

FINAL REPORT

**1st Mini Children and Family Service
Review**

Western Service Area

February 1-3, 2010

Executive Summary

Children and Family Services Review

Western Service Area

This document presents the findings from the 1st Mini-Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the Western Service Area. The Nebraska CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) team has identified Mini-CFSR as an important activity for assessing the performance of each service area and the state as a whole with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and their families. The Mini-CFSR is scheduled to take place in each service area, quarterly in the years 2010 and 2011.

The Western Service Area's 1st Mini-CFSR was conducted from February 1st to 3rd, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review was January 1, 2009 to January 25, 2010. The findings were derived from file reviews of 14 cases (9 foster care and 5 in home services) which were randomly selected from all child welfare cases which were open at some time during the period under review. The reviews also included interviews with parents, children, foster parents, CFS specialists, and other service providers to assess items 17-20 within the review tool.

In the Western Service Area, 6 of the 14 cases reviewed were brought to the attention of DHHS for juvenile justice services and 3 of the cases were non court involved. Cases reviewed were from the following local offices: Chadron, Gering, Lexington, McCook, North Platte and Sidney.

The review was completed by five teams of two reviewers made up of one staff person from DHHS and one staff person from an out of home reform contractor (Boys & Girls Home, Voices for Families, and Speak Out). A second level review of 100% of the cases was completed by Terri Farrell

Background Information

The mini CFSR is modeled after the Federal CFSR 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 the Western 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 the following items: timeliness of initiating investigations (item 1), foster care re-entries (item 5), stability of foster care placement (item 6), other planned permanent living arrangement (item 10), proximity of foster care placement (item 11), placement with siblings (item 12) and addressing mental/behavioral health of the child (item 23).

The Mini-CFSR also identified key areas of concern with regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. Concerns were identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 1 (children have permanency and stability in their living situations), which was substantially achieved in only 33% 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 44% of the cases reviewed.

Concerns were also identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 2 (the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children), which was substantially achieved in only 44% of the cases reviewed. Within Permanency Outcome 2, Western Service Area's lowest rating was for item 16 (relationship of child in care with parents) which was rated as a strength in 37.5% of the cases reviewed.

Additionally, concerns were identified with regard to Well-Being Outcome 1 (families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs), which was substantially achieved in only 36% of the cases reviewed. The lowest rating within this outcome was for item 20 (caseworker visits with parent(s)), which was rated as a Strength in 43% 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:	4	80%
Partially Achieved:	1	20%
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 HHS. 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:

- 5 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to the item.
- All 5 cases (100%) were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in all cases applicable to this item was that all investigations of child maltreatment were initiated, by face to face contact with the child victim, in a timely manner according to the timeframes established by the state's statute.
 - In one case it was identified that face to face contact with the child was made the same day that the report was received.

Reviewer Comments:

The review indicates that the Western Service Area is consistently meeting the time frames for making contact with children who are the subject of child maltreatment reports. In addition to meeting the timeframes established, it was noted that in some cases contact was made the same day that the report was received, providing an immediate response.

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:

- 4 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to the item.
- 3 (75%) of the 4 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - Strengths were noted in these three cases as there were no instances of repeat maltreatment occurring within six months.
- 1 (25%) of the 4 cases was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - An area needing improvement was identified in this case as repeat maltreatment occurred about 3 months following the first substantiated report. A safety plan and services were not put into place until after the second incident of maltreatment was reported, 3 months following the first substantiated report.

Reviewer Comments:

It is noted that a majority of the cases reviewed (10 of 14) were not applicable to this item as there were no maltreatment reports during the Period Under Review (January 1, 2009 to January 25, 2010).

The review identified that improvement in this area may be gained through consistently identifying and providing appropriate services to families in a timely manner.

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

Status of Safety Outcome S2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	8	57%
Partially Achieved:	2	14%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	4	29%
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. Four of the 14 cases were excluded from the assessment because there were no substantiated/inconclusive/petition to be filed maltreatment reports or identified risks of harm to children in the home during the period under review, or because the target child entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home who were at risk of maltreatment.

