FINAL REPORT

3rd Mini Children and Family Services Review

Northern Service Area

(July 19th-21st, 2010)

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

A mini CFSR was held in Norfolk on July 19th-21st, 2010. 14 cases were reviewed. The period under review was July 1st, 2009 through July 31st, 2010. 8 cases were foster care cases and 6 were in home cases. Three cases were OJS, three were 3b and the other eight were abuse/neglect. 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 workers Leslie Schlecht and Kayl Dahlke. Out of home contractor Jami Hulsey also assisted with second level.

Background Information

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

With regards to outcomes, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items incorporated in the seven outcomes depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the onsite case review. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as Strength. Performance ratings for each of the seven outcomes are based on item ratings for each case. A service area may be rated as having "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," or "not achieved" the outcome. The determination of whether a service area is in substantial conformity with a particular outcome is based on the percentage of cases that were determined to have substantially achieved that outcome. In order for a service area to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. The standard for substantial conformity is based on the standard set for Federal CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be acceptable. The focus of the CFSR process is on continuous quality improvement; standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to the goal of achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being.

A service area that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must work with their local CQI team to develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

The 3rd Mini CFSR identified several areas of high performance in Northern Service Area with regard to achieving desired outcomes for children. The service area did achieve substantial conformity with one of the seven CFSR outcomes, safety outcome 1(children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect). The service area did achieve overall ratings of strength for the individual indicators pertaining to timeliness of investigations (item 1), 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), other planned living arrangement (item 10), and placement with siblings (item 12).

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 having permanency in their living situation), which was substantially achieved in only 50 percent of the cases reviewed. The lowest rating within this outcome was for item 7 (permanency goal for child), which was rated as a strength in 50 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 rating was item 20 (caseworker visits with parents)-rated as a strength in 46% of the cases reviewed.

Items with ratings of 100% strengths this round were item 1 (timeliness of investigations), item 2 (repeat maltreatment), item 3 (services to prevent removal or re-entry in foster care), item 5 (foster care re-entries), item 8 (reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives), item 10 (other planned living arrangement, and item 12 (placement with siblings).

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	100%
Partially Achieved:	0	0%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	9	64%

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

***Review Findings*:**
***Five of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.**
***5 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
***0 cases were rated as areas needing improvement**
***9 cases were not applicable**
***Two cases that were rated as strengths were out of home cases and the other three were in home.**

Strengths: Two cases had only one intake during the period under review and the timeframes were met. The priority on those two intakes were priority 2 and priority 3. The other three cases that were rated as strengths did not have any intakes that were received during the period under review.

Areas needing improvement: There were no areas needing improvement for this item.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment
In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether there had been at least one substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed maltreatment report during the period under review, and if so, whether another substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed report occurred within a 6 month period before or after the report identified. Cases were considered not applicable for assessment if the child or family had never had a maltreatment report.

Review Findings:
***Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***3 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
***0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***11 cases were not applicable**

Strengths: In one case an intake received before the period under review was assessed and unfounded for physical abuse against the child's daycare, not the parents of the child. In another case removal was not necessary once the DHHS became involved with the family and provided in home support services. In the last case rated as a strength on this item, removal of the child was necessary due to physical neglect and drug use in the family home. The child tested positive for meth and had severe developmental needs, was non verbal and could not report well as to what was happening in the family home.

Areas needing improvement: There were no areas needing improvement for 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. There were no cases found to be partially achieved on this outcome.

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:	1	7%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	14%
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 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
***0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***7 cases were not applicable**

***Six of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases and one was an out of home case.**

Strengths: In four cases it was noted that there were numerous services in place to prevent removal/re-entry in to foster care. Those services ranged from intensive outpatient treatment to family support in the home. Other services were tracker, family therapy, transportation assistance, and intensive family preservation. In one case the target child and mother moved in with a relative to allow for an in home service case to be opened. There was a case that the child could not remain in his home due to drug dealing and use by the parents. This child was also developmentally delayed and the communication level was poor so determining what this child was and was not exposed to would have been hard to determine.

