

# CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS

## Massachusetts FINAL REPORT 2023

This page is intentionally blank.

# **Final Report: Massachusetts Child and Family Services Review**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of Massachusetts. The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau (CB) to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the CB, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for Massachusetts are based on:

- The Statewide Assessment prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) and submitted to the CB on February 6, 2023. The Statewide Assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan.
- The August 2022 State Data Profile, prepared by the CB, which provides the state's Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) compared to national performance on 7 statewide data indicators.
- The results of case reviews of 100 cases [50 foster care and 50 in-home], conducted via a State-Led Review process statewide in Massachusetts during April–September 2023, examining case practices occurring during April 2022 through September 2023.
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
  - Attorneys for the agency
  - Attorneys for parents
  - Attorneys for children/youth and Guardians ad Litem
  - Child welfare agency statewide and regional leadership and program managers
  - Child welfare caseworkers and supervisors
  - Contractors/service providers
  - State licensed/approved childcare facility staff
  - Tribal representatives and Tribal child welfare staff
  - Information system staff
  - Judges/judicial officers, and members of the Court Improvement Project (CIP)
  - Foster and adoptive parents
  - Foster and adoptive licensing, recruitment, and retention staff
  - Public/private agency training staff
  - Parents
  - Youth

## Background Information

The Round 4 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates 1 or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. In addition, for Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1, the state's RSP on applicable statewide data indicators must be better than or no different than national performance. This determination for substantial conformity is based on the data profile transmitted to the state to signal the start of that state's CFSR. The state's RSP in subsequent data profiles will be factored into the determination of indicators required to be included in the state's Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state's substantial conformity with the 7 systemic factors. Each item reflects a key federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the Statewide Assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity. An overview of the pathways to substantial conformity for the CFSR outcomes and systemic factors is in Appendix B of the Round 4 *CFSR Procedures Manual*.

The CB made several changes to the CFSR process, items, and indicators that are relevant to evaluating performance, based on lessons learned during the third round of reviews. As such, a state's performance in the fourth round of the CFSRs may not be directly comparable to its performance in the third round.

## I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

### Massachusetts 2023 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

The CB has established high standards of performance for the CFSR 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 considered acceptable. The high standards ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families regarding safety, permanency, and well-being. This is consistent with the CFSR's goal of promoting continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes. A state must develop and implement a PIP to address the areas of concern identified for each outcome or systemic factor for which the state is found not to be in substantial conformity. The CB recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in some outcome areas often take time to implement. The results of this CFSR are intended to serve as the basis for continued improvement efforts addressing areas where a state still needs to improve.

Table 1 provides a quick reminder of how case review items and statewide data indicators are combined to assess substantial conformity on each outcome:

**Table 1. Outcomes, Case Review Items, and Statewide Data Indicators**

| Outcome              | Case Review Item(s)       | Statewide Data Indicators   |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Safety Outcome 1     | Item 1                    | Maltreatment in foster care<br>Recurrence of maltreatment   |
| Safety Outcome 2     | Items 2 and 3             | N/A   |
| Permanency Outcome 1 | Items 4, 5, and 6         | Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care<br>Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12–23 months<br>Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more<br>Reentry to foster care in 12 months<br>Placement stability |
| Permanency Outcome 2 | Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 | N/A   |
| Well-Being Outcome 1 | Items 12, 13, 14, and 15  | N/A   |
| Well-Being Outcome 2 | Item 16                   | N/A   |
| Well-Being Outcome 3 | Items 17 and 18           | N/A   |

Massachusetts was found in substantial conformity with none of the 7 outcomes.

The following 4 of the 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity:

- Statewide Information System
- Quality Assurance System
- Staff and Provider Training
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

## CB Comments on State Performance

In its Round 3 CFSR in 2015, Massachusetts was not in substantial conformity with any of the 7 outcomes and was found to be in substantial conformity with 2 of the 7 systemic factors: Statewide Information System and Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Massachusetts entered into a PIP to address the areas of non-conformity and successfully completed implementation of its PIP and met all of its measurement goals. For its Round 4 CFSR, the CB approved Massachusetts to conduct a State-Led Review, which was completed in 2023. Massachusetts was found to be not in conformity with any of the 7 outcomes and in conformity with 4 of the 7 systemic factors: Statewide Information System, Quality Assurance System, Staff and Provider Training, and Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

The results of the case review identified several areas of promising approaches in Massachusetts child welfare practice. Massachusetts does very well in making concerted efforts to place children with relatives when appropriate. In the cases reviewed, 32% of the children in the foster care sample were placed with relatives, and of the 47 cases that were applicable for assessment on Item 10 (relative placement) 80% were rated as a Strength. Massachusetts' Statewide Assessment stated that in the state fiscal years 2020–2022, 39.3% of all children in care were placed in kinship care.

Case review results demonstrated that assessing the needs of foster parents and supporting them was another area of promising case practice, with an 83% Strength rating across the 39 applicable cases. However, in stakeholder interviews, foster parents spoke of the need for training related to racial trauma and supporting transgender and LGBTQ youth. The state does well in conducting routine, quality visits with children in both foster care and in-home services cases. For children in the child welfare system, case review results showed that the agency made concerted efforts to meet children's educational needs in 83% of the applicable cases and made concerted efforts to meet children's health care needs in 82% of the applicable cases.

The case review results also identified several opportunities for improvement for family preservation cases (in-home services cases). Ongoing safety assessment and planning, service provision to parents, and service provision to children in the areas of education, physical health, and behavioral health were rated higher for foster care cases. Particularly for in-home cases, more efforts should be made to actively engage fathers, including noncustodial fathers, in service assessment and delivery, case planning, and consistent, quality, face-to-face visits.

Since the Massachusetts Round 3 PIP, performance on Safety Outcome 2 (services to prevent entry or re-entry into foster care and safety and risk assessment and management) has declined, particularly with respect to family preservation cases. Services to address safety concerns related to domestic violence were not provided in 68% of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement. More investigation is needed to understand whether this is a service array issue, or related to worker preparedness or supervision, or other factors. In approximately half of foster care and family preservation cases, safety planning and monitoring was insufficient. Massachusetts stated in its Statewide Assessment that initiatives are underway to address safety management with the development of a new Structured Decision-Making (SDM) tool. According to information in the Statewide Assessment, these new tools were implemented in June and July of 2023. The CB would like to know more how the use of the SDM tool is affecting the agency's ability to appropriately assess and manage child safety, because this may be an area the state can build upon in its PIP to improve outcomes in safety assessment and management.

Meaningful parent engagement, an essential component in ensuring positive outcomes for children in care and families involved in the child welfare system, is a significant challenge in Massachusetts. The state has already begun to address this issue in a project with the Capacity Building Center for States. That project is showing promise in improving parent engagement during the assessment process. However, case review results identified issues with ongoing consistent engagement in both foster care and family preservation cases. CB suggests Massachusetts explore implementing the promising approaches from their project into ongoing case work. This could be another area for PIP efforts to capitalize on.

Statewide, 24% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 1. A review of the 50 applicable cases revealed that Massachusetts demonstrates good practice approaches of reuniting families within 12 months of children entering out-of-home care. There were 14 cases where concerted efforts to achieve reunification were rated as a Strength. Massachusetts' statewide data indicators confirm this observation, with Massachusetts' RSP consistently above national performance on timeliness to permanency within 12 months of children entering foster care. But this data indicator's trend is moving in the wrong direction, approaching being statistically no different than national performance. In addition, Massachusetts' RSP for re-entry to care is significantly worse than national performance. CB recommends that DCF complete more exploration as to why foster care re-entries are so high.

A different picture emerged when looking at children with permanency goals of guardianship or adoption. None of the 3 cases with a goal of guardianship achieved permanency within the 18-month federal timeframe. Twenty-eight children in the foster care cases reviewed had a goal of adoption. It appears that generally, Massachusetts changes children's goals to adoption swiftly when case circumstances warrant it through a strong practice of convening internal agency permanency planning conferences. However, although most adoption goals were established timely, the goals were not achieved within federal timeframes. Of the 28 cases with a goal of adoption, 5 received a Strength rating for achieving timely permanency. Reasons for the agency's lack of timely achievement of adoption included: lengthy time to submit Interstate Compact Placement of Children (ICPC) requests; delays in completing the Child's Adoption Assessment (CAA); and delays in vetting identified resources. Case review results also indicated that legal and judicial system partners may share some responsibility for adoption delays. The extent of the impact from the practices of professionals within those systems is a bit unclear and Massachusetts should more deeply explore the broad categories of practice challenges. Those broad categories include: delays in scheduling court dates, multiple continuances, practices relating to motions, and general "court delays." The delays observed in the case file reviews are consistent with the statewide data indicators. For the two permanency indicators that identify the percentage of children who have been in care for 12 to 23 months and 24+ months, Massachusetts' performance is below national performance.

Several areas assessed in other items may be contributing to the delays in achieving adoption. One area where there is a clear connection between agency and legal and judicial practice that may be affecting the timeliness to adoption involves the timely filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) petitions or motions in accordance with Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) timeframes. It appears that in Massachusetts petitions or motions seeking termination of parental rights are not routinely filed in accordance with ASFA timeframes. Stakeholders said that there is no consistent process in place for independently petitioning for TPR. Stakeholders reported that parties and attorneys are often notified of the agency's intention orally at a pre-trial conference or on the date of the hearing. In some jurisdictions the agency files a "Notice of Intent" to notify parents and counsel of their intent to terminate parental rights, but this is not a common practice.

Additionally, data provided in Massachusetts' Statewide Assessment and confirmed in stakeholder interviews showed that although periodic reviews (foster care reviews) are held timely, initial and subsequent permanency hearings are not. Permanency hearings are a critical point for legal and judicial professionals in supporting the achievement of timely and appropriate permanency for children. They provide an opportunity for the court to inquire about the status of a TPR petition when a child's goal is adoption. Timely and consistently held permanency hearings with targeted attention paid to the critical aspects of the safety, permanency, well-being of children can assist in achieving timely permanency. Massachusetts should address the timely filing of TPRs and the timeliness of permanency by adoption in the PIP.