Review Findings:

- 7 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to the item.
- 5 (71%) of the 7 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in one case was that concerted efforts were made through family support services and counseling services to address safety issues in order to protect the child in the home and prevent entry into foster care.
 - In four of the cases it was noted that at reunification, concerted efforts through a variety of services, including tracker services, intensive outpatient treatment, therapy, family support, relative respite care, substance abuse evaluation, and safety planning, were provided to prevent re-entry of the children into foster care.
- 2 (29%) of the 7 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - An area needing improvement was identified in one case as an out of home placement was chosen even after the safety analysis indicated no reason that an in-home placement would not be viable. In this same case, at the time of reunification, no assessment was completed and no services were provided and there was no indication that concerted efforts were made to prevent this child from re-entering foster care.
 - In another case, more than three months passed from the time of the maltreatment report until family support services began. Aside from the family support services, no other indication of concerted efforts to prevent entry into foster care could be found.

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers identified that there are a wide variety of services being provided to families to protect children and prevent entry or re-entry into foster care. Improvement in this area could be achieved through identifying implementing services needed to prevent entry as soon as possible and by assuring appropriate aftercare services are made available to prevent re-entry.

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 14 of the cases were applicable to the item.
- 8 (57%) of the 14 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in one case was that the agency conducted periodic safety assessments while in foster care and while transitioning back home.
 - In another case, the agency made concerted efforts to keep the child safe during foster placement through supervised visits with family until unsupervised visits were determined to be appropriate.
 - Another strength identified was that a risk assessment was completed and reviewed on an ongoing basis and a safety plan was developed based on the risk assessment.
- 6 (43%) of the 14 cases was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In three cases it was noted that the agency did not conduct or document a safety assessment prior to reunification.
 - In one in-home case, it was noted that the agency did not continually monitor and update the safety plan.
 - One review noted that there was no documentation of ongoing assessments needed to manage the child's safety in the home.

Reviewer Comments:

The reviewers identified that initial assessments are being conducted and documented, however, in some cases, the needed ongoing assessments are not being found. Reunification is taking place without the completion of an ongoing assessment and without clear evidence that there are no longer safety factors present. Reviewers also noted a lack of safety plans and OJS evaluations in the case files reviewed.

II. PERMANENCY

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

Status of Permanency Outcome P1

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	3	33%
Partially Achieved:	6	67%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0%
Not Applicable:	5	36%

Item 5. Foster care re-entries

Reviewers rated this assessment a Strength if during the period under review a child did not have an entry into care within a 12-month period from being discharged from another entry into foster care. Reviewers also rated this item as a Strength if a re-entry was an isolated incident during which the agency did what was reasonable to manage the risk following reunification but the child re-entered care for another reason (for example, the death of a parent). Reviewers rated this item as an Area Needing Improvement if re-entries occurring within a 12-month period were due to the same general reasons or same perpetrators. Reviewers rated this item as Not Applicable if : (1) the child entered foster care before, and remained in foster care during, the period under review; or (2) the child entered foster care before, and exited foster care during, the period under review and there was not another entry into foster care during the period under review.

Review Findings:

- 3 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 3 (100%) of the 3 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - Strengths were noted for 2 of the 3 cases as there were no re-entries into foster care.
 - In another case, while re-entry did occur, it was noted as a strength because it was identified that the agency did make concerted efforts to prevent re-entry by providing safety and therapeutic services.

Reviewer Comments:

The reviewers identified that re-entry occurred in one of the three applicable cases. When re-entry did occur, documentation was found to show that efforts had been made through safety and therapeutic services to prevent re-entry into foster care.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement changes during the period under review, and if so, whether the changes in

placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs.

Review Findings:

- 9 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 9 (100%) of the 9 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - In two of the cases reviewed, strengths were noted as the target child was placed in foster care in a relative home for the entire period that he was out of home.
 - In one case the child only had one placement during the period under review and the placement was stable.
 - In four cases, multiple placements were noted, however this item was rated as strength in these cases as all placement changes were made in an effort to increase stability, to achieve case goals or to ensure step down level of care as appropriate for the child.

Reviewer Comments:

The reviewers noted overall stability for those children who were placed in foster care, identifying that in most cases the child only experienced one foster care placement during the period under review. It was noted that long term placement with relatives contributed to stability in some of the cases reviewed. Reviewers also identified that in the cases where more than one foster care placement was experienced, this change occurred either to increase stability for the child or occurred when it was identified that a less restrictive level of care was appropriate.