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

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 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item.**
***11 (79%) cases were rated as strengths**
***3 (21%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***0 were not applicable**
***Five of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases. Six of the cases rated as strengths for this item were out of home cases. In the three cases rated as areas needing improvement for this item, one was an in home case and the other two were out of home cases.**

Strengths: In the 11 cases substantially achieved there were no safety concerns found on the target child. In nine of the cases it was noted that ongoing safety assessments were found in the case file and appropriately addressed the ongoing safety concerns. Numerous cases had informal assessments that were occurring on an ongoing basis through family team meetings.

Areas needing improvement: In the three cases found to need improvement each case had a different reason for this rating. In one case no safety assessment was found in the file to reflect a placement change occurring. In the second case there was no assessment found in the case file to reflect why visits between child and parents went from supervised to

unsupervised. In the third case there was no assessment found in the case file to reflect that all the children in the home were being assessed for safety (this was an in home case).

S2. Outcome Reviewer Comments: On the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved reviewers had a variety of comments. They ranged from the child's placements being appropriate to meet the child's needs, ongoing assessments being completed through family team meetings to in six cases there being no safety concerns or issues in the facility or home. In one case removal was necessary due to drug use in the home. Reviewers comments on the cases found to be partially achieved were that there were no assessments on the other children residing in the home. In the cases that were found to be not achieved for this outcome the reviewer's commented that it was because there were not ongoing assessments to address case changes such as visits going from supervised to unsupervised or changes in case circumstances found in the case file.

II. PERMANENCY

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

Status of Permanency Outcome P1

	Total Number	**Total Percentage**
Substantially Achieved:	4	50%
Partially Achieved:	4	50%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	6	43%

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 r-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 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
***0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***12 cases were not applicable**

In the two cases that were rated as strengths for this item in both cases foster care re-entry was due to the treatment level of care that the child(ren) needed to receive.

There were no files that were found to have area needing improvement for this item.

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*:**
***Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***6 (75%) cases were rated as strengths**
***2 (25%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***6 of the cases were not applicable**

Strengths: In six cases this was rated as a strength. In one case the target child had only one placement change during the period under review. In another case the children were placed with a grandmother prior to the period under review and have been stable in that placement, which is moving towards adoption. In two cases the child's placement change was due to the child's behavior/mental health needs or due to the completion of a treatment program. One case the target child was initially placed at a shelter and then went to a foster home before being reunified with his parents. In the last case rated as a strength for this item the target child was in two placements since the initial removal, one was an emergency shelter and then to a relative foster home.

Area needing improvement: In two cases this item was found to be needing improvement. In one case initial placement occurred in a licensed relative foster home. Due to family dynamics the providers requested that the child be moved. The move was un-planned. This was after the permanency plan had been changed to guardianship with this family. The second placement has since agreed to assume the guardianship placement. In the second case the target child's behaviors continued to cause him to be placed in detention or locked facilities. The child's current placement is detention while awaiting federal charges on attempted murder, two counts of first degree assault, aggravated weapons offense and disorderly conduct.

Item 7. <u>Permanency goal for child</u>
In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether DHHS had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner, including filing for termination of parental rights when relevant. Reviewers examined the appropriateness of a goal that ultimately rules out adoption, guardianship, or return to family. Reviewers assessed whether the child's best interests were thoroughly considered by DHHS in setting a goal of other planned living arrangement, and that such a decision is /was continually reviewed for ongoing appropriateness. Cases were assigned a rating of Strength for this item when reviewers determined that DHHS had established an appropriate permanency goal in a timely manner. Cases were assigned a rating of Area Needing Improvement when goals of reunification were not changed in a timely manner when it was apparent that reunification was unlikely to happen, termination of parental rights was not filed when the child had been foster care for 15 of the past 22 months and no compelling reasons were

noted in the file, or the goal established for the child was not appropriate. Cases were identified as Not Applicable if the child was not in foster care.