Another area that may be affecting the timeliness of permanency in Massachusetts is placement stability. Seventy percent of the cases reviewed were found to have a Strength rating for this item. In 35 of the 50 foster care cases, children experienced one placement during the period under review (PUR). In contrast, 7 of the children had between 4 and 9 placements during the PUR. In several of these cases, the frequent changes in placement were due to the children's behavioral needs that could not be managed in the foster home, or to the use of temporary placements while waiting for a more appropriate placement to meet the child's needs. However, in looking at the statewide data indicator for placement stability Massachusetts' performance is worse than national performance and is trending in the wrong direction.

Massachusetts faces a considerable systemic challenge in the array of services available and accessible to children and families. Children and families face significant waitlists, sometimes of 6 months or more, to access needed services. This affects multiple outcomes including timely permanency and the positive well-being of children and families, particularly relating to behavioral health services. Multiple stakeholder groups reported that service providers were challenged by staffing shortages and a limited array of services, particularly "step-down" services for youth with significant behavioral health needs. One approach Massachusetts has undertaken to mitigate these challenges is the "Behavioral Health Roadmap." This may be an opportunity to leverage this reform effort in ensuring appropriate services are available and accessible to meet the needs of children and families.

Another area where the need for more services was found is services to children whose age at the time of entry was less than 1 year old. In the case review sample, 36% of cases involved children who entered care under age 1 versus 18% of children in Massachusetts' overall foster care population. That 18% is disproportionately higher than for other ages at the time of entry in Massachusetts' foster care population. In addition, children who exited care before age 1 are also reentering care within 12 months of being reunified at the second highest rate of any age (8.8%), second to youth who exit care at age 15. Children between the ages of 1 and 2 years have a reentry rate of 8.76%. Evidence-based programs exist that could address the needs of this population and Massachusetts is encouraged to explore those programs to consider whether any would be of value to the children and families in Massachusetts.

An additional systemic factor area that needs attention is diligent recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive family homes. Massachusetts' culturally diverse population is reflected in its child welfare population. Stakeholder interviewees said that foster parent recruitment staff are attuned to reaching out to diverse populations to have foster and adoptive parent resources that match the needs of children in care. However, this effort is hampered by an inability to support the recruited families through the entire process of licensure (e.g., foster parent training available in multiple languages). As a result, children are placed in homes where the racial and cultural backgrounds diverge from their own.

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention systemic factor requires that the state ensure that the standards for licensing foster parents are applied equally. In Massachusetts, foster and adoptive parents are licensed both by the state agency and by child placing agencies. While all child placing agencies and state licensing staff are required to follow the same standards, there is no system in place to ensure that the standards are being applied equally.

## Equity Observations and Considerations

Ensuring that child welfare is serving all people equitably and with respect for all individuals is essential to the work in child welfare and is a focused priority at the Children's Bureau. To create a system that is effective and equitable for all, states must pay particular attention to variation in performance metrics because disparity in outcomes could signal inequity that should be explored and addressed. During Round 4 of the CFSR, there is a focus on using data and evidence to identify disparities in services and outcomes; to understand the role that child welfare programs, policies, and practices may play in contributing to those disparities; and to inform and develop system improvements to address them.

As noted below in the sections on notable changes and observations in performance on the Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1 data indicators during Round 4, the data for some of these statewide indicators showed the following notable performance-related information by race/ethnicity in Massachusetts:

**Maltreatment in care:** Although their total number of days in care decreased, the rate of Black children who were victims of maltreatment while in care increased over the last 3 reporting years and was the highest among races/ethnicities with more than 10 victimizations. Hispanic children comprised 32% of the total days in care and 36% of the victimizations and had the second highest rate of maltreatment in care.

**Timeliness to permanency:** The percentage of Black children achieving permanency within 12 months of entry decreased by 54% over the past 3 reporting periods, the largest decrease when compared to children of any other race/ethnicity. Hispanic children comprised the second largest population of children entering care and experienced a 41% decline in the percentage of children achieving permanency within 12 months of entry. White children comprised the third largest proportion of children entering care and experienced a consistent decline in achieving permanency within 12 months of entry, with an overall decrease of 34%.

**Placement stability:** Black children experienced the highest rate of placement moves per 1,000 days in care. Although the state's placement stability rate increased over the past 3 reporting years, it increased substantially more for Black and Hispanic children, 85% and 56% respectively.

## II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide the state's performance on the applicable statewide data indicators from the data profile that was transmitted to the state to signal the launch of the CFSR and performance summaries from the case review findings of the onsite review. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. A summary of the state's performance for all outcomes and systemic factors is in Appendix A. Additional information on case review findings, including the state's performance on case review item rating questions, is in the state's practice performance report in Appendix B.

### Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's RSP on two statewide data indicators and the state's performance on Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.

The state's policy requires that DCF immediately assigns accepted emergency reports and that investigations are initiated within 2 hours for emergency reports received during working hours and within 2–4 hours for emergency reports received during non-working hours. Investigations are initiated by having face-to-face contact with alleged victim(s).

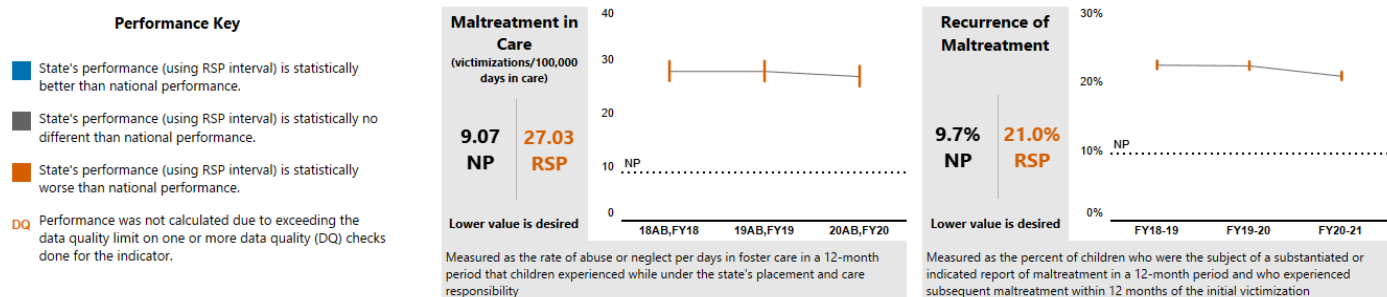


Accepted reports assigned for a non-emergency response received during working hours are assigned within 1 working day of the decision to screen in the report. Non-emergency reports received during non-working hours are assigned for investigation the next working day. Investigations of non-emergency reports are initiated by having face-to-face contact with the alleged victim(s) within 3 working days. In calculating working days, the day after the report is received is counted as the first working day.

## Statewide Data Indicators

The chart below shows the state's performance from the August 2022 data profile that signaled the start of the statewide assessment process and was used to determine substantial conformity for Safety Outcome 1.

**Figure 1. State's Performance on Safety Outcome 1 Indicators**



## Case Review

**Figure 2. Performance on Safety Outcome 1 and Supporting Items**



Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1:

- The state's performance on the "maltreatment in foster care" data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- The state's performance on the "recurrence of maltreatment" data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- Less than 95% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 1.

## Notable Changes and Observations in Performance on the Safety Outcome 1 Data Indicators During Round 4

**Table 2. Risk-Standardized Performance Compared to National Performance—Safety 1 Data Indicators**

| Statewide Data Indicator                | Data Profile Transmitted With Statewide Assessment and Used to Determine Substantial Conformity | February 2023 Profile | Inclusion in PIP? |
|---|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Maltreatment in Foster Care             | Worse   | Worse                 | Yes               |
| Recurrence of Maltreatment in 12 months | Worse   | Worse                 | Yes               |

Massachusetts has consistently performed statistically worse than national performance on both Safety Outcome 1 indicators.

**Maltreatment in Care:** The overall rate of children experiencing maltreatment in care has remained relatively stable over the past 3 reporting years with a small decrease in the most recent year. The number of victimizations in care decreased by 13% during the same period.

- Children ages 11–16 years consistently had one of the highest rates of maltreatment in care (after children age 17), comprised the age group with the largest number and proportion of days in care, and had the highest number and proportion of total victimizations. Children ages 5 and under consistently experienced the lowest rate of victimizations in care.
- The rate of Black children who were victims of maltreatment while in care increased over the last 3 reporting years and was the highest among races/ethnicities with more than 10 victimizations in FY 2020. Hispanic children comprised 32% of the total days in care and 36% of the victimizations in FY 2020.
- Performance varies across counties, with Bristol County having the highest number of victimizations and rate of maltreatment in care.

**Recurrence of Maltreatment:** The number of children experiencing recurrence of maltreatment moderately decreased by 20% over the past 3 reporting years resulting in about a 1 percentage point decrease in performance on this indicator.