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:

- 9 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to the item.
- 4 (44%) of the 9 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - In all of the cases given a strength rating, permanency goals for the child were specified in the case file.
 - It was also noted that in these four cases the permanency goals were established in a timely manner.
- 5 (56%) of the 9 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - It was noted in one case that the permanency goals were not established within the 60 day timeline, with 6 months passing before the primary permanency goal was established.
 - In one case the permanency goal was not established until eight months after the children had entered care.
 - In another case the permanency goal was not updated until 3½ months following reunification.
 - In five cases no concurrent goal had been established.

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers identified a need for improvement in making equal efforts toward concurrent planning. It was also identified that in many cases, permanency goals were not established or revised in a timely manner. Reviewers also noted untimely referrals to the permanency team.

In cases applicable to this item, the following goals were identified:

Primary Permanency Goal:

- Reunification—5 cases
- Guardianship—0 cases
- Independent Living—0 cases
- Family Preservation—3 cases
- Adoption—1 case

Concurrent Goal:

- No concurrent goal—5 cases
- Reunification—0 cases
- Guardianship—1 cases
- Independent Living—1 case
- Family Preservation—1 case
- Adoption—1 case
- Self-Sufficiency—0 cases

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:

- 6 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 5 (83%) of the 6 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - In two cases a strength noted is that the agency and courts are making concerted efforts to change permanency goals in a timely manner.
 - In one case the permanency objective of reunification was achieved within 8 months of being in out of home placement.
 - In another case, although the child has been out of the home for 18 months, a strength was noted because the case file documents an extensive search for relatives and efforts to pursue relative placements.
- 1 (17%) of the 6 cases was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In one case an area needing improvement was noted as the primary permanency goal of reunification was not established for 6 months and therefore unable to show that diligent efforts had been made to achieve this goal in a timely manner.

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:

- 2 of the 14 cases reviewed were applicable to the item.
- 1 (50%) of the 2 cases was rated as a Strength.
 - The strength noted in this case was that the agency established a goal of adoption concurrent with the goal of reunification and documentation shows that efforts are being made to achieve the goal of adoption in a timely manner.
- 1 (50%) of the 2 cases was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - An area needing improvement was cited for this case as adoption was not made a permanency goal or concurrent goal until after parental rights were terminated and the adoption process extended over 2 years.

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:

- 2 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 2 (100%) of the 2 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in one case was that concerted efforts were made to work toward the goal of other planned permanent living arrangements such as guardianship.
 - In another case it was noted that a concurrent goal of independent living is being pursued with equal efforts as the primary goal of reunification.

Status of Permanency Outcome P2

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

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:

- 8 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 8 (100%) of the 8 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength found in two cases was that the foster care placement was located in the same community as the child’s family.
 - In two other cases it was noted that the foster care placement is in close enough proximity to allow face to face contact between the parents and child.
 - In three cases, while placement is not in close proximity to the child’s parents and home community, documentation showed that the placement was in the closest facility available to meet the child’s needs.
 - A strength noted in two of the cases reviewed was that transportation services were provided to assist with maintaining visitation between parent and child when the child was placed outside of their home community.

Reviewer Comments:

The review identified that children are commonly placed within their home community or within close proximity to their parents and home community. In the instances in which placement was not within close proximity to the child’s family, it was identified that this occurred because an appropriate placement was not available in the child’s home community and that the closest appropriate placement was utilized.

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:

- 3 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 3 (100%) of the 3 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in two cases was that the target child and their sibling(s) were placed in the same foster care home.
 - In one case, the agency separated the siblings in order to meet the needs of each child as they both required formal behavioral management.

Reviewer Comments:

The review identified that siblings are placed together in foster care unless it is not in the best interest of the child to do so.

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 sever physical abuse or sexual abuse. DHHS Policy requires that siblings placed separately must have a minimum of one visit per month. Other forms of communication including phone calls and letters are strongly encouraged.

Review Findings:

- 8 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 4 (50%) of the 8 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - In three of the cases a strength was noted as concerted efforts were made through transportation and/or supervised visitation services to ensure sufficient frequency of visits and promote the continuity of the parent child relationship.
 - In one case arrangements were made for weekly visitation with the child's parents and siblings.
- 4 (50%) of the 8 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In two cases there was no documentation to indicate whether visits occurred between the child in foster care and their siblings.
 - In one case an area needing improvement was identified as concerted efforts were not made to ensure the quality of visitation between the child and mother was sufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship.

- In another case reviewers found that concerted efforts were not made to allow contact either in person or through phone calls to maintain a relationship between the child and the child's father.