***Review Findings*:**
***Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***4 (50%) cases were rated as strengths**
***4 (50%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***6 were not applicable**

Strengths: In the four cases reviewed that were rated as strengths for this item the permanency goals were established and achieved in a timely manner.

Area needing improvement: Four cases reviewed were rated as areas needing improvement for this item. In two of the cases it was noted that the case plan was not established within 60 days of adjudication. In another case there was no TPR (termination of parental rights) filed and the child was in foster care 31 months. In the last case the permanency goal of guardianship was not reached for 27 months and at 42 months that goal was changed to adoption.

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*:**
***Four of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***4 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
***0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***10 as not applicable**

Strengths: Four cases were rated as strengths on this item. In one case the goal of reunification was established 8 days after adjudication and the child was reunified before the end of the period under review. In another case, the case plan goal of reunification was established within 30 days of adjudication. On another case the goal of reunification was not successfully moving ahead according to the case file and the permanency goal was changed to guardianship prior to the 15 month mark of the child being in out of home care. In the last case it was found that while the courts and agency attempted to address permanency and stability the youth's behaviors prevented this from happening. This child is currently in detention awaiting charges in adult court.

There were no cases reviewed that were found to be needing improvement for this item.

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*:**
***Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***2 (67%) cases were rated as a strength**

***1 (33%) case was rated as area needing improvement**
***11 were not applicable**

Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths for this item, the goal of adoption was set within a timely manner and active efforts are being made by DHHS to achieve this goal.

Area needing improvement: In the one case that this item was rated as needing improvement the target child has had the goal of adoption for 42 months and the adoption has not been finalized.

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*:**
***Three of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***3 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
***0 cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***11 were not applicable**

Strengths: Three cases were rated as strengths for this item. In one case, it was noted that while permanency goal planning has been an ongoing issue with this child to meet his/her behavioral and mental health needs the current placement is stable and will remain until he ages out of the system. In another case the child's DD (developmentally disabled) placement is meeting the youth's needs and addressing independent living issues such as life skills, education, and behavioral needs. In the last case the child had remained in the independent living placement and successfully completed the program with graduation occurring before the end of the period under review.

There were no cases reviewed that were needing improvement for this item.

P1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers comments on the cases found to be substantially achieved were that permanency goals were established within the set time frames and services helped to support and maintain the stability of the placements in these cases. On the cases rated as partially achieved reviewers commented that in one case the behavior of the child disrupted the placement. On three cases it was noted that the case plan goal was established after the 60 day mark. In another case there was not a TPR (termination of parental rights) found in the case file.

Status of Permanency Outcome P2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	6	75%
Partially Achieved:	1	13%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	13%
Not Applicable:	6	43%

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement
Reviewers were to determine whether the child's foster care setting was in close proximity to the child's parents or close relatives. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which termination of parental rights had been completed prior to the period under review, or in which contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interest.

***Review Findings*:**
***Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***6 (86%) cases were rated as strengths**
***1 (14%) case was rated as area needing improvement**
***7 were not applicable**

Strengths: Six cases reviewed were rated as strengths for this item. In several of the cases it was noted that the child resides within the same county as his/her family. The distance between the child and their family was no more than 80 miles. It was also noted that in one case visitation was occurring between child and family several times per week. In another case the family lives close enough to the child to facilitate visits at least a few times per month as well as attending the child's family team meetings that are being held on a monthly basis.

Area needing improvement: In the one case rated as area needing improvement, placement was based on the child's criminal behavior and not on the permanency goal of reunification. Because of the youth's numerous law violations and behavioral issues the proximity of the out of home placement was not very conducive to maintain regular contact between the youth and his/her family.

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*:**
***Two of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***2 (100%) cases were rated as strengths**
***0 as area needing improvement**
***12 were not applicable**

Strengths: In the two cases rated as strengths in this item the following reasons were given: In one case all children were placed together in the home of their maternal grandmother. In the other case two of the three siblings were placed in the same foster home, while the third sibling was placed in a treatment setting due to his sexualized behaviors that posed a risk to his sister and brother.