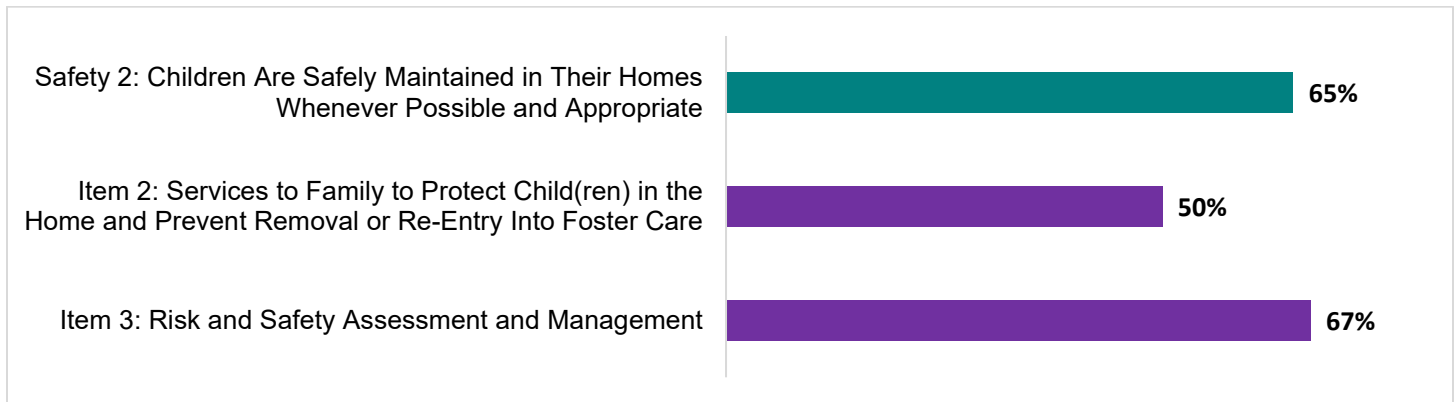
- Children 0–5 consistently comprise the greatest number of initial and subsequent victimizations and the highest percentage of children experiencing recurrence of maltreatment. Although children age 17 years comprised a relatively small number of recurring victims, they experienced a 44% increase from FYs 2018–2019 to FYs 2020–2021.
- Bristol County had the highest percentage of recurrent victimizations in the last 2 reporting years.

## Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

## Case Review

**Figure 3. Performance on Safety Outcome 2 and Supporting Items**



Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2:

- Less than 95% of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 2.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 3.

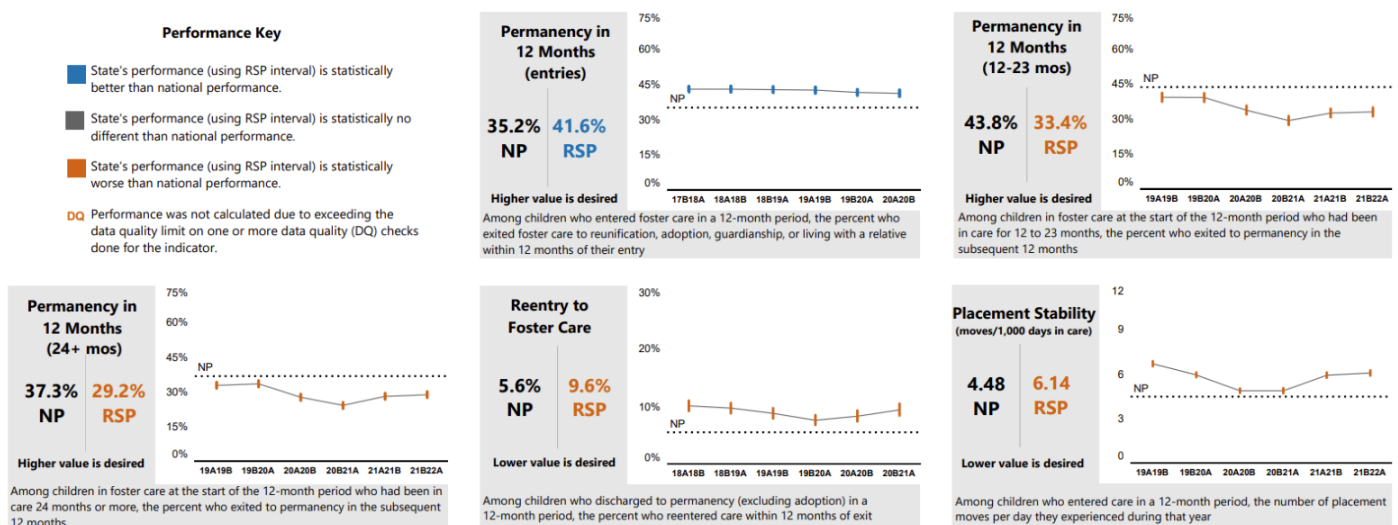
## Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's RSP on 5 statewide data indicators and the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6.

### Statewide Data Indicators

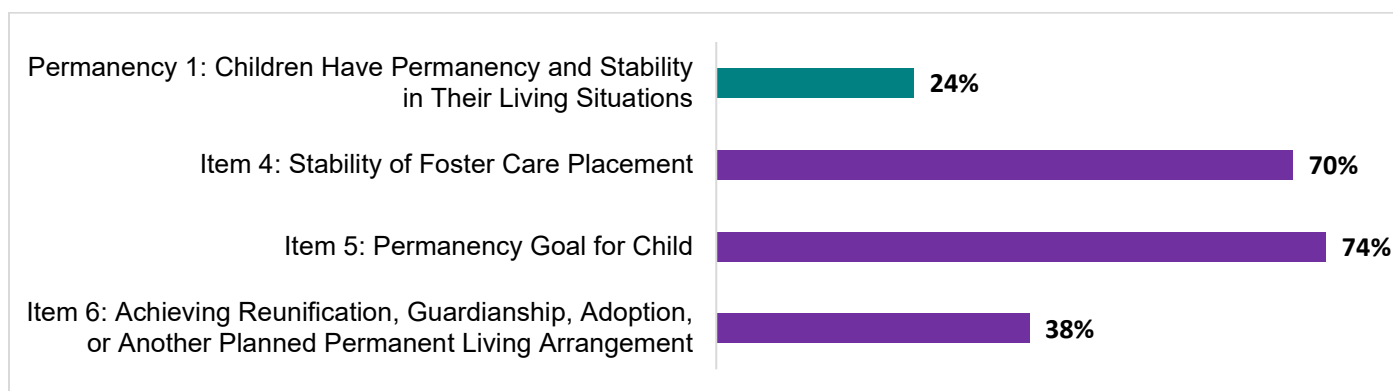
The chart below shows the state's performance from the August 2022 data profile that signaled the start of the statewide assessment process and was used to determine substantial conformity for Permanency Outcome 1.

**Figure 4. State's Performance on Permanency Outcome 1 Indicators**



## Case Review

**Figure 5. Performance on Permanency Outcome 1 and Supporting Items**



Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1:

- The state’s performance on the “permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care” data indicator was statistically better than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12–23 months” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “reentry to foster care in 12 months” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- The state’s performance on the “placement stability” data indicator was statistically worse than national performance.
- Less than 95% of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 4.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 5.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 6.

## Notable Changes and Observations in Performance on the Permanency Outcome 1 Data Indicators During Round 4

**Table 3. Risk-Standardized Performance Compared to National Performance—Permanency 1 Data Indicators**

| Statewide Data Indicator                                       | Data Profile Transmitted With Statewide Assessment and Used to Determine Substantial Conformity | February 2023 Profile | Inclusion in PIP? |
|--|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Permanency in 12 months for children entering care             | Better  | Better                | No                |
| Permanency in 12 months for children in care 12–23 months      | Worse   | Worse                 | Yes               |
| Permanency in 12 months for children in care 24 months or more | Worse   | Worse                 | Yes               |

| Statewide Data Indicator            | Data Profile Transmitted With Statewide Assessment and Used to Determine Substantial Conformity | February 2023 Profile | Inclusion in PIP? |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Reentry to foster care in 12 months | Worse   | Worse                 | Yes               |
| Placement stability                 | Worse   | Worse                 | Yes               |

Massachusetts consistently performs statistically worse than the nation in the achievement of permanency on all permanency indicators except permanency in 12 months for children entering care.

Although Massachusetts performed statistically better than national performance for children achieving permanency within 12 months of entry into care, there were some notable declines.

- Children ages 11–16 years experienced a 43% decline in achieving permanency. This was the largest decline among all age groups, followed by children age 17 and children under 1 year, who experienced 42% and 30% declines respectively. Children age 17 and children under 1 year also experienced the lowest percentages of children exiting to permanency.
- Hispanic children comprised the second largest population of children entering care and experienced a 41% decline in the percentage of children achieving permanency within 12 months of entry. The percentage of Black children achieving permanency within 12 months of entry decreased by 54% over the past 3 reporting periods.
- Suffolk and Plymouth counties saw the largest declines in performance—by 53% and 52% respectively.
- Children ages 11–16 years comprised the largest number of children in care for 2 years or more and the second smallest age group to exit to permanency.
- Worcester county had a decline in the percentage of children in care 12–23 months who exited to permanency over the 3 reporting periods.
- Black and Hispanic children and children of two or more races experienced a lower percentage of exits to permanency relative to the percentages that these children represent out of the total children in care.
- Hampden County has the second highest number and percentage of children in care 12 months or more and was one of the lowest-performing counties in achieving permanency for children in care 12–23 months. For children in care 24 months or more, Hampden County had a decline in the percentage of children achieving permanency during the past 3 reporting years and had the lowest county performance in the most recent reporting year.

Massachusetts experienced a similar decrease in the number of children exiting care and reentering care within 12 months of exit, 27% and 23% respectively; which resulted in overall performance for reentry into foster care remaining relatively stable the past 3 reporting years.

- Although the largest number and proportion of all children who reenter care within 12 months of exits are children ages 11–16 years, children under 1 year old consistently experienced the highest percentage of reentries (followed by children ages 11–16).
- Children of two more races and White children experienced a higher percentage of reentries into care in the past 3 reporting years in comparison to state performance.
- Performance varies across counties. Hampden, Worcester, and Norfolk counties showed low rates of reentry in comparison to the state; Middlesex, Essex, and Franklin counties showed fairly high rates.

Performance on placement stability consistently declined over the past 3 reporting years, with steadily declining numbers of days in care and steadily increasing numbers of placement moves. The overall rate of placement moves per 1,000 days in care increased by 47%.

