing improvement some of the comments were-there was no documentation found that the children were indeed safe; no ongoing assessment found in the file, the safety plan did not address all identified safety factors. Other concerns were regarding an in home case. In another case there was not an assessment completed on the other children in the home. Finally, there was a case where an intake was received on a child while the child was in a foster home, but the safety plan was not updated to reflect the intake was assessed and addressed in regards to that intake.

S2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved reviewers comments ranged from the case had completed safety assessments done, no reports of any safety concerns for the target child in foster care during the period under review, to no safety concerns reported while child was having visits with parents in lieu of reunification. It was also noted in one case that while services were implemented to help the family prevent removal, those services would not have met the needs of the child at that time to prevent the removal from occurring. Reviewers comments on the cases found to be partially achieved were that the needs of the other children (besides the target child) were not assessed and some safety plans lacked addressing issues that did rise to the level of an intake.

II. PERMANENCY

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

Status of Permanency Outcome P1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	6	75%
Partially Achieved:	2	25%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

Item 5. Foster care re-entries

Reviewers rated this assessment Strength if during the period under review a child did not have an entry into care within a 12-month period from being discharged from another entry into foster care. Reviewers also rated this item as a Strength if a re-entry was an isolated incident during which the agency did what was reasonable to manage the risk following reunification but the child re-entered care for another reason (for example, the

death of a parent). Reviewers rated this item as an Area Needing Improvement if re-entries occurring within a 12-month period were due to the same general reasons or same perpetrators. Reviewers rated this item as Not Applicable if : (1) the child entered foster care before, and remained in foster care during, the period under review; or (2) the child entered foster care before, and exited foster care during, the period under review and there was not another entry into foster care during the period under review.

Review Findings: Two of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 2 cases were rated as strengths, 0 as area needing improvement, and 6 were not applicable.

In the two cases that were rated as strengths for this item one was noted as in regards to the youth only having 1 more move during the period under review, and this was in accordance with the case plan goals. In the other case there was no re-entry in to foster care within 12 months of the current review. There were no files that were found to have area needing improvement for this item.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

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

Review Findings: Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 7 cases were rated as strengths, 1 as area needing improvement, and 0 as not applicable.

Strengths: There was a case where the child had only one placement and it was very stable as it has been in place for 3 years. In another case the target child and siblings were placed with a relative and no other placement occurred. There were four cases that there was only one placement during the period under review.

Area needing improvement: In the one case that this item was found to be needing improvement there were eight placements that occurred. This was however, due to the youth's high behavioral needs and assaultive behaviors.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

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

Review Findings: Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 7 cases were rated as strengths, 1 as area needing improvement, and 0 as not applicable.

Strengths: In six of the cases it was noted that the permanency goals were established in a timely manner. In one case permanency was achieved in 8 MONTHS! In this case the permanency goal was reunification. The target child's parents worked hard in achieving the reunification by participating in therapy and family support services.

Area needing improvement: In the one case that was found to need improvement there was no compelling reasons found in the file as to why the TPR was not filed.

Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship or Permanent Placement with Relatives

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

Review Findings: Five of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 5 cases were rated as strengths, 0 as area needing improvement, and 3 as not applicable.

Strengths: In the five cases that were found to have strengths on this item it was noted that there was one case that a relative guardianship occurred within 8 months. The other cases were found to have established reunification in a timely manner and/or concerted efforts had been made to achieve reunification. There were no cases found to need improvement on this item.

Item 9. Adoption

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

Review Findings: Two of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 2 cases were rated as strengths, 0 as area needing improvement, and 6 as not applicable.

Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths there was found to be concerted efforts made to achieve the goal of adoption. There were no cases found to need improvement on this item. In one of the cases it was noted that the caseworker had to do extensive work with the Dad because he was living in Mexico at the time and the lines of communication could have been a problem in regards to achieving the plan of adoption. The file was well documented that efforts by the caseworker went above and beyond the expectations and the worker had contact through the Mexican consulate as well as with the Dad and adoptive parents. A semi-open adoption was agreed upon by all parties which resulted in achieving the permanency of adoption in a very timely manner. There were no cases found to need improvement on this item.

Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

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

Review Findings: Four of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 2 cases were rated as strengths, 2 as area needing improvement, and 4 were not applicable.

Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths for this item it was noted that there was an IL plan completed and in the file as well as the PALS referral.

Area needing improvement: In the two cases rated as area needing improvement, the child had been in care since 2004 and still has not achieved the goal of independent living in one case. The other case there was no IL plan in the file and no documentation found that the Ansell Casey Assessment was completed.