There were no cases rated as needing improvement on this item.

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*:**
***Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***6 (86%) cases were rated as strengths**
***1 (14%) case was rated as area needing improvement**
***7 were not applicable**

Strengths: Six cases were rated as strengths for this item. In all of these cases contact between parents (mother and father) and siblings in foster care was occurring anywhere from several times per week to several times per month. In one case it was noted that a visitation plan was created on the day of removal for each parent. In another case the mother of the target child had re-entered the child's life after being gone for several years and contact was occurring weekly between the two of them. The father was incarcerated and it is court ordered that they not have visits.

Area needing improvement: In the one case rated as area needing improvement the following reason was noted: There is no documentation found in the case file to indicate visits or efforts towards visits occurred between the Mother and the target child and the whereabouts of the father are unknown.

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*:**
***Eight of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***5 (63%) cases were rated as strengths**
***3 (38%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***6 were not applicable**

Strengths: Five cases were rated as strengths for this item. In all the cases connections were maintained through extended family visits and/or holiday celebrations. ICWA was addressed in all of the cases. In one case the youth was very involved in tribal activities and the tribe is currently working on finding a mentor for the child to teach him/her about the culture. In another case the relative placement home is working on teaching the target child Spanish and is involving the child in various faith and religious activities.

Area needing improvement: Three cases were rated as area needing improvement for this item. In all three of the cases it was noted that the case file lacked documentation showing that there were active efforts to preserve connections.

Item 15. <u>Relative placement</u>
Reviewers had to focus on the title IV-E provision that requires States to consider giving preference to placing the child with relatives, and determine whether the State considered such a placement and how (for example, seeking out and evaluating the child's relatives). Relatives include non-custodial parents, such as fathers not in the home, if applicable to the case. Reviewers had to determine the extent to which the agency identified relatives who had some reasonable degree of relationship with the child and with whom the child might reside. There did not need to be in the case record a formal evaluation of relatives with whom the child might reside, but for reviewers to have answered "yes" evidence must exist, through either the case documentation or the case interviews, that relatives were evaluated and considered. Reviewers rated this item as a Strength if (1) the agency assessed the child's needs and determined that he/she required special services *and* (2) the agency assessed potential relative placements and determined that the relative placements did not have the capacity to meet the child's needs. Reviewers rated this item as a strength unless no efforts were made to locate or identify relatives for placement, or placement with a family known to the child. Reviewers rated this item as not applicable if (1) the agency determined upon the child's initial entry into care that his/her needs required residential treatment services and a relative placement would be inappropriate, or (2) if relatives were unable to be identified despite the agency's diligent efforts to do so, or in situations such as abandonment in which the identity of the parents and relatives remains unknown despite efforts to identify them. Reviewers were to check not applicable if the child was placed with relatives.

***Review Findings*:**
***Six of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***4 (67%) cases were rated as strengths**
***2 (33%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***8 were not applicable**

Strengths: In the four cases rated as strengths for this item the following reasons were noted: In two of the cases the child is placed with a relative and are in the process of adopting them. In the other two cases both maternal and paternal relatives were assessed for possible placement. They were not pursued because in one case the child's mental/behavioral needs were high and the family was unable to care for him/her in their home. In the other case paternal relatives identified had a criminal history.

Area needing improvement: In the two cases that were rated as needing improvement for this item there was no documentation found in the case file that efforts were made to search for maternal/paternal relatives.

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*:**
***Seven of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***6 (86%) cases were rated as strengths**
***1 (14%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***7 were not applicable**

Strengths: In five of the six cases that were rated as strengths for this item it was specifically noted that the family and child were involved in monthly family team meetings. In one case the mother had just recently came back in to the child's life and has started to participate with the case planning process through weekly visitation with the child. Family therapy was provided in another case and it resulted in strengthening the child/parent bond. In several cases the youth had visits with their parents in the parental home and were involved in their own community functions: such as church and family gatherings.