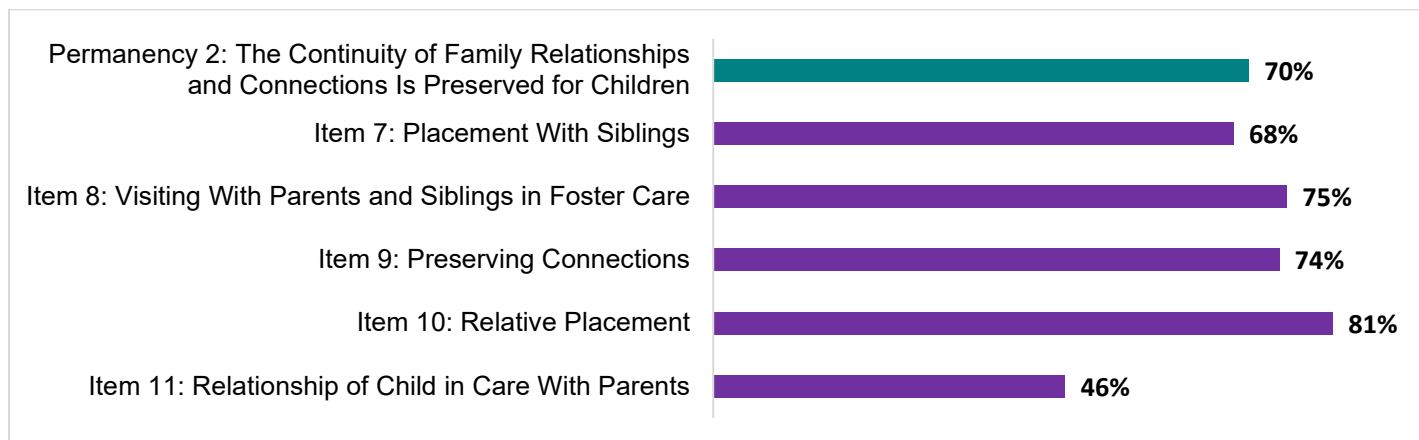
- Children in care ages 6–10 years consistently experienced the highest rate of placement moves per 1,000 days in care over the past 3 reporting years. Children ages 11–16 had the largest number of days in care and the greatest proportion of placement moves, followed by children ages 1–5 years.
- Black children experienced consistently increasing rates of placement moves per 1,000 days in care, increasing by 85% over the past 3 reporting years. The rate of placement moves increased by 56% for Hispanic children.
- Hampden County comprised the largest proportion of placement moves, the highest rate of placement moves per 1,000 days in care, and the greatest rate increase: 105% over the past 3 reporting years.

## Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

### Case Review

**Figure 6. Performance on Permanency Outcome 2 and Supporting Items**



Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2:

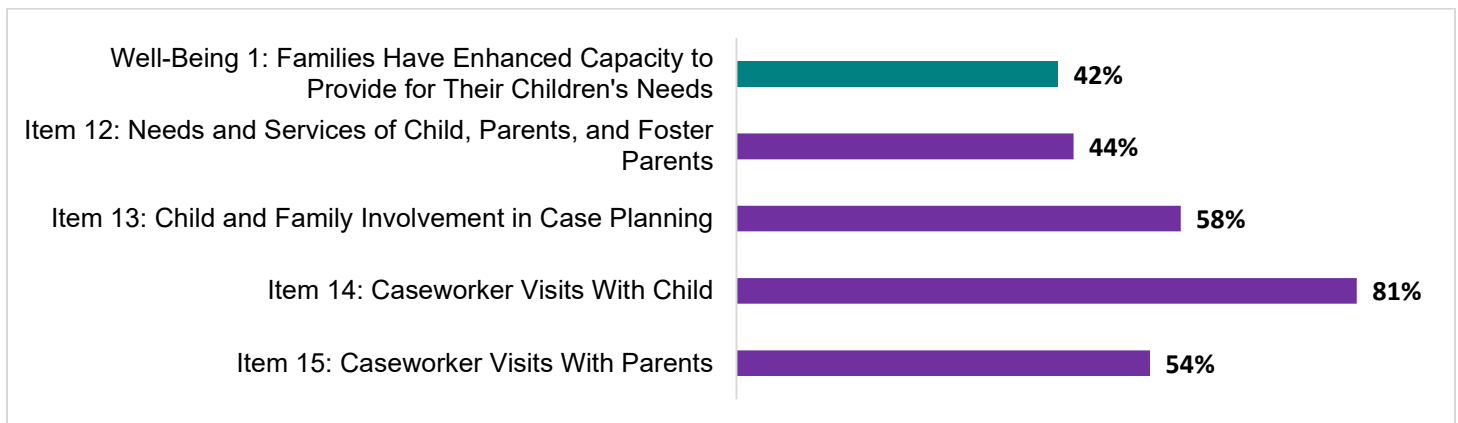
- Less than 95% of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 7.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 8.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 9.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 10.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 11.

## Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state’s performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

## Case Review

**Figure 7. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 and Supporting Items**



Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1:

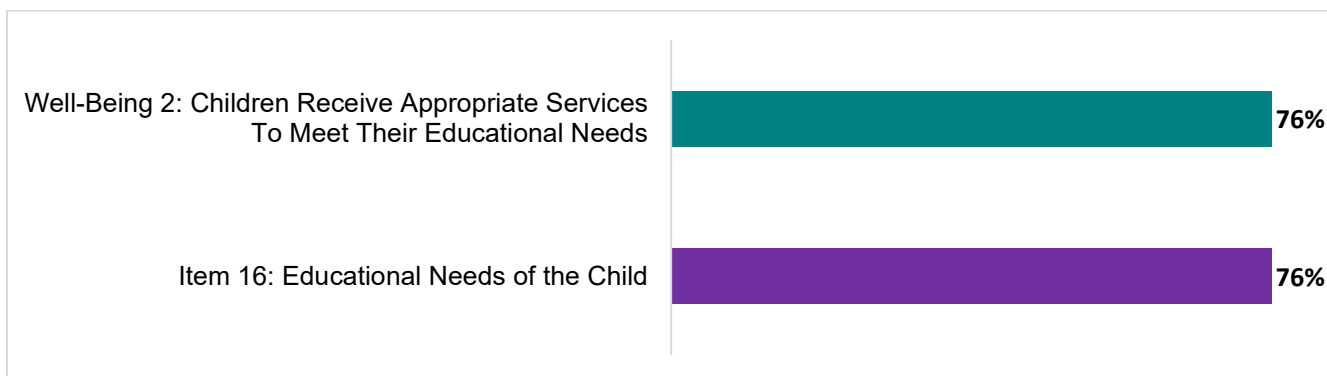
- Less than 95% of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 12.
    - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Sub-Item 12A.
    - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Sub-Item 12B.
    - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Sub-Item 12C.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 13.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 14.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 15.

## Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Item 16.

## Case Review

**Figure 8. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 and Supporting Items**



Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2:

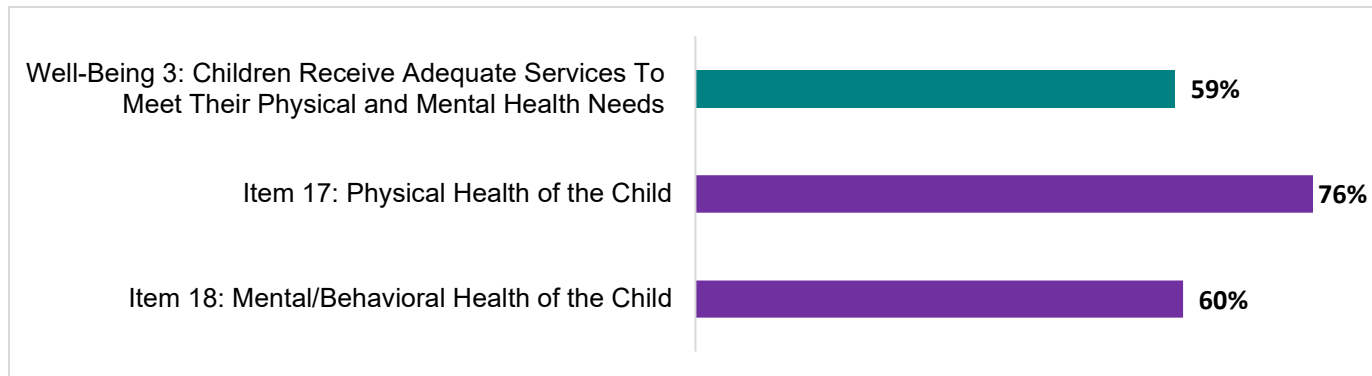
- Less than 95% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 16.

## Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

### Case Review

**Figure 9. Performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 and Supporting Items**



Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3:

- Less than 95% of the cases reviewed were substantially achieved.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 17.
  - Less than 90% of the cases were rated as a Strength on Item 18.



### III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The CB determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined based on ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the CB must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the CB must find that the item is functioning as required. For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item.

#### Statewide Information System

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Item 19.

| Item                                  | Rating   |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Item 19: Statewide Information System | Strength |

Massachusetts was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System.

#### Item 19: Statewide Information System

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 19 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- The Statewide Assessment contained evidence indicating that foster care status and demographic information were accurate and entered in the information system timely. Multiple stakeholders expressed confidence that the child's location and permanency goals were accurate in the information system, i-FamilyNet. DCF has systems in place to ensure that status, demographics, permanency goals, and location are entered timely and are accurate.

#### Case Review System

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

| Items   | Rating                   |
|---|--------------------------|
| Item 20: Written Case Plan                            | Area Needing Improvement |
| Item 21: Periodic Reviews                             | Strength                 |
| Item 22: Permanency Hearings                          | Area Needing Improvement |
| Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights               | Area Needing Improvement |
| Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers | Area Needing Improvement |

Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System.

## Item 20: Written Case Plan

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the Statewide Assessment.
- The data presented in the Statewide Assessment showed that although Massachusetts has policies in place requiring the participation of the parents in case planning, it is not routinely happening. Massachusetts acknowledged in writing at the beginning of the stakeholder interviews that parent engagement in case planning was an Area Needing Improvement. As a result, none of the stakeholder interviews included this item.