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers found a variety of things with regard to visitation. In half of the cases reviewed, the reviewers found visitation planning and clear documentation that visitation occurred regularly with mother, father and siblings and that the agency assisted as needed in providing support and encouragement to facilitate visitation. In the other half of the cases, reviewers were not able to find documentation of visitation with siblings or that documentation did not show that efforts were made to encourage involvement of both parents.

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:

- 9 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 7 (78%) of the 9 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted by the reviewers in three cases was that the children had been placed in their home community or close enough to their home community to allow them to maintain connections to school, community, extended family and friends.
 - In one case it was noted that the child's connection to extended family was maintained through placement with relatives.
 - In six of the cases, reviewers noted that information regarding ICWA was documented in the case file.
- 2 (22%) of the 9 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In one case the reviewers found that the child was not able to preserve connections to school or church while in foster care as the most appropriate placement was outside of the child's community.
 - In another case documentation showed that the child had to change schools and there was no indication in the file as to whether the child was able to maintain connections to neighborhood, community, friends, or faith.

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers identified that good efforts are being made to inquire about and document Native American affiliation as required by ICWA. In the majority of cases, children were able to be placed in a setting that allowed them remain in the same school, continue activities in their community and maintain a connection to their family.

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:

- 7 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 4 (57%) of the 7 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - Strengths were noted in two cases as an appropriate and stable placement with relatives was secured.
 - In two other cases documentation shows an extensive search for relatives was completed to identify potential placements for the child.
- 3 (43%) of the 7 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In one case reviewers found no documentation to show that either maternal or paternal relatives were identified.
 - Two cases showed that efforts were made to identify one, but not both sides the child's extended family. In one case, maternal relatives were identified and considered for relative placement but no paternal relatives were identified, and in the other case, paternal relatives were identified and considered for potential placement but no maternal relatives were noted.

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers found that relatives were fully identified and explored as potential foster placements in 4 of the 7 applicable cases. Relative placements were secured in 2 of the 7 applicable cases. Reviewers noted that in 2 of the cases reviewed, relative placements were not fully explored as extended family was only identified for one of the child's parents. For example, paternal relatives were identified but no maternal relatives were identified. In one of the cases reviewed, no relatives, maternal or paternal were identified.

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:

- 8 of the 14 cases were applicable.
- 3 (37.5%) of the 8 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in one case was that the agency provided supervised visitation and transportation services to facilitate visitation between parent and child.
 - In one case, family therapeutic sessions were provided as a means to support and strengthen the child's relationship with his parents.
 - In another case the agency encouraged the mother to attend appointments with the child and provided gas vouchers to facilitate this.
- 5 (62.5%) of the 8 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In all of the cases which identified this item as an area needing improvement, the reviewers noted that there was no indication in the case files that concerted efforts were made to encourage and promote a positive and nurturing relationship between the child and his/her parent(s).

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers noted a lack of documentation in the case files to show that efforts were made to encourage and nurture the relationship between the child and parents beyond regular visitation.

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 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 9 (64%) of the 14 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - In eight of the cases rated as a strength, thorough assessments were completed to identify the needs of the child and parents and the appropriate services were provided to meet the identified needs.
 - In four of the cases it was noted that informal assessments were completed on an ongoing basis throughout the period under review.
 - Reviewers noted in one case that services were modified based on the needs and abilities of the parents.
- 5 (36%) of the 14 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In these five cases reviewers noted that assessments were completed for the children and parents; however identified areas of need for the parents were not met by the agency.

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers identified that the agency consistently performed well in terms of assessing and meeting the needs of the child. In terms of the parents, reviewers noted that in some cases the needs of one parent were identified and addressed while the other parent's needs were not. The

needs of foster parents were addressed in the majority of cases; however in several cases a slow reaction time to providing services to foster parents was noted. Overall, needs are most commonly being identified informally rather than through formal assessments.