Area needing improvement: In the one case that was rated as needing improvement in this item it was noted that according to the case file it was unclear if visitation was encouraged by the case worker with the mother when the child was placed outside her home. There was documentation in this case that attempts were made by the case worker to locate the father but he was never found.

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). It was also noted that ICWA was addressed in most of these cases. In two of the cases the identified child and siblings were placed with a relative. In the cases where this outcome was only partially achieved the reviewers commented that there were no documented efforts found to show that the DHHS worker made concerted efforts to locate the fathers in those cases. In one case comments made were that there were no efforts made to find a relative placement. In the case that was not achieved there was no documentation found that efforts were made to preserve the connections (child's community, church, school, etc...) of the child.

III. WELL-BEING

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

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	6	43%
Partially Achieved:	7	50%
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**
***8 (57%) cases were rated as strengths**
***6 (43%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***0 were not applicable**
***Two of the cases rated as strengths were in home cases and six were out of home cases. Four of the cases rated as area needing improvement were in home cases and two were out of home cases.**

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

CHILDREN
17a. Strengths: The child's needs and services were both informally and formally assessed and addressed through initial assessments, case management and family team meetings. Some of the services provided to address the identified needs were, behavioral assessments, Developmental Disabilities assessments, Electronic Monitoring, Family Support, individual and family therapy and tracker services.

17a. Area needing improvement: In one case it was noted that the identified child had been sexually abused and there was no indication that his/her victimization was being addressed in therapy. In another case it was noted that there was very little information found in the case

file to show that the child's needs were being assessed and addressed. It was also noted in this case that the case plan goals appeared to revolve more around the parents than the identified child. In another case it was noted that the other children remaining in the home did not have their needs assessed or addressed.

PARENTS
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. Informal assessments were completed through face to face contact and family team meetings. Comprehensive Family Assessments were also completed. Some of the services offered to address the identified needs were transportation assistance, drug/alcohol treatment, family support services, parenting classes, and therapy. There was one case that while both parents' needs were assessed there were none identified, therefore no services were provided.

17b. Area needing improvement: In two cases it was noted that while the mother's needs had been assessed and addressed, the father needs had not been assessed. In one of those two cases there was no documentation found to indicate that active efforts had been made to locate the father, on the other case it stated that the fathers whereabouts were unknown. In two cases it was noted there was no information found to indicate that either parents needs had been assessed. In another case the mother reported that she had voiced to the caseworker that she needed some help with learning how to deal with her children's behaviors but that no services have been put in to place to help her with this.

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

17c. Area needing improvement: There was only one case that was rated as needing improvement on this item. In this case it was noted that the caseworker interview revealed that this worker did not feel as though the relative licensed foster home needed services because they were related to the identified child, however the placement was disrupted and the child had to be removed. The reason it was disrupted was due to the foster mom and identified child not getting along. Supportive services specific to this placement and the unique issues of a relative placement could have minimized the potential for disruption.

Item 18. <u>Child and family involvement in case planning</u>
In assessing this item reviewers were to determine whether the agency actively involved the parent(s), guardian, child(ren) and other people identified by the family in the case planning activities relevant to the current case plan. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent (guardian) and the child (older than 8 and not incapacitated) had actively participated in identifying the services and goals for the case plan.

***Review Findings*:**
***All of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***10 (71%) cases were rated as strengths**
***4 (29%) of the cases were rated as area needing improvement**

***0 were not applicable**
***In the ten cases rated as strengths four were in home cases and six were out of home cases. In the four cases that were rated as area needing improvement two were in home cases and two were out of home cases.**

Strengths: In eight of the ten cases that were rated as strengths for this item it was specifically noted that both parents and child (when old enough) participated in the case planning process through monthly family team meetings as well as through monthly face to face contact with the case worker. In one case the children were too young to participate in the case planning and the parent's rights were terminated. In the other case the child has developmental delays and would be unable to participate in the case planning process.