P1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers comments on the cases found to be substantially achieved were that the target child was either living with relatives or there was only 1 to 2 placement changes total for the period under review. On the cases rated as partially achieved reviewers commented that in one case the target child had numerous placements throughout the life of the case and during the period under review, but it was noted that these placement changes were as a result of the child's behaviors. On the other case that was rated as being partially achieved the reviewers noted that there was no Independent Living plan in the case file.

Status of Permanency Outcome P2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	5	63%
Partially Achieved:	3	37%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

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: Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 6 cases were rated as strengths, 0 as area needing improvement, and 2 as not applicable.

Strengths: In one of the cases the child's placement was further than 50 miles but was appropriate due to the needs of the child. Transportation was also provided for the parents to go and visit on a regular basis. On the other five cases rated as strengths the children were placed close enough for visits to occur at least monthly. There were no cases rated as needing improvement on this item.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

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

Review Findings: Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 3 cases were rated as strengths, 0 as area needing improvement, and 5 as not applicable.

Strengths: In one case the target child was adopted by the same adoptive home that a half sibling was adopted by. In another case all of the children were placed within the community that they were removed from. The third case rated as a strength on this item, the target child was not placed with the rest of the siblings but that was because of the youth's behavioral needs and safety concerns of having the target child reside with the siblings. There were no cases rated as needing improvement on this item.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

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

Review Findings: Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 4 cases were rated as strengths, 2 as area needing improvement, and 2 as not applicable.

Strengths: In the four cases that were rated strengths on this item it was noted that visitation was occurring on a regular basis. Efforts were made by the Department to ensure that the visits would occur by working with everyone's schedules or if needed providing transportation to and from visits.

Area needing improvement: In one of the two cases there was no documentation found in the file that showed that there were efforts to locate the father. In the other case while there was documentation showing that visits occurred between the son and his mother, there was no documentation to show that visits ever occurred between Dad and his son. Efforts were made by the department to facilitate visits but Dad chose not to have visits.

Item 14. Preserving connections

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

Review Findings: Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 6 cases were rated as strengths, 1 as area needing improvement, and 1 as not applicable.

Strengths: *In the six cases that were rated as strengths on this item 4 of them had documented that ICWA issues had been addressed and 5 of the cases the child was kept within the community that they were removed from and their connections were maintained by keeping the child within the same school district and in the same extra-curricular activities.*

Area needing improvement: *In the one case that was rated as needing improvement the child had numerous placements outside his/her community and unable to keep connections to friends, social activities and school.*

Item 15. Relative placement

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

Review Findings: Five of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 4 cases were rated as strengths, 1 as area needing improvement, and 3 as not applicable.

Strengths: *In one case the target child was placed with the maternal grandmother. In another case the child was placed with the Mother when released from YRTC. The third case the child was placed with a Great Grandma. The fourth case searches were completed for both maternal and paternal relatives in hopes of finding an appropriate relative placement.*

Area needing improvement: *In the one case rated as needing improvement on this item it was noted that there was no evidence that paternal relatives were identified or assessed as possible placements. There were also 4 different placement changes on this case.*

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

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

not applicable if a relationship with the child's parents was contrary to the child's safety or best interest during the period under review.

Review Findings: Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 5 cases were rated as strengths, 2 as area needing improvement, and 1 as not applicable.

Strengths: *In one of the cases the Mother and Father were both offered assistance with having regular visits with the target child, but chose not to. In another case Mom relinquished her parental rights and extensive efforts were made by the caseworker to locate Dad, who was finally found and ended up relinquishing his rights as well. In two of the cases it was documented in the file that there were supports in place for the parents to maintain their relationship with their child that included supervised visitation and transportation to and from visits if needed.*

Area needing improvement: *In one of the cases rated as needing improvement on this item it was found that there was no evidence in the case file that efforts were made by the caseworker to support the relationship between the target child and father. In the other case the family was denied financial assistance for transportation to go and have visits with their child. No reason was found in the file as to why they were being denied transportation assistance for visits.*

P2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: *On the cases where this outcome was determined to be substantially achieved reviewers commented that visitation was occurring on a regular basis (at least monthly) and supported by provided transportation when needed. It was also noted that ICWA was addressed in most of these cases. In the cases where this outcome was only partially achieved the reviewers commented that on two of the cases the financial costs of the Department providing transportation for these visits was an issue, and therefore transportation could not be provided. On two cases the reviewers commented that visits between child and father were not set up.*

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:	5	36%
Partially Achieved:	8	57%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	7%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

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

In assessing item 17, reviewers were to determine whether DHHS adequately assessed the needs of children, parents and foster parents AND provided the services to meet those

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

Review Findings: All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 6 cases were rated as strengths, 8 as area needing improvement, and 0 as not applicable.