Specifics related to finding determination: In this item reviewers looked at the needs and services of children, parents and foster parents. Two of the areas identified were whether there was an assessment of needs done and the provision of services provided for the families and foster parents. The following is a breakdown of the information found in regards to these two questions:

Assessment of Needs

Child	Parent	Foster Parents
Yes: 14 cases	Yes: 10 cases	Yes: 8 cases
No: 0 cases	No: 3 cases	No: 1 case
N/A: 0 cases	N/A: 1 case	N/A: 5 cases

Provision of Services

Child	Parent	Foster Parents
Yes: 14 cases	Yes: 8 cases	Yes: 8 cases
No: 0 cases	No: 5 cases	No: 1 case
N/A: 0 cases	N/A: 1 case	N/A: 5 cases

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 were applicable to the item.
- 7 (50%) of the 14 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - The reviewers noted that in six of the cases that were rated as a strength for this item, the caseworker sought input from the family (parent(s) and child(ren) when age appropriate) on an ongoing basis and included them in the case planning.
 - In four of the cases rated as a strength it was noted that team meetings were used as part of the case planning process.
- 7 (50%) of the 14 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In three cases it was noted that concerted efforts were not made to involve one or both of the parents in the case planning process.
 - In two cases it was noted that the agency did not develop a case plan, establish goals or evaluate progress during the period under review.
 - In four cases it was noted that the children were not involved in the case planning.

Reviewer Comments:

The reviewers identified that case planning is more often taking place during monthly contacts rather than during family team meetings.

Specifics related to finding determination: In this item reviewers looked at whether or not the child and family were involved in the case planning. The following is a breakdown of that information according to the child, Mother and Father:

Child	Mother	Father
<i>Yes: 8 cases</i>	<i>Yes: 11 cases</i>	<i>Yes: 11 cases</i>
<i>No: 4 cases</i>	<i>No: 3 cases</i>	<i>No: 3 cases</i>
<i>N/A: 2 cases</i>	<i>N/A: 0 cases</i>	<i>N/A: 0 cases</i>

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 were applicable to the item.
- 9 (64%) of the 14 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in one case was that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworker and the child were sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals.
 - In another case it was noted that the agency met with the children privately in their home on a monthly basis to discuss school, safety and the progress of family relationships and to inquire of extra curricular activities.
 - Another strength noted was that there were team meetings, face to face visits and phone calls to ensure progress and success through out the life of the case.
- 5 (36%) of the 14 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In two cases reviewers noted that no portion of the visits between the worker and the child were occurring in a private setting.
 - In one case it was noted that visits are occurring on a less than once a month basis and there is no documentation regarding why visits are not occurring more frequently.
 - In another case no information could be found pertaining to the quality of contact between the child and the case manager. There was no knowledge of topics of discussion, length or location of contact.
 - Another case was rated as an area needing improvement as the case file contained no documentation to show any contact with the children occurred after the initial assessment.

Reviewer Comments:

Much of the information regarding the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworker and the children had to be obtained through interview as documentation in the case files was not sufficient to determine how often visits were taking place and the topics covered during those visits.

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 were applicable to this item.
- 6 (43%) of the 14 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - One strength noted was that during the period under review the agency met privately with the parents in their home and also in monthly team meetings to discuss the progress of behaviors, school related progress, communication with the family, medical appointments and other medical needs.
 - In another case, reviewers found that the worker had one to two visits with parents each month as well as frequent phone contact with the parents to discuss the child's progress.
- 8 (57%) of the 14 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In seven of the cases in which this item was rated as an area needing improvement, reviewers noted that the frequency of contact between the worker and one or both of the parents was not sufficient.
 - In one case no information could be found either in the case file or through interviews regarding the quality of contact between the case manager and the parents. There was no knowledge of topics of discussion, length or location of contact.

Reviewer Comments:

Much of the information regarding the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworker and the parents had to be obtained through interview as documentation in the case files was not sufficient.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2

	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	7	64%
Partially Achieved:	1	9%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	3	27%
Not Applicable:	3	21%

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:

- 11 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 7 (64%) of the 11 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in three of the cases was that the educational needs of the child were assessed through the OJS evaluation.
 - Two of the cases noted that there was monthly contact between the caseworker and the parents or the school in regard to the child's progress at school.
 - In another case it was noted that tracker services were provided to the child, who had dropped out of school due to truancy, in order to monitor his progress towards earning his GED.
- 4 (36%) of the 11 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - In the four cases rated as an area needing improvement for this item, there was no information contained within the case file which pertained to the assessment of the child's educational needs or addressed the child's educational needs.
 - In one of the cases it was identified that the target child had an IEP but there was no information regarding the specific educational needs of the child or how these needs were being addressed.

Reviewer Comments:

Reviewers' findings regarding educational needs of the child were varied. It was identified that in some of the cases there was clear documentation of educational assessments as well as efforts made to address educational needs. However, in other cases the reviewers were not able to find any educational assessments in the case file or documentation of efforts made to address any identified educational needs.