Area needing improvement: In three of the four cases rated as needing improvement for this item it was noted that there was no documentation found in the case file to indicate that the child(ren) and the family were involved in the case planning. In the other case there was no documentation to indicate that active efforts were made to locate the father and include him in the case planning process.

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 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***9 (64%) cases were rated as strengths**
***5 (36%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***0 were not applicable**

Four of the cases rated as a strength for this item were in home cases and five were out of home. Two of the cases rated as area needing improvement was an in home case and three were out of home cases.

Strengths: In the nine cases reviewed that were found to be strengths in this item there was found to be at least monthly contacts between the worker and the child occurring. The quality of those narratives addressed permanency, safety and well being issues.

Area needing improvement: In the five cases rated as needing improvement it was noted in that the file lacked contact documentation and the child was not seen monthly. In one case it was noted that the child was only seen 5 months out of the period under review. In another case the child was only seen three months out of the period under review. In two of these five cases it was noted that the narratives were not of quality: meaning they did not address safety, permanency and well being issues.

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 there is no plan for further involvement between the parents and the agency or the parents and the child, and the child

is not in a permanent home.

***Review Findings*:**
***13 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***6 (46%) cases were rated as strengths**
***7 (54%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***1 was not applicable**
***One of the cases rated as strengths for this item was an in home case and five were out of home cases. Five of the cases rated as area needing improvement for this item were in home cases and two were out of home cases.**

Strengths: In the six cases rated as strengths for this item 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 five of the seven cases rated as area needing improvement on this item it was noted that caseworker visits with the mother were occurring on a monthly basis and the contact narratives reflected that permanency, safety and well being were discussed. However, in these five cases there was little to no contact occurring between the caseworker and the father. On the other two cases rated as needing improvement on this item one was because contacts between the caseworker and Mom were only occurring via phone and in the other case it was because caseworker visits with both parents only occurred two out of the 12 months the case was reviewed.

WB1. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the cases that were rated as being substantially achieved that extensive efforts were made by the Department to ensure the families had the capacity to provide for their children's needs and were assessed formally and informally through ongoing assessments and mental health assessments. Families participated in therapy, family support, utilization of respite care when needed, communication during visits with caseworkers, and involvement in the case planning process. Families got involved in the case planning process through monthly contacts with the DHHS worker and through family team meetings. In the cases where this outcome was found to be partially achieved reviewers commented that in several cases the father was never located by DHHS, and the child was not included in the case planning process. In the case that was rated as not achieved the reviewer commented that there was no assessment completed on the foster parents.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2

	Total Number	**Total Percentage**
Substantially Achieved:	6	60%
Partially Achieved:	0	0%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	4	40%
Not Applicable:	4	29%

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*:**
***Ten of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***6 (60%) cases were rated as strengths**
***4 (40%) case was rated as area needing improvement**
***2 were not applicable**
***One of the cases rated as strengths for this item was an in home case and five were out of home cases. Two cases rated as area needing improvement for this item were in home cases and the other two were out of home cases.**

Strengths: In the six 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 IEP's, an ESU referral, and assisting with getting a GED. Grade/report cards were found in the case file.

Area needing improvement: In the four cases rated as needing improvement it was found that there was no educational documents found in the case file and there was no information regarding any assessments of needs being completed.

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. There were no cases found to be partially achieved for this outcome. In the four cases that this outcome was found to be not achieved the reviewers commented that in two of the four there was no documentation found in the case file regarding grade reports of any kind. In three of the four cases there was no educational record/information found in the case file on the other children residing in the family 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:	8	57%
Partially Achieved:	3	21%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	3	21%
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*:**
***Thirteen of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***10 (77%) cases were rated as strengths**
***3 (23%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***1 was not applicable**
***Three of the cases rated as strengths for this item were in home cases and seven were out of home cases. Two cases rated as area needing improvement for this item was an in home case and one was an out of home case.**

Strengths: In the ten 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 the three cases rated as area needing improvement for this item there was no updated medical/dental exam dates documented in the case file.