## Item 21: Periodic Reviews

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Although the timeliness of periodic reviews declined during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the data, confirmed by stakeholder interviews, showed that Foster Care Reviews (periodic reviews) are routinely held in a timely manner across the state. The Statewide Assessment presented data for SFY 2023 that showed that most reviews were timely from July 2022 through October 2022 and stakeholders interviewed said that periodic reviews held 2022 through January 2023 were timely. When reviews were delayed, they were typically rescheduled within a month.

## Item 22: Permanency Hearings

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 22 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- There was inconsistency in the data presented in the Statewide Assessment and with the information provided during stakeholder interviews. Generally, slightly more than half of the initial permanency hearings were timely and that less than slightly more than two thirds of subsequent permanency hearings were held on time. There were data quality issues resulting from inconsistent entry of the data and a lack of information sharing between the Juvenile Court and the agency and that children who enter care because of a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) petition may not have permanency hearings scheduled by the court.

## Item 23: Termination of Parental Rights

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the Statewide Assessment and confirmed in stakeholder interviews showed that TPRs are not routinely filed in accordance with ASFA. Massachusetts lacks data to show when TPR filings occur.

## Item 24: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the Statewide Assessment showed that although the state has a variety of means to notify foster parents of hearings and the right to be heard, the agency's information system lacks the ability to track when notices of hearings and reviews are sent to, and received by, foster and adoptive parents, and relatives providing care. Some statewide assessment focus group participants reported that their receipt of notices of permanency hearings was inconsistent, but some stakeholders participating in interviews reported that notices for hearings were received.

## Quality Assurance System

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Item 25.

| Item                              | Rating   |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Item 25: Quality Assurance System | Strength |

Massachusetts was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System.

## Item 25: Quality Assurance System

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) is operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 25 based on information from the Statewide Assessment.
- The Statewide Assessment provided information about DCF's extensive quality assurance process, which identifies the strengths and needs of the service delivery system through the case review process and policy fidelity reviews. DCF uses the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions (OSRI) to review 200 cases per year and routinely provides relevant reports and evaluates program improvement through established processes for the analysis and dissemination of quality data on performance measures. In addition, DCF has a Data Fellows Program that develops and expands staff's capacity to better understand and use data to improve practice and outcomes for the children and families served by the agency. The Department has a process for providing feedback to stakeholders and decision makers and as needed to adjust state programs and process.

## Staff and Provider Training

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

| Items                           | Rating   |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Item 26: Initial Staff Training | Strength |
| Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training | Strength |

| Items  | Rating                   |
|--|--------------------------|
| Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training | Area Needing Improvement |

Massachusetts was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training.

## Item 26: Initial Staff Training

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 26 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Massachusetts' new worker training consists of 6 weeks of classroom training, formalized on-the-job learning (OJL) activities, and a graduated process for being assigned new cases. Data showed that between almost all staff complete the training within the required 6 weeks. DCF described in the Statewide Assessment how the agency used the Round 3 PIP to address a revision of their new worker training which emphasized social work practice skills and application over theory. DCF also included a formalized OJL strategy and the development of a self-assessment evaluation of the initial training. All new social workers must complete this 6-week training series plus OJL activities before being assigned cases. Supervisors monitor the progress of their workers' training in real time on the state's learning management system, MassAchieve. Supervisors can also look at the training calendar for trainings that would support specific skill enhancement for workers and assign the training to workers.

## Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 27 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- DCF conducts several training series, including the New Supervisor training series, New Area Program Manager (APM) Professional Development Program, Data Fellow Institute (DFI) series, and other in-service trainings. All supervisors and Area Program Managers rated the New Supervisor/Manager series as good to excellent. DCF also described how its professional development and training division, the Child Welfare Institute (CWI), supports staff in obtaining a social work license. Stakeholder interviews indicated that over 90% of staff routinely completed the annual 30-hour requirement for ongoing training and over 90% of the supervisors have completed their required training. DCF provides several ongoing training options to enable staff to receive the required amount of ongoing training.

## Item 28: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E) that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- DCF recently began implementing a new policy regarding ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents. Stakeholder interviews identified significant training gaps that affect a foster parent's ability to

care for children placed with them, e.g., race and cultural issues for black and brown children who are placed in white homes and a lack of information about how to work with children with significant trauma histories, and LGBTQI children and youth. Stakeholders reported the Massachusetts Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) course contents are not standardized as it is up to the instructor to determine what is covered in each course. The consensus among stakeholders was that licensed childcare facilities consistently provide required training and this training is closely monitored by the state.

## Service Array and Resource Development

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

| Items                             | Rating                   |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Item 29: Array of Services        | Area Needing Improvement |
| Item 30: Individualizing Services | Area Needing Improvement |

Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development.

### Item 29: Array of Services

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Although Massachusetts has a vast service array in most areas of the state, certain parts of the state are lacking, particularly in 4 Area Offices that are considered “under-resourced”: Cape and Islands, Greenfield, Berkshire, and South Central. There is also a gap between what is available and what is accessible, especially to families living in poverty or who lack access to transportation. The state provided information on the challenges in accessing agency and non-agency services that exist in certain geographic areas in the state. Stakeholders talked about gaps and wait lists for services throughout the state, especially in the rural areas but noted the best access and availability of services in the Boston metro area. Stakeholders identified existing challenges with translation services, mental health services, and domestic violence services.

### Item 30: Individualizing Services

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- The Statewide Assessment contained survey data that showed assessments and services are rarely individualized. While the state has interpretation services for non-English speaking families, stakeholders expressed concerns about the accuracy of interpretation and the ability to readily access these services. Due to wait lists for services across the state, workers often refer families to whatever is available even if the service is not tailored or individualized to the family's needs. Stakeholders said that

services are more easily individualized and accessible through contracted service provider networks in the metropolitan areas of the state.

## Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

| Items  | Rating   |
|--|----------|
| Item 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR | Strength |
| Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs                     | Strength |

Massachusetts was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community.

### Item 31: State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs), the state engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 31 based on information from Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Massachusetts routinely engages stakeholders in a variety of committees including the Family Advisory Council, Youth Advisory Council, and groups focused on programs and issues such as ICWA and the Adoption Call to Action. Stakeholders said that they feel heard, they felt that their opinions matter, and that their feedback was integrated into the CFSP and APSR and other work of the Department. In the Statewide Assessment, DCF stated that it works with a full array of partners including youth and families, community stakeholders and providers, advocates, related organizations, and other state and federal agencies. Using a multi-level approach, the Department's collaboration is intended to solve problems and build community and service system capacity to meet the needs of children, youth and families through practice, policy, and systemic reform. Stakeholders interviewed said that DCF collaborates with both internal stakeholders and external stakeholders in meaningful ways as the agency regularly requests their input and provides them with feedback on how their input is influencing the agency's strategic planning.

### Item 32: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the Statewide Assessment.
- The Statewide Assessment included information describing how DCF works collaboratively with several of the state's federally assisted programs and other state agencies serving the same population, including the Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MassHealth (Medicaid), Children's Trust (CT), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Department of Early Education and Care



(EEC). Massachusetts also collaborates with the agencies that administer Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits to families.

## Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity based on the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

| Items   | Rating                   |
|---|--------------------------|
| Item 33: Standards Applied Equally  | Area Needing Improvement |
| Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks                          | Strength                 |
| Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes                    | Area Needing Improvement |
| Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements | Area Needing Improvement |

Massachusetts was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

### Item 33: Standards Applied Equally

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 33 based on information from Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- The Statewide Assessment did not provide data on the contracted agencies' process for licensing. Stakeholders said that contracted child placement agencies must follow both EEC and DCF policies and regulations, but there is no routine system in place to ensure that the standards for licensing of foster and adoptive homes are applied equally across state and contracted child placing agencies. DCF described the licensing process and the waivers that could be applied in certain circumstances. They also provided data to show the waivers applied for by type and data that showed the aggregate outcome of waivers. However, there was no data presented, either from a sample of records or aggregate data from the state's management information system, on how the standards were applied.

### Item 34: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information provided showed that it takes an average of 1.7 days for background checks to come back to the state after foster parents had been fingerprinted. There are 34 locations across the state that conduct fingerprinting. The state has ticklers in its data system that support the process of ensuring that new household members in foster homes are routinely included in obtaining the necessary criminal background checks. The state has a case planning process that includes provision for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements. The state also indicated that the i-FamilyNet requirements do not allow for licensure and placement of children in unrestricted foster homes without completion of full background checks. It does allow for placements with kin after completion of a limited

background check that includes all requirements except fingerprinting. Kinship homes cannot be granted a license or considered IV-E eligible before completion of the fingerprinting requirement.

### **Item 35: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes**

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the state for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed is occurring statewide.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the Statewide Assessment, Massachusetts said that diligent recruitment plans are developed and implemented at a local level. The Statewide Assessment did not include data on the race and ethnicity of the foster and adoptive parent population. While it appears the data on the race and ethnicity needs of the foster care population is available in the state's data system, local recruiters in area offices are not aware of it. Stakeholders said that although they make efforts to recruit a diverse population of foster parents, there is often not a way to train and onboard special populations in the language that they speak and understand, e.g., Haitian Creole.

### **Item 36: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements**

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- Massachusetts received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the Statewide Assessment. The state agreed that was an area needing improvement and no stakeholder interviews were completed for this item.
- Massachusetts provided data that showed that 30.8% of ICPCs are completed timely.



## APPENDIX A

### Summary of Massachusetts 2023 Child and Family Services Review Performance

#### I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items and Performance on Statewide Data Indicators

**Outcome Achievement:** Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the state to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Item Achievement:** Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

**Statewide Data Indicators:** For Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1, the state's performance is also considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator. State performance may be statistically better, worse, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the CB did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

**RSP** (Risk-Standardized Performance) is derived from a multi-level statistical model, reflects the state's performance relative to states with similar children, and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children and, for some indicators, the state's entry rate. It uses risk adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a fairer comparison of state performance against national performance.

**RSP Interval** is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state's RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

**Data Period(s) Used** refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1–September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1–March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1–September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.