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

17a. Strengths: *In the six cases where this item was rated as a strength some of the comments were that the child's needs and services were both informally and formally assessed and addressed. Some of the services provided to address the identified needs were IEP's, behavioral assessments, mental health assessments, Developmental Disabilities assessments, Electronic Monitoring, Family Support, individual and family therapy, and GED services.*

17a. Area needing improvement: *In one case it was noted that the needs of the child were not documented in the file. It was unclear as to how needs were assessed.*

17b. Strengths: *In several of the cases rated as strengths it was noted that the worker did a good job assessing both parents' needs by conducting informal/formal assessments.*

17b. Area needing improvement: *In three cases it was found that there was no ongoing assessment on the father's needs. In two cases it was noted that there was no information found in the file of any formal/informal assessment of either Mom or Dad's needs.*

17c. Strengths: *In four of the cases reviewed rated as strengths it was noted that the foster parent's needs were assessed by the worker discussing the foster parent's concerns/needs and services were provided. Those services were foster care payments and respite care.*

17c. Area needing improvement: *In one case the foster parents reported to never being asked if they had needs and that they did ask for daycare assistance but never received it.*

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

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

Review Findings: All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 10 cases were rated as strengths, 4 as area needing improvement, and 0 as not applicable.

Strengths: *In two of the cases it was noted that the child was involved in the case planning as evidenced by involvement in the team meetings and worker visits with the youth. In eight of*

the cases it was noted that both the child and the parents were involved in the case planning through interactions in family team meetings and worker visits with the parents.

Area needing improvement: In one case the father was unable to be located. In another case the Mom and child were not involved in the case plan, while in another case the whole family was not involved in case planning. There was no information found to indicate why the family was not involved in the case planning despite the efforts made by the Department. In the other case reviewed that was found to need improvement it was noted that the Father was not involved in case planning and there was no documentation of efforts made by the case worker to locate the Father.

Item 19. Worker visits with child

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

Review Findings: All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 11 cases were rated as strengths, 3 as area needing improvement, and 0 as not applicable.

Strengths: In the eleven cases reviewed found to be strengths in this item there was found to be at least monthly contacts between the worker and the child occurring. In nine of the cases it was specifically noted that the contact narratives were of very good quality and addressed safety, permanency and well being of the child.

Area needing improvement: In the three cases rated as needing improvement it was noted that the visits did not occur monthly and the quality of the contact narratives was lacking in addressing permanency, safety and well being.

Item 20. Worker visits with parents

Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker had sufficient face to face contact with parents to encourage attainment of their children's permanency goal while ensuring safety and well being. Cases that were considered not applicable were those when the permanency objective was something other than reunification or family preservation.

Review Findings: All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 6 cases were rated as strengths, 8 as area needing improvement, and 0 as not applicable.

Strengths: In six of the cases visits between worker and parents (mother and father) were occurring at least monthly. The quality of the contact narratives was noted to be very good and addressed the permanency, safety, and well being of the child.

Area needing improvement: In one case a parent reported to not seeing the caseworker on a monthly basis and that this caseworker had never been to this parent's home. There was no evidence found in three cases that the Father was seen by the case worker. In two of the cases it was noted that the quality of the contact narratives was poor. In another case it was noted that there were no visits between caseworker and Mom, and in another case it was noted that neither parent was seen by the case worker.

WB1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved that extensive efforts were made by the Department to ensure the families had the capacity to provide for their children’s needs and were assessed formally and informally through ongoing assessments and mental health assessments. Families participated in therapy, family support, utilization of respite care when needed, communication during visits with caseworkers, and involvement in the case planning process. In the cases where this outcome was found to be partially achieved reviewers commented that some of the cases lacked evidence that the parent’s needs were assessed or addressed.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	10	91%
Partially Achieved:	0	0%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	9%
Not Applicable:	3	22%

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: Eleven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 10 cases were rated as strengths, 1 as area needing improvement, and 3 as not applicable.

Strengths: In the ten cases rated as strengths for this item it was noted that educational needs of the child were assessed and addressed by the case worker by providing educational testing and monitoring at the schools they attended. Services provided to address the needs found ranged from an ESU referral to assisting with a GED.

Area needing improvement: In the one case rated as needing improvement it was found that there was no educational documents found in the case file and the child misses one day of school per week to attend visits with a parent and mental health therapy. This was of concern to the reviewers because missing one day per week seemed to be excessive especially considering that visits can occur in the evenings and weekends as well as therapy sessions. This was brought to the attention of the case workers supervisor by the reviewers.

WB2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on those outcomes found to be substantially achieved that the children received appropriate services to meet their educational needs when needs were identified and IEP/GED material was found in the case file. In the case that this outcome was found to be not achieved the reviewers commented that there were concerns that this target child was being taken out of school one day per week for therapy/visits and there was no educational documents found in the file.

