

Quarterly Mini CFSR Review Report

Northern Service Area 11th Quarter Review Results

This document presents the findings from the 2012 11th Quarter Mini Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the Northern Service Area. The Nebraska CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) team has identified the Mini CFSR Review as an important activity for assessing the performance of each Service Area and the State as a whole with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and their families. Mini CFSR Reviews are scheduled to take place in each Service Area once every quarter in year 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The Northern Service area 11th Quarter Mini CFSR Review was conducted on July 9th through July 11th, 2012. The period under review for the onsite case review was July 1st, 2011 through July 1st, 2012. The findings were derived from file reviews of 14 cases (8 foster care and 6 in home services), which were randomly selected from all open child welfare cases at some point in time during the period under review. The reviews also included interviews with parents, children, Foster Parents, and Children and Family Services Specialists (CFSS) to assess items 17-20 within the review tool.

In the Northern Service Area, 10 of the 14 cases were brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) because of abuse/neglect issues. Four cases were juvenile justice cases. The review was completed by 6 teams of two reviewers made up of both staff from DHHS and Contracted Providers. 100% of the cases were reviewed by the following second level reviewer: Leslie Schlecht from DHHS.

Background Information

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

With regards to outcomes, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) is assigned to each of the 23 items incorporated in the seven outcomes depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the onsite case review. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 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.

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Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

The 11th Quarter Mini CFSR identified several areas of high performance in the Northern Service Area with regard to achieving desired outcomes for children. The Service Area did achieve substantial conformity in two of the seven CFSR outcomes. Those two outcomes were: Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate) and Well Being Outcome 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs). The Service Area achieved overall ratings of Strength (100%) for the individual indicators pertaining to Item 2 (repeat maltreatment), Item 3 (services to the family), Item 4 (risk reassessment and safety management), Item 5 (foster care re-entries), Item 12 (placement with siblings), Item 17a (needs and services to children), Item 17c (needs and services to foster parents), and Item 21 (educational needs of the child). This round Item 19 (caseworker visits with child) was rated a strength in 93% of the cases. Item 23 (mental/behavioral health of the child) was at 90%. Item 1 (timeliness of investigations of reports of child maltreatment), Item 8 (reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives), Item 11 (proximity of foster care placement), and Item 14 (preserving connections) were all above 80%.

The mini CFSR review also identified key areas of concern with regard to achieving outcomes for children and families. Concerns were identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 1, (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations), which was substantially achieved in 25% of the reviewed cases. The lowest rating within this outcome was Item 7, Permanency Goal for Child, which was rated as Strength in 37.5% of the 8 applicable cases.

Concerns were identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 2, (Continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children) which was substantially achieved in 50% of reviewed cases. Within Permanency Outcome 2, the lowest ratings within this outcome were for Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) which was rated as a Strength in 60% of the cases; Item 15 (Relative placement) which was rated as a Strength in 50% of the cases; and Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents) which was rated as a Strength in 50% of the cases.

Concerns were also identified with regard to Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs), which was substantially achieved in 64.29% of the cases reviewed. The lowest ratings were for Item 17 (Needs and services to child, parents and foster parents), which was rated as a Strength in 64.29% of the reviewed cases; Item 18 (Child and family involvement in case planning) was rated as a Strength in 61.54% of the reviewed cases; and Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parent (s)) was rated as a Strength in 50% of the reviewed cases.

Safety Outcome 1 (children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) was substantially achieved in 83.33% of reviewed cases. Well-Being Outcome 3 (Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs) was substantially achieved in 76.92% of reviewed cases. A table with results is attached for your review.

The report will only contain case details and charts for items 4 and 7, as they are the remaining priority items that Nebraska needs to address in order to pass the Federal Program Improvement Plan. Case details for the other items will be made available upon request.