#### **SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.**

| Data Element   | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Safety Outcome 1:</b><br><b>Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.</b> | Not in Substantial Conformity | 52% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 1:</b><br><b>Timeliness of investigations</b>  | Area Needing Improvement      | 52% Strength               |

### DATA INDICATORS FOR SAFETY OUTCOME 1

| Statewide Data Indicator  | National Performance | Overall Determination           | Direction of Desired Performance | RSP   | RSP Interval | Data Period(s) Used |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|--------------|---------------------|
| Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care) | 9.07                 | Worse Than National Performance | Lower                            | 27.03 | 25.13–29.07  | 20A–20B, FY20–21    |
| Recurrence of maltreatment  | 9.7%                 | Worse Than National Performance | Lower                            | 21.0% | 20.4%–21.7%  | FY20–21             |

### SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.

| Data Element  | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Safety Outcome 2:</b><br>Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.  | Not in Substantial Conformity | 65% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 2:</b><br>Services to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care | Area Needing Improvement      | 50% Strength               |
| <b>Item 3:</b><br>Risk and safety assessment and management   | Area Needing Improvement      | 67% Strength               |

### PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

| Data Element   | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Permanency Outcome 1:</b><br>Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.                 | Not in Substantial Conformity | 24% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 4:</b><br>Stability of foster care placement   | Area Needing Improvement      | 70% Strength               |
| <b>Item 5:</b><br>Permanency goal for child  | Area Needing Improvement      | 74% Strength               |
| <b>Item 6:</b><br>Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or another planned permanent living arrangement | Area Needing Improvement      | 38% Strength               |

## DATA INDICATORS FOR PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1

| Statewide Data Indicator  | National Performance | Overall Determination            | Direction of Desired Performance | RSP   | RSP Interval | Data Period(s) Used |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|--------------|---------------------|
| Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care             | 35.2%                | Better Than National Performance | Higher                           | 41.6% | 40.2%–43.1%  | 20A–22A             |
| Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12–23 months      | 43.8%                | Worse Than National Performance] | Higher                           | 33.4% | 31.5%–35.3%  | 21B–22A             |
| Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more | 37.3%                | Worse Than National Performance  | Higher                           | 29.2% | 27.9%–30.6%  | 21B–22A             |
| Re-entry to foster care in 12 months                                  | 5.6%                 | Worse Than National Performance  | Lower                            | 9.6%  | 8.6%–10.7%   | 20B–22A             |
| Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)                    | 4.48                 | Worse Than National Performance  | Lower                            | 6.14  | 5.96–6.32    | 21B–22A             |

## PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

| Data Element  | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Permanency Outcome 2:</b><br>The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children. | Not in Substantial Conformity | 70% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 7:</b><br>Placement with siblings   | Area Needing Improvement      | 68% Strength               |
| <b>Item 8:</b><br>Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care   | Area Needing Improvement      | 75% Strength               |
| <b>Item 9:</b><br>Preserving connections  | Area Needing Improvement      | 74% Strength               |
| <b>Item 10:</b><br>Relative placement   | Area Needing Improvement      | 81% Strength               |
| <b>Item 11:</b><br>Relationship of child in care with parents   | Area Needing Improvement      | 46% Strength               |

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.**

| <b>Data Element</b>  | <b>Overall Determination</b>  | <b>State Performance</b>   |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Well-Being Outcome 1:</b><br>Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. | Not in Substantial Conformity | 42% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 12:</b><br>Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents                            | Area Needing Improvement      | 44% Strength               |
| <b>Sub-Item 12A:</b><br>Needs assessment and services to children                                      | Area Needing Improvement      | 73% Strength               |
| <b>Sub-Item 12B:</b><br>Needs assessment and services to parents                                       | Area Needing Improvement      | 49% Strength               |
| <b>Sub-Item 12C:</b><br>Needs assessment and services to foster parents                                | Area Needing Improvement      | 83% Strength               |
| <b>Item 13:</b><br>Child and family involvement in case planning                                       | Area Needing Improvement      | 58% Strength               |
| <b>Item 14:</b><br>Caseworker visits with child  | Area Needing Improvement      | 81% Strength               |
| <b>Item 15:</b><br>Caseworker visits with parents  | Area Needing Improvement      | 54% Strength               |

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.**

| <b>Data Element</b>  | <b>Overall Determination</b>  | <b>State Performance</b>   |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Well-Being Outcome 2:</b><br>Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs. | Not in Substantial Conformity | 76% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 16:</b><br>Educational needs of the child  | Area Needing Improvement      | 76% Strength               |

**WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.**

| <b>Data Element</b>  | <b>Overall Determination</b>  | <b>State Performance</b>   |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Well-Being Outcome 3:</b><br>Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. | Not in Substantial Conformity | 59% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 17:</b><br>Physical health of the child  | Area Needing Improvement      | 76% Strength               |
| <b>Item 18:</b><br>Mental/behavioral health of the child   | Area Needing Improvement      | 60% Strength               |

## II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The CB determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The CB determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the CB must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the CB must find that the item is functioning as required.

### STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

| Data Element                                     | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance      |
|--|---|------------------------|
| <b>Statewide Information System</b>              | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 19:<br/>Statewide Information System</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength               |

### CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

| Data Element   | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance             |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Case Review System</b>  | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 20:<br/>Written Case Plan</b>                            | Statewide Assessment                            | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 21:<br/>Periodic Reviews</b>                             | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                      |
| <b>Item 22:<br/>Permanency Hearings</b>                          | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 23:<br/>Termination of Parental Rights</b>               | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 24:<br/>Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |

### QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

| Data Element                                 | Source of Data and Information | State Performance      |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Quality Assurance System</b>              | Statewide Assessment           | Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 25:<br/>Quality Assurance System</b> | Statewide Assessment           | Strength               |

### STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

| Data Element                               | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance      |
|--|---|------------------------|
| <b>Staff and Provider Training</b>         | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 26:<br/>Initial Staff Training</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength               |

| <b>Data Element</b>                                     | <b>Source of Data and Information</b>           | <b>State Performance</b> |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Item 27:<br/>Ongoing Staff Training</b>              | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                 |
| <b>Item 28:<br/>Foster and Adoptive Parent Training</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement |

### ***SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT***

| <b>Data Element</b>                           | <b>Source of Data and Information</b>           | <b>State Performance</b>      |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Service Array and Resource Development</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 29:<br/>Array of Services</b>         | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 30:<br/>Individualizing Services</b>  | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |

### ***AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY***

| <b>Data Element</b>   | <b>Source of Data and Information</b>           | <b>State Performance</b> |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>   | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Substantial Conformity   |
| <b>Item 31:<br/>State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                 |
| <b>Item 32:<br/>Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs</b>                     | Statewide Assessment                            | Strength                 |

### ***FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION***

| <b>Data Element</b>  | <b>Source of Data and Information</b>           | <b>State Performance</b>      |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</b>                  | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 33:<br/>Standards Applied Equally</b>  | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 34:<br/>Requirements for Criminal Background Checks</b>                          | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                      |
| <b>Item 35:<br/>Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes</b>                    | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 36:<br/>State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements</b> | Statewide Assessment                            | Area Needing Improvement      |

## APPENDIX B: PRACTICE PERFORMANCE REPORT

### Massachusetts CFSR (State-Led) 2023

The Practice Performance Report provides an aggregated summary of practice performance for all 18 items in the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions (OSRI) for all approved and final cases from all the sites in the Massachusetts CFSR (State-Led) and includes a breakdown of performance by case type. Please refer to the Rating Criteria section at the end of each item in the OSRI to identify which responses to questions will result in a Strength rating. For more information on the OSRI, see <https://www.cfsrportal.acf.hhs.gov/resources/round-4-resources/cfsr-round-4-instruments-tools-and-guides>

### Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

#### Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment

| Practice Description   | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|---|
| (Question 1A) Investigations or assessments were initiated in accordance with the state's timeframes and requirements in cases.  | 78.57% (33 of 42)                                     |
| (Question 1B) Face-to-face contact with the child(ren) who is (are) the subject of the report were made in accordance with the state's timeframes and requirements in cases. | 52.38% (22 of 42)                                     |
| (Question 1C) Reasons for delays in initiation of investigations or assessments and/or face-to-face contact were due to circumstances beyond the control of the agency.      | 0% (0 of 20)  |
| Item 1 Strength Ratings  | 52.38% (22 of 42)                                     |

### Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

#### Item 2: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Questions 2A and 2B) Agency made concerted efforts to provide or arrange for appropriate services for the family to protect the children and prevent their entry or reentry into foster care. | 46.15% (6 of 13)                                   | 31.58% (6 of 19)  | 37.5% (12 of 32)                                      |

| <b>Practice Description</b>   | <b>Foster Care—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>In-Home Services—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>All Case Types—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> |
|---|---|--|--|
| (Questions 2A and 2B) Although the agency did not make concerted efforts to provide or arrange for appropriate services for the family to protect the children and prevent their entry into foster care, the child(ren) was removed from the home because this action was necessary to ensure the child's safety. | 15.38% (2 of 13)  | Not Applicable   | 15.38% (2 of 13)   |
| (Questions 2A and 2B) Agency did not make concerted efforts to provide services and the child was removed without providing appropriate services.   | 7.69% (1 of 13)   | Not Applicable   | 7.69% (1 of 13)  |
| (Questions 2A and 2B) Concerted efforts were not made to provide appropriate services to address safety/risk issues and the child(ren) remained in the home.  | 15.38% (2 of 13)  | 68.42% (13 of 19)  | 46.88% (15 of 32)  |
| <b>Item 2 Strength Ratings</b>  | <b>76.92% (10 of 13)</b>                                    | <b>31.58% (6 of 19)</b>  | <b>50% (16 of 32)</b>  |