Item 23. Mental health of the child
Reviewers were to determine whether during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the child(ren). Reviewers rated this item as a strength if the agency conducted an assessment of the child's mental health and determined that there were no problems in that area, nor any need for mental health services. If there was a need for services then they were offered.

***Review Findings*:**
***Ten of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to this item**
***6 (60%) cases were rated as strengths**
***4 (40%) cases were rated as area needing improvement**
***4 were not applicable**
***One case rated as a strength for this item was an in home case and five were out of home cases. Three cases rated as area needing improvement for this item were in home cases and one was an out of home case.**

Strengths: In the six cases rated as strengths for this item there was found to be initial and ongoing formal/informal assessments being conducted on the child ranging from the Youth Level of Service evaluation to the Comprehensive Family Assessment. Informal assessments were completed by the DHHS worker through monthly family team meetings and face to face contacts with the youth.

Area Needing Improvement: One case noted that the child had been a victim of sexual abuse but it did not appear that this was being addressed through therapy. In another case there was little documentation found to indicate the identified child's mental health needs were assessed. On the other two, the area needing improvement rating resulted from: one case the other children residing in the home were not assessed and in the other case it was difficult to determine what the needs were because there was no assessment found in the file. The only thing found in the file in regards to mental health was a referral for a psychological assessment.

WB3. Outcome Reviewer Comments: Reviewers commented on the outcomes found to be substantially achieved that mental health needs were assessed and if there were needs identified that they were also addressed. There was also medical/dental/mental health documentation found in the case file. On the cases found to be partially achieved reviewers commented that in two cases there was no updates in the case file in regards to how mental health therapy was going. In one case there was no documentation found in the case file in regards to dental and physical exams/updates. In the three cases that were found to not be achieved on this outcome it was noted that in two of the cases there was no physical/dental/vision exams found in the case file. In the other case while there was a psychological evaluation referral found in the case file there was nothing found in the file about what the recommendations were as a result of that evaluation.

NSA Results

Case Sample: *Mini CFSR Review – July 2010*
Type of Review: 3rd *Mini CFSR* **Report Type:** *Northern Service Area*
Number of Reviews: *14* **Review Period:** *July 19th-21st, 2010*

Performance Item Results

S = Strength ANI = Area Needing Improvement N/A = Not Applicable

Performance Item	S	ANI	N/A	S (%)	ANI (%)	N/A (%)	Total
Number of Submitted Review:							14
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5	0	9	100	0	64	14
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	3	0	11	100	0	79	14
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	7	0	7	100	0	50	14
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	11	3		79	21		14
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	2	0	12	100	0	86	14
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	6	2	6	75	25	43	14
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	4	4	6	50	50	43	14
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	4	0	10	100	0	71	14
Item 9: Adoption	2	1	11	67	33	79	14
Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement	3	0	11	100	0	79	14
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	6	1	7	86	14	50	14
Item 12: Placement with siblings	2	0	12	100	0	86	14
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	6	1	7	86	14	50	14
Item 14: Preserving connections	5	3	6	63	38	43	14
Item 15: Relative placement	4	2	8	67	33	57	14
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	6	1	7	86	14	50	14
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	8	6		57	43		14
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	10	4	0	71	29	0	14
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	9	5		64	36		14
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parent(s)	6	7	1	46	54	7	14
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	6	4	4	60	40	29	14

Item 22: Physical health of child	10	3	1	77	23	7	14
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	6	4	4	60	40	29	14

SA = Substantially Achieved (%) PA = Partially Achieved (%) NACH = Not Achieved (%) N/A = Not Applicable

Performance Outcome	SA	PA	NACH	N/A	SA (%)	PA (%)	NACH (%)	N/A (%)	Total
Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	5	0	0	9	100	0	0	64	14
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	11	1	2	0	79	7	14	0	14
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	4	4	0	6	50	50	0	43	14
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	6	1	1	6	75	13	13	43	14
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	6	7	1	0	43	50	7	0	14
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	6	0	4	4	60	0	40	29	14
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	8	3	3	0	57	21	21	0	14