

Quarterly Mini CFSR Review Report

Western Service Area 12th Quarter Review Results

This document presents the findings from the 2012 12th Quarter Mini Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the Western 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 Western Service Area 12th Quarter Mini CFSR Review was conducted on October 23th through October 26th, 2012. The period under review for the onsite case review was October 1st, 2011 through October 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 Western Service Area, nine of the fourteen cases reviewed were brought to the attention of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) because of abuse/neglect issues. Of these nine cases, five were non-court involved. Five of the fourteen cases reviewed were juvenile justice cases, with three of these being OJS cases and two being 3b status offender cases. Cases reviewed were from the following local offices: Alliance, Gering, Lexington, McCook, North Platte, and Sidney.

The review was completed by 10 first level reviewers from DHHS who were divided into five teams of two reviewers each. 100% of the cases were reviewed by the following second level reviewer: Lori Posvar, Quality Assurance Program Specialist, 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

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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 12th Quarter Mini CFSR identified several areas of high performance in the Western Service Area. Although the Service Area did not achieve substantial conformity in any of the seven outcomes, the Service Area did achieve overall ratings of Strength (100%) for the individual indicators pertaining to 8 of the 23 Items.

- Item 5 (foster care re-entries)
- Item 8 (reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives)
- Item 10 (other planned permanent living arrangement)
- Item 11 (proximity of foster care placement)
- Item 12 (placement with siblings)
- Item 14 (preserving connections)
- Item 15 (relative placement)
- Item 23 (mental / behavioral health of the child)

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 50% of the reviewed cases. The lowest ratings within this outcome were Item 7 (permanency goal for child), which was rated as Strength in 50% of the 8 applicable cases and Item 9 (adoption) which rated as a Strength in 0% of the 2 applicable cases.

Concerns were identified with regard to Permanency Outcome 2 (Continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children). Within Permanency Outcome 2, the lowest ratings were for Item 13 (visiting with parents and siblings in foster care) which was rated as a Strength in 50% of the 8 applicable cases, Item 14 (preserving connections) which was rated as a Strength in 50% of the 8 applicable cases, and Item 16 (relationship of child in care with parents) which rated as a Strength in 25% of the 8 applicable cases.

Concern was also noted in Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs) which was substantially achieved in 37.51% of the reviewed cases. The lowest ratings for this outcome were in Item 17 (needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents) which rated as a Strength in 42.86% of the 14 applicable cases, Item 18 (child and family involvement in case planning) which rated as a Strength in 42.86% of the 14 applicable cases, and Item 20 (caseworker visits with parents) which rated as a Strength in 50% of the 14 applicable cases.

Of the remaining outcomes, Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) was substantially achieved in 75.00% of reviewed cases, Safety Outcome 2 (children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate) was substantially achieved in 71.43% of

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reviewed cases, Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs) was substantially achieved in 88.89% of reviewed cases, and Well-Being Outcome 3 (Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs) was substantially achieved in 57.14% 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

Western Service Area

- The standard federal goal for each item is 90% and 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 | 9th Qtr 2012 | 10 th Qtr 2012 | 11 th Qtr 2012 | 12 th Qtr 2012 |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Period Under Review | Jan 2011 to Jan 2012 | Apr 2011 to Apr 2012 | July 2011 to July 2012 | Oct 2011 to Oct 2012 |
| Number of Cases | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations | 83% | 100% | 100% | 88% |
| Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment | 75% | 67% | 100% | 83% |
| Outcome: Safety 1 (Items 1 and 2) | 67% | 75% | 100% | 75% |
| Item 3: Services to the family to maintain in home | 90% | 89% | 100% | 78% |
| Item 4: Risk and safety management | 71% | 64% | 93% | 71% |
| Outcome: Safety 2 (Items 3 and 4) | 71% | 64% | 93% | 71% |
| Item 5: Foster care re-entries | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Item 6: Stability of foster care placement | 100% | 100% | 100% | 88% |
| Item 7: Permanency goal for the child | 63% | 38% | 75% | 50% |
| Item 8: Achievement of goals (Reunification/Guardianship) | 88% | 100% | 83% | 100% |
| Item 9: Achievement of goal (Adoption) | 80% | 33% | 100% | 0% |
| Item 10: Achievement of goal (Independent Living) | N/A | 100% | N/A | 100% |
| Outcome: Permanency 1 (Items 5-10) | 63% | 75% | 63% | 50% |
| Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Item 12: Placement with siblings | 80% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings | 38% | 25% | 71% | 50% |
| Item 14: Preserving connections | 88% | 38% | 88% | 50% |
| Item 15: Relative placement | 50% | 67% | 100% | 100% |
| Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents | 14% | 50% | 71% | 25% |
| Outcome: Permanency 2 (Items 11-16) | 38% | 38% | 75% | 25% |
| Item 17: Needs and Services | 64% | 57% | 79% | 43% |
| Item 18: Child and Family involvement in case planning | 64% | 64% | 100% | 43% |
| Item 19: Caseworker visit with child | 64% | 86% | 85% | 71% |
| Item 20: Caseworker visit with mother/father | 46% | 57% | 83% | 50% |
| Outcome: Well-Being 1 (Items 17-20) | 49% | 57% | 79% | 36% |
| Item 21: Educational needs of the child | 91% | 75% | 100% | 89% |
| Outcome: Well-Being 2 (Item 21) | 91% | 75% | 100% | 89% |
| Item 22: Physical health needs of the child | 44% | 50% | 69% | 54% |
| Item 23: Mental/Behavioral Health Needs of the child | 67% | 75% | 80% | 100% |
| Outcome: Well-Being 3 (Items 22 and 23) | 39% | 40% | 64% | 57% |

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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.
- Ten (71.43%) of the 14 cases were rated as a Strength.
 - Six of the ten cases were foster care cases and four were in home cases.
- Four (28.57%) of the 14 cases was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.
 - Two of the four cases were foster care cases and two were in home cases.

Strength:

- Informal assessments of risk and safety during worker contacts.
- Risk and safety is being informally assessed during family team meetings.
- Collateral contacts were utilized in initial and ongoing risk and safety assessments.
- Documentation includes information from service providers and therapists pertaining to risk and safety.
- Youth Level of Services assessments were completed in Juvenile Justice Cases.
- Safety Assessments and safety plans were updated as needed.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Safety and risk assessments should be completed for all children in the household. In three cases, reviewers found that while safety and risk assessments were completed for the target child, there was no documentation to indicate that safety or risk assessments were completed on the other children in the home.
- One case file lacked documentation to show that any ongoing assessments, formal or informal, were completed in a case involving an out of state ICPC placement.

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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.
- Four (50%) of the eight cases were rated as a Strength.
- Four (50%) of the eight cases were rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Strength:

- Initial permanency goals were established timely- within 60 days of the child's removal.
- Changes in permanency goals were appropriate and timely.
- Identified permanency goals were appropriate to meet the child's needs.
- In three of the four cases, the child had been in out of home placement more than 15 out of 22 months.
 - In one case, documentation shows that termination of parental rights is being pursued.
 - In two cases, while termination of parental rights is not being pursued, there is clear information documented in the case file that supports an exception or compelling reason for not filing for termination.

Area Needing Improvement:

- Permanency goals were found to be appropriate but were not established timely.
 - In two cases the initial permanency goal was not established until 3 months after the child had been removed.
 - In two cases the child was in out of home placement 6 months before the initial permanency goal was established.

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Charts with Goals for Items 4 & 7