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CFSR Item & Outcome Quarterly Results

Northern Service Area

- The standard federal goal for each item is 90% and each outcome is 95%
- Items 4 & 7 are highlighted in the table below because they are the only 2 CFSR items that must be addressed in 2012-2013 in order to pass the Federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP). **The State must meet the following goals in order to pass the PIP: Item 4 = 73.5% and Item 7 = 50.5%**

Report Quarter	8th Qtr 2011	9th Qtr 2012	10 th Qtr 2012	11 th Qtr 2012
Period Under Review	Oct 2010 to Oct 2011	Jan 2011 to Jan 2012	Apr 2011 to Apr 2012	July 2011 to July 2012
Number of Cases	14	14	14	14
Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations	100%	80%	100%	83%
Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment	67%	50%	100%	100%
Outcome: Safety 1 (Items 1 and 2)	80%	60%	100%	83%
Item 3: Services to the family to maintain in home	100%	100%	100%	100%
Item 4: Risk and safety management	93%	93%	100%	100%
Outcome: Safety 2 (Items 3 and 4)	93%	93%	100%	100%
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	100%	100%	80%	100%
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	88%	75%	75%	75%
Item 7: Permanency goal for the child	63%	63%	50%	38%
Item 8: Achievement of goals (Reunification/Guardianship)	100%	100%	100%	83%
Item 9: Achievement of goal (Adoption)	67%	100%	100%	80%
Item 10: Achievement of goal (Independent Living)	100%	0%	100%	N/A
Outcome: Permanency 1 (Items 5-10)	50%	38%	25%	25%
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	100%	100%	100%	83%
Item 12: Placement with siblings	100%	100%	100%	100%
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings	29%	33%	63%	60%
Item 14: Preserving connections	75%	88%	63%	86%
Item 15: Relative placement	67%	60%	67%	50%
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	29%	57%	50%	50%
Outcome: Permanency 2 (Items 11-16)	38%	75%	38%	50%
Item 17: Needs and Services	43%	14%	64%	64%
Item 18: Child and Family involvement in case planning	43%	21%	64%	62%
Item 19: Caseworker visit with child	79%	86%	93%	93%
Item 20: Caseworker visit with mother/father	46%	8%	43%	50%
Outcome: Well-Being 1 (Items 17-20)	43%	14%	57%	64%
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	92%	85%	80%	100%
Outcome: Well-Being 2 (Item 21)	92%	85%	80%	100%
Item 22: Physical health needs of the child	88%	62%	83%	75%
Item 23: Mental/Behavioral Health Needs of the child	100%	100%	85%	90%
Outcome: Well-Being 3 (Items 22 and 23)	92%	64%	79%	77%

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Case Details for Items 4 & 7

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

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

Review Findings:

- All of the fourteen cases were applicable to the Item.
- Fourteen (100%) of the 14 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - Eight of the fourteen cases were foster care cases and six were in home cases.
 - Three out of the in home cases that were rated as a strength involved an Office of Juvenile Services (OJS) youth. One was an out of home case.
- Zero of the 14 cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

In the fourteen cases substantially achieved, there were either no safety concerns found on the target child or services were implemented to address safety concerns found through initial/ongoing assessments. In these cases, informal assessments were occurring on an ongoing basis through family team meetings and monthly face to face contacts between worker, child, parents and providers. Safety plans, using the safety model, were updated and found in the case file.

Area Needing Improvement: There were no cases rated as Area Needing Improvement

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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 permanency goals were not changed in a timely manner to reflect current case circumstances, when it was apparent that reunification was unlikely to happen, termination of parental rights was not filed when the child had been in foster care for 15 of the past 22 months and no compelling reasons were noted in the file, or the goal established for the child was not appropriate. Cases were identified as Not Applicable if the child was not in foster care.

Review Findings:

- All eight out of home cases reviewed were applicable to the Item.
- Three (37.50%) of the eight cases were rated as a Strength.
 - All three cases rated as a strength were abuse/neglect cases.
- Five (62.50%) of the eight cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - Four of the five cases that were rated as an Area Needing Improvement involved an OJS youth.

Strength:

There was timely implementation of primary permanency goals as well as timely permanency goal changes made to meet the child's needs. In all three cases reviewed that were rated as strengths for this item, the permanency goals were established within the 60 day timeframe. Youth Level of Services (YLS) was completed in Juvenile Justice Cases. In one case, it was specifically noted that the permanency goal of adoption was established in two weeks from the day the child was made a ward of the state. One case had a date of 34 days from case opening that the permanency goal was established. The third case was right at 60 days of establishing the permanency goal.

Area Needing Improvement:

In four of the cases needing improvement on this item, it was noted that while the permanency goal established was appropriate, it was not established within the 60 day timeframe. The amount of days that the permanency goals were established over the 60 day time frame ranged from 1 day to 19 days. In one case, it was noted that there was no documentation found of an exception for not filing the termination of parental rights (TPR).

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Charts with Goals for Items 4 & 7