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	83%
Partially Achieved:	0	0%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	17%
Not Applicable:	2	29%

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:

- 12 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 10 (83%) of the 12 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A common strength noted in all ten of these was that the case file contained documentation that the child received periodic, age appropriate physical, vision and dental health examinations.
 - In four cases it was noted that the agency was ensuring that identified follow up treatment was being provided as needed.
- 2 (17%) of the 12 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

- In one case, no documentation could be found to show that medical needs of the child, which were part of the initial report, were ever addressed.
- In another case there was no documentation in the case file to show that a physical or dental health assessment was conducted.

Reviewer Comments:

In the majority of cases reviewed, documentation showed that the physical health needs of the child were adequately addressed through periodic medical and dental exams as well as ongoing treatment to address individual medicals needs that were identified.

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:

- 8 of the 14 cases were applicable to the item.
- 8 (100%) of the 8 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - A strength noted in three cases was that a formal mental health assessment was completed as part of the OJS evaluation.
 - One case noted that the child had formal mental and behavioral health assessments while in group home care and received ongoing weekly therapy.

Reviewer Comments:

Overall, reviewers found adequate documentation to show that mental health assessments were completed. Documentation also showed that appropriate services were provided to address identified mental health needs.

WSA Results

Case Sample: Mini CFSR Review – JANUARY 2010

Type of Review: 1st Mini CFSR

Report Type: Western Service Area

Number of Reviews: 14

Review Period: January 1st, 2009 – January 25th, 2010

PERFORMANCE ITEM RESULTS

Performance Item		Item Ratings (#)			Item Ratings (%)		
		S	ANI	N/A	S	ANI	N/A
Item 1:	Timeliness of initiating investigations	5	0	9	100%	0	64%
Item 2:	Repeat maltreatment	3	1	10	75%	25%	71%
Item 3:	Services to family	5	2	7	71%	29%	50%
Item 4:	Risk assessment and safety management	8	6	0	57%	43%	0%
Item 5:	Foster care re-entries	3	0	11	100%	0%	79%
Item 6:	Stability of foster care placement	9	0	5	100%	0%	36%
Item 7:	Permanency goal for child	4	5	5	44%	56%	36%
Item 8:	Reunification, guardianship etc	5	1	8	83%	17%	43%
Item 9:	Adoption	1	1	12	50%	50%	86%
Item 10:	Other planned permanent living arrangement	2	0	12	100%	0%	86%
Item 11:	Proximity of foster care placement	8	0	6	100%	0%	43%
Item 12:	Placement with siblings	3	0	11	100%	0%	79%
Item 13:	Visiting with parents and siblings	4	4	6	50%	50%	43%
Item 14:	Preserving connections	7	2	5	78%	22%	36%
Item 15:	Relative placement	4	3	7	57%	43%	50%
Item 16:	Relationship of child in care with parents	3	5	6	37.5%	62.5%	43%
Item 17:	Needs and services	9	5	0	64%	36%	0%
Item 18:	Child and family involvement in case planning	7	7	0	50%	50%	0%
Item 19:	Caseworker visits with child	9	5	0	64%	36%	0%
Item 20:	Caseworker visits with parent(s)	6	8	0	43%	57%	0%
Item 21:	Educational needs of the child	7	4	3	64%	36%	21%
Item 22:	Physical health of the child	10	2	2	83%	17%	14%
Item 23:	Mental/behavioral health of the child	8	0	6	100%	0%	43%

OUTCOME RESULTS

Performance Outcome	COUNTS (#)				PERCENTAGES (%)			
	SA	PA	NA	N/A	SA	PA	NA	N/A
Safety 1 (Items 1-2)	4	1	0	9	80%	20%	0%	64%
Safety 2 (Items 3-4)	8	2	4	0	57%	14%	29%	0%
Permanency 1 (Items 5-10)	3	6	0	5	33%	67%	0%	36%
Permanency 2 (Items 11-16)	4	5	0	5	44%	56%	0%	36%
Wellbeing 1 (Items 17-20)	5	8	1	0	36%	57%	7%	0%
Wellbeing 2 (Item 21)	7	1	3	3	64%	9%	27%	21%
Wellbeing 3 (Items 22-23)	10	0	2	4	83%	0%	17%	29%

KEY:

N/A = Not Applicable

PA = Partially Achieved

NACH = Not Achieved

S = Strength

SA = Substantially Achieved

ANI = Area Needing Improvement