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:	10	71%
Partially Achieved:	2	14.5%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	14.5%
Not Applicable:	0	0%

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: Eleven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 7 cases were rated as strengths, 4 as area needing improvement, and 3 as not applicable.

Strengths: In the seven cases rated as strengths for this item it was found that medical/dental needs were assessed, services were provided when needed and it was documented in the case file.

Area needing improvement: In one case there was no updated dental exam dates documented in the case file, in two of the cases there were no updated physical or dental exam dates documented in the case file, and in the other case there was no updated physical exam dates documented in the case file.

Item 23. Mental health of the child

Reviewers were to determine if the child is/was in foster care, was an initial formal mental health screening or assessment provided upon the most recent entry into foster care (or within the timeframe specified in the State's guidelines, if applicable). Reviewers checked not applicable if the child was not in foster care or if the State has no guidelines and there were no indications that a screening or assessment was needed. 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.

***Review Findings:* Eleven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item. 11 cases were rated as strengths, 0 cases as area needing improvement, and 3 as not applicable.**

***Strengths:* In the eleven cases rated as strengths for this item there was found to be initial and ongoing formal/informal assessments being conducted on the child. There were no cases rated as area needing improvement on this item.**

***WB3. Outcome Reviewer Comments:* Reviewers commented on the outcomes found to be substantially achieved that needs were assessed and if there were needs identified that they were also addressed. There was also medical/dental/mental health documentation found in the case file. On the cases found to be partially achieved or not achieved reviewers commented that some of the physical/mental health or dental documentation was missing from the file.**

NSA Results

Case Sample: Mini CF SR Review – January 2010

Type of Review: 1st Mini CF SR

Report Type: Northern Service Area

Number of Reviews: 14
2010

Review Period: January 1st, 2009 – January 25th,

PERFORMANCE ITEM RESULTS

Performance Item		Item Ratings (#)			Item Ratings (%)		
		S	ANI	N/A	S	ANI	N/A
Item 1:	Timeliness of initiating investigations	3	2	9	21%	15%	64%
Item 2:	Repeat maltreatment	2	0	12	14%	0%	86%
Item 3:	Services to family	7	0	7	50%	0%	50%
Item 4:	Risk assessment and safety management	11	3	0	79%	21%	0%
Item 5:	Foster care re-entries	2	0	6	25%	0%	75%
Item 6:	Stability of foster care placement	7	1	5	88%	13%	0%
Item 7:	Permanency goal for child	7	1	0	88%	13%	0%
Item 8:	Reunification, guardianship etc	5	0	3	63%	0%	37%
Item 9:	Adoption	2	0	6	25%	0%	75%
Item 10:	Other planned permanent living arrangement	2	2	4	25%	25%	50%
Item 11:	Proximity of foster care placement	6	0	2	75%	0%	25%
Item 12:	Placement with siblings	3	0	5	38%	0%	63%
Item 13:	Visiting with parents and siblings	4	2	2	50%	25%	25%
Item 14:	Preserving connections	6	1	1	75%	12.5%	12.5%
Item 15:	Relative placement	4	1	3	50%	13%	37%
Item 16:	Relationship of child in care with parents	5	2	1	63%	24%	13%
Item 17:	Needs and services	6	8	0	43%	57%	0%
Item 18:	Child and family involvement in case planning	10	4	0	71%	29%	0%
Item 19:	Caseworker visits with child	11	3	0	79%	21%	0%
Item 20:	Caseworker visits with parent(s)	6	8	0	43%	57%	0%
Item 21:	Educational needs of the child	10	1	3	71%	8%	21%
Item 22:	Physical health of the child	7	4	3	50%	29%	21%
Item 23:	Mental/behavioral health of the child	11	0	3	79%	0%	21%

OUTCOME RESULTS

Performance Outcome	COUNTS (#)				PERCENTAGES (%)			
	SA	PA	NA	N/A	SA	PA	NA	N/A
Safety 1 (Items 1-2)	3	1	1	9	21%	7%	7%	65%
Safety 2 (Items 3-4)	11	3	0	0	79%	21%	0%	0%
Permanency 1 (Items 5-10)	6	2	0	0	75%	25%	0%	0%
Permanency 2 (Items 11-16)	5	3	0	0	63%	38%	0%	0%
Wellbeing 1 (Items 17-20)	5	8	1	0	36%	57%	7%	0%
Wellbeing 2 (Item 21)	10	0	1	3	71%	0%	7%	22%
Wellbeing 3 (Items 22-23)	10	2	2	0	71%	14%	15%	0%

KEY:

N/A = Not Applicable
S = Strength
Improvement

PA = Partially Achieved
SA = Substantially Achieved

NACH = Not Achieved
ANI = Area Needing