### **Item 3: Risk and Safety Assessment and Management**

| <b>Practice Description</b>  | <b>Foster Care—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>In-Home Services—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>All Case Types—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> |
|--|---|--|--|
| (Question 3A1) There were no maltreatment allegations about the family that were not formally reported or formally investigated/assessed.  | 100% (50 of 50)   | 90% (45 of 50)   | 95% (95 of 100)  |
| (Question 3A1) There were no maltreatment allegations that were not substantiated despite evidence that would support substantiation.  | 100% (50 of 50)   | 98% (49 of 50)   | 99% (99 of 100)  |
| (Question 3A) The agency conducted an initial assessment that accurately assessed all risk and safety concerns.  | 100% (2 of 2)   | 92.31% (12 of 13)  | 93.33% (14 of 15)  |
| (Question 3B) The agency conducted ongoing assessments that accurately assessed all risk and safety concerns.  | 86% (43 of 50)  | 57.14% (28 of 49)  | 71.72% (71 of 99)  |
| (Question 3C) When safety concerns were present, the agency developed an appropriate safety plan with the family and continually monitored the safety plan as needed, including monitoring family engagement in safety-related services. | 55.56% (5 of 9)   | 52.17% (12 of 23)  | 53.13% (17 of 32)  |
| (Question 3D) There were no safety concerns pertaining to children in the family home that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency.   | 85.71% (12 of 14)   | 59.09% (13 of 22)  | 69.44% (25 of 36)  |



| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Question 3E) There were no concerns related to the safety of the target child in foster care during visitation with parent(s)/caregiver(s) or other family members that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency. | 91.43% (32 of 35)                                  | Not Applicable  | 91.43% (32 of 35)                                     |
| (Question 3F) There were no concerns for the target child's safety in the foster home or placement facility that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency.   | 98% (49 of 50)                                     | Not Applicable  | 98% (49 of 50)  |
| Item 3 Strength Ratings  | 82% (41 of 50)                                     | 52% (26 of 50)  | 67% (67 of 100)                                       |

## Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

### Item 4: Stability of Foster Care Placement

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|
| (Question 4B) Placement changes for the child were planned by the agency in an effort to achieve the child's case goals or to meet the needs of the child. | 13.33% (2 of 15)                                   | 13.33% (2 of 15)                                      |
| (Question 4C) The child's current or most recent placement setting is stable.  | 92% (46 of 50)                                     | 92% (46 of 50)  |
| Item 4 Strength Ratings  | 70% (35 of 50)                                     | 70% (35 of 50)  |

### Item 5: Permanency Goal for Child

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|
| (Question 5A3) Permanency goal(s) is (are) specified in the case file.   | 100% (50 of 50)                                    | 100% (50 of 50)                                       |
| (Question 5B) Permanency goals in effect during the period under review were established in a timely manner.   | 80% (40 of 50)                                     | 80% (40 of 50)  |
| (Question 5C) Permanency goals in effect during the period under review were appropriate to the child's needs for permanency and to the circumstances of the case. | 82% (41 of 50)                                     | 82% (41 of 50)  |
| (Question 5D) Child has been in foster care for at least 15 of the most recent 22 months.  | 68% (34 of 50)                                     | 68% (34 of 50)  |
| (Questions 5E and 5F) Child meets other Adoption and Safe Families Act criteria for termination of parental rights (TPR).  | 6.25% (1 of 16)                                    | 6.25% (1 of 16)                                       |

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|
| (Questions 5F and 5G) The agency filed or joined a TPR petition before the period under review (PUR) or in a timely manner during the PUR or an exception applied. | 91.43% (32 of 35)                                  | 91.43% (32 of 35)                                     |
| Item 5 Strength Ratings  | 74% (37 of 50)                                     | 74% (37 of 50)  |

## Item 6: Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|
| (Questions 6A4 and 6B) The agency and court made concerted efforts to achieve reunification in a timely manner.  | 71.43% (10 of 14)                                  | 71.43% (10 of 14)                                     |
| (Questions 6A4 and 6B) The agency and court made concerted efforts to achieve guardianship in a timely manner.   | 0% (0 of 3)  | 0% (0 of 3)   |
| (Questions 6A4 and 6B) The agency and court made concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner.   | 17.86% (5 of 28)                                   | 17.86% (5 of 28)                                      |
| (Questions 6A4 and 6C) The agency and court made concerted efforts to place a child with a goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) in a living arrangement that can be considered permanent until discharge from foster care. | 80% (4 of 5)                                       | 80% (4 of 5)  |
| (Questions 6A4 and B or 6A4 and C) The agency and court made concerted efforts to achieve concurrent goals. If one of two concurrent goals was achieved during the period under review, rating is based on the goal that was achieved.             | 0% (0 of 0)  | 0% (0 of 0)   |
| Item 6 Strength Ratings  | 38% (19 of 50)                                     | 38% (19 of 50)  |

## Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

### Item 7: Placement With Siblings

| Practice Description  | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|---|--|---|
| (Question 7A) The child was placed with all siblings who also were in foster care.  | 20.59% (7 of 34)                                   | 20.59% (7 of 34)                                      |
| (Question 7B) When all siblings were not placed together, there was a valid reason for the child's separation from siblings in placement. | 59.26% (16 of 27)                                  | 59.26% (16 of 27)                                     |
| Item 7 Strength Ratings   | 67.65% (23 of 34)                                  | 67.65% (23 of 34)                                     |

## Item 8: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

| Practice Description  | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|---|--|---|
| (Question 8A1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and mother was more than once a week.  | 9.52% (2 of 21)                                    | 9.52% (2 of 21)                                       |
| (Question 8A1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and mother was once a week.  | 47.62% (10 of 21)                                  | 47.62% (10 of 21)                                     |
| (Question 8A1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and mother was less than once a week but at least twice a month.   | 19.05% (4 of 21)                                   | 19.05% (4 of 21)                                      |
| (Question 8A1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and mother was less than twice a month but at least once a month.  | 0% (0 of 21)                                       | 0% (0 of 21)  |
| (Question 8A1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and mother was less than once a month.   | 23.81% (5 of 21)                                   | 23.81% (5 of 21)                                      |
| (Question 8A1) Child never had visits with mother.  | 0% (0 of 21)                                       | 0% (0 of 21)  |
| (Question 8A) Concerted efforts were made to ensure that the frequency of visitation between the mother and child was sufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship. | 80.95% (17 of 21)                                  | 80.95% (17 of 21)                                     |
| (Question 8C) Concerted efforts were made to ensure that the quality of visitation between the mother and child was sufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship.   | 76.19% (16 of 21)                                  | 76.19% (16 of 21)                                     |
| (Questions 8A and 8C) The frequency and quality of visitation between the child and mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.                       | 76.19% (16 of 21)                                  | 76.19% (16 of 21)                                     |
| (Question 8B1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and father was more than once a week.  | 7.14% (1 of 14)                                    | 7.14% (1 of 14)                                       |
| (Question 8B1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and father was once a week.  | 64.29% (9 of 14)                                   | 64.29% (9 of 14)                                      |
| (Question 8B1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and father was less than once a week but at least twice a month.   | 7.14% (1 of 14)                                    | 7.14% (1 of 14)                                       |
| (Question 8B1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and father was less than twice a month but at least once a month.  | 0% (0 of 14)                                       | 0% (0 of 14)  |
| (Question 8B1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and father was less than once a month.   | 21.43% (3 of 14)                                   | 21.43% (3 of 14)                                      |
| (Question 8B1) Child never had visits with father.  | 0% (0 of 14)                                       | 0% (0 of 14)  |
| (Question 8B) Concerted efforts were made to ensure that the frequency of visitation between the father and child was sufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship. | 78.57% (11 of 14)                                  | 78.57% (11 of 14)                                     |

| <b>Practice Description</b>  | <b>Foster Care—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>All Case Types—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> |
|--|---|--|
| (Question 8D) Concerted efforts were made to ensure that the quality of visitation between the father and child was sufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship.                    | 71.43% (10 of 14)   | 71.43% (10 of 14)  |
| (Questions 8B and 8D) The frequency and quality of visitation between the child and father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.  | 71.43% (10 of 14)   | 71.43% (10 of 14)  |
| (Question 8E1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and siblings in foster care was more than once a week.  | 3.7% (1 of 27)  | 3.7% (1 of 27)   |
| (Question 8E1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and siblings in foster care was once a week.  | 22.22% (6 of 27)  | 22.22% (6 of 27)   |
| (Question 8E1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and siblings in foster care was less than once a week but at least twice a month.   | 33.33% (9 of 27)  | 33.33% (9 of 27)   |
| (Question 8E1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and siblings in foster care was less than twice a month but at least once a month.  | 18.52% (5 of 27)  | 18.52% (5 of 27)   |
| (Question 8E1) The usual frequency of visits between the child and siblings in foster care was less than once a month.   | 18.52% (5 of 27)  | 18.52% (5 of 27)   |
| (Question 8E1) Child never had visits with siblings in foster care.  | 3.7% (1 of 27)  | 3.7% (1 of 27)   |
| (Question 8E) Concerted efforts were made to ensure that the frequency of visitation between the child and siblings in foster care was sufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship. | 85.19% (23 of 27)   | 85.19% (23 of 27)  |
| (Question 8F) Concerted efforts were made to ensure that the quality of visitation between the child and siblings in foster care was sufficient to maintain or promote the continuity of the relationship.   | 85.19% (23 of 27)   | 85.19% (23 of 27)  |
| (Questions 8E and 8F) The frequency and quality of visitation with siblings in foster care was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.  | 85.19% (23 of 27)   | 85.19% (23 of 27)  |
| Item 8 Strength Ratings  | 75% (27 of 36)  | 75% (27 of 36)   |

## Item 9: Preserving Connections

| <b>Practice Description</b>  | <b>Foster Care—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>All Case Types—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> |
|--|---|--|
| (Question 9A) Concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's important connections (for example, neighborhood, community, faith, language, extended family members including siblings who are not in foster care, Tribe, school, and/or friends). | 74% (37 of 50)  | 74% (37 of 50)   |

| Practice Description    | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Item 9 Strength Ratings | 74% (37 of 50)                                     | 74% (37 of 50)  |

### Item 10: Relative Placement

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|
| (Question 10A1) The child's current, or most recent, placement was with a relative.                                      | 31.91% (15 of 47)                                  | 31.91% (15 of 47)                                     |
| (Question 10A2) The child's current or most recent placement with a relative was appropriate to the child's needs.       | 100% (15 of 15)                                    | 100% (15 of 15)                                       |
| (Question 10B) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Identify</b> maternal relatives. | 66.67% (6 of 9)                                    | 66.67% (6 of 9)                                       |
| (Question 10B) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Locate</b> maternal relatives.   | 66.67% (6 of 9)                                    | 66.67% (6 of 9)                                       |
| (Question 10B) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Inform</b> maternal relatives.   | 66.67% (6 of 9)                                    | 66.67% (6 of 9)                                       |
| (Question 10B) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Evaluate</b> maternal relatives. | 88.89% (8 of 9)                                    | 88.89% (8 of 9)                                       |
| (Question 10C) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Identify</b> paternal relatives. | 100% (6 of 6)                                      | 100% (6 of 6)   |
| (Question 10C) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Locate</b> paternal relatives.   | 83.33% (5 of 6)                                    | 83.33% (5 of 6)                                       |
| (Question 10C) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Inform</b> paternal relatives.   | 83.33% (5 of 6)                                    | 83.33% (5 of 6)                                       |
| (Question 10C) Cases in which concerns existed due to a lack of concerted efforts to <b>Evaluate</b> paternal relatives. | 83.33% (5 of 6)                                    | 83.33% (5 of 6)                                       |
| Item 10 Strength Ratings   | 80.85% (38 of 47)                                  | 80.85% (38 of 47)                                     |

### Item 11: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

| Practice Description  | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|---|--|---|
| (Question 11A) Concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive, nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother. | 52.38% (11 of 21)                                  | 52.38% (11 of 21)                                     |
| (Question 11B) Concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive, nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father. | 42.86% (6 of 14)                                   | 42.86% (6 of 14)                                      |
| Item 11 Strength Ratings  | 45.83% (11 of 24)                                  | 45.83% (11 of 24)                                     |

## Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

### Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

| Practice Description     | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|
| Item 12 Strength Ratings | 50% (25 of 50)                                     | 38% (19 of 50)  | 44% (44 of 100)                                       |

#### Sub-Item 12A: Needs Assessment and Services to Children

| Practice Description  | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|---|--|---|---|
| (Question 12A1) The agency conducted formal or informal initial and/or ongoing comprehensive assessments that accurately assessed the children's needs. | 88% (44 of 50)                                     | 84% (42 of 50)  | 86% (86 of 100)                                       |
| (Question 12A2) Appropriate services were provided to meet the children's needs.  | 76.6% (36 of 47)                                   | 65.22% (30 of 46)                                       | 70.97% (66 of 93)                                     |
| Sub-Item 12A Strength Ratings   | 78% (39 of 50)                                     | 68% (34 of 50)  | 73% (73 of 100)                                       |

#### Sub-Item 12B: Needs Assessment and Services to Parents

| Practice Description  | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|---|--|---|---|
| (Question 12B1) The agency conducted formal or informal initial and/or ongoing comprehensive assessments that accurately assessed the mother's needs  | 69.23% (27 of 39)                                  | 81.63% (40 of 49)                                       | 76.14% (67 of 88)                                     |
| (Question 12B3) Appropriate services were provided to meet the mother's needs.  | 60.53% (23 of 38)                                  | 60.87% (28 of 46)                                       | 60.71% (51 of 84)                                     |
| (Questions 12B1 and B3) Concerted efforts were made to assess and address the needs of mothers.   | 61.54% (24 of 39)                                  | 61.22% (30 of 49)                                       | 61.36% (54 of 88)                                     |
| (Question 12B2) The agency conducted formal or informal initial and/or ongoing comprehensive assessments that accurately assessed the father's needs. | 65.22% (15 of 23)                                  | 50% (19 of 38)  | 55.74% (34 of 61)                                     |

| Practice Description  | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|---|--|---|---|
| (Question 12B4) Appropriate services were provided to meet the father's needs.                    | 47.62% (10 of 21)                                  | 29.41% (10 of 34)                                       | 36.36% (20 of 55)                                     |
| (Questions 12B2 and 12B4) Concerted efforts were made to assess and address the needs of fathers. | 47.83% (11 of 23)                                  | 34.21% (13 of 38)                                       | 39.34% (24 of 61)                                     |
| Sub-Item 12B Strength Ratings   | 52.38% (22 of 42)                                  | 46% (23 of 50)  | 48.91% (45 of 92)                                     |

### **Sub-Item 12C: Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents**

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|
| (Question 12C1) The agency adequately assessed the needs of the foster or pre-adoptive parents related to caring for children in their care on an ongoing basis. | 87.23% (41 of 47)                                  | 87.23% (41 of 47)                                     |
| (Question 12C2) The agency provided appropriate services to foster and pre-adoptive parents related to caring for children in their care.                        | 82.93% (34 of 41)                                  | 82.93% (34 of 41)                                     |
| Sub-Item 12C Strength Ratings  | 82.98% (39 of 47)                                  | 82.98% (39 of 47)                                     |

### **Item 13: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning**

| Practice Description  | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|---|--|---|---|
| (Question 13A) The agency made concerted efforts to actively involve the child in the case planning process.  | 86.21% (25 of 29)                                  | 80.56% (29 of 36)                                       | 83.08% (54 of 65)                                     |
| (Question 13B) The agency made concerted efforts to actively involve the mother in the case planning process. | 70.27% (26 of 37)                                  | 73.47% (36 of 49)                                       | 72.09% (62 of 86)                                     |
| (Question 13C) The agency made concerted efforts to actively involve the father in the case planning process. | 66.67% (14 of 21)                                  | 37.84% (14 of 37)                                       | 48.28% (28 of 58)                                     |
| Item 13 Strength Ratings  | 70.21% (33 of 47)                                  | 46% (23 of 50)  | 57.73% (56 of 97)                                     |

#### Item 14: Caseworker Visits With Child

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Question 14A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and child(ren) was more than once a week.                             | 0% (0 of 50)                                       | 0% (0 of 50)  | 0% (0 of 100)   |
| (Question 14A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and child(ren) was once a week.                                       | 16% (8 of 50)                                      | 0% (0 of 50)  | 8% (8 of 100)   |
| (Question 14A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and child(ren) was less than once a week but at least twice a month.  | 12% (6 of 50)                                      | 0% (0 of 50)  | 6% (6 of 100)   |
| (Question 14A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and child(ren) was less than twice a month but at least once a month. | 70% (35 of 50)                                     | 96% (48 of 50)  | 83% (83 of 100)                                       |
| (Question 14A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and child(ren) was less than once a month.                            | 2% (1 of 50)                                       | 4% (2 of 50)  | 3% (3 of 100)   |
| (Question 14A1) Caseworker never had visits with child(ren).   | 0% (0 of 50)                                       | 0% (0 of 50)  | 0% (0 of 100)   |
| (Question 14A) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and the child (ren) was sufficient.                                    | 98% (49 of 50)                                     | 96% (48 of 50)  | 97% (97 of 100)                                       |
| (Question 14B) The quality of visits between the caseworker and the child(ren) was sufficient.   | 88% (44 of 50)                                     | 78% (39 of 50)  | 83% (83 of 100)                                       |
| Item 14 Strength Ratings   | 86% (43 of 50)                                     | 76% (38 of 50)  | 81% (81 of 100)                                       |

#### Item 15: Caseworker Visits With Parents

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Question 15A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and mother was more than once a week. | 0% (0 of 38)                                       | 0% (0 of 49)  | 0% (0 of 87)  |
| (Question 15A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and mother was once a week.           | 7.89% (3 of 38)                                    | 0% (0 of 49)  | 3.45% (3 of 87)                                       |



| <b>Practice Description</b>  | <b>Foster Care—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>In-Home Services—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>All Case Types—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> |
|--|---|--|--|
| (Question 15A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and mother was less than once a week but at least twice a month.  | 5.26% (2 of 38)   | 0% (0 of 49)   | 2.3% (2 of 87)   |
| (Question 15A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and mother was less than twice a month but at least once a month. | 39.47% (15 of 38)   | 89.8% (44 of 49)   | 67.82% (59 of 87)  |
| (Question 15A1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and mother was less than once a month.                            | 39.47% (15 of 38)   | 8.16% (4 of 49)  | 21.84% (19 of 87)  |
| (Question 15A1) Caseworker never had visits with mother.   | 7.89% (3 of 38)   | 2.04% (1 of 49)  | 4.6% (4 of 87)   |
| (Question 15A2) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and the mother was sufficient.                                    | 78.95% (30 of 38)   | 93.88% (46 of 49)  | 87.36% (76 of 87)  |
| (Question 15C) The quality of visits between the caseworker and the mother was sufficient.   | 71.43% (25 of 35)   | 77.08% (37 of 48)  | 74.7% (62 of 83)   |
| (Questions 15A2 and 15C) Both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with the mother were sufficient.                      | 68.42% (26 of 38)   | 73.47% (36 of 49)  | 71.26% (62 of 87)  |
| (Question 15B1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and father was more than once a week.                             | 0% (0 of 21)  | 0% (0 of 37)   | 0% (0 of 58)   |
| (Question 15B1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and father was once a week.                                       | 14.29% (3 of 21)  | 0% (0 of 37)   | 5.17% (3 of 58)  |
| (Question 15B1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and father was less than once a week but at least twice a month.  | 4.76% (1 of 21)   | 0% (0 of 37)   | 1.72% (1 of 58)  |
| (Question 15B1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and father was less than twice a month but at least once a month. | 38.1% (8 of 21)   | 27.03% (10 of 37)  | 31.03% (18 of 58)  |

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Question 15B1) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and father was less than once a month.      | 33.33% (7 of 21)                                   | 51.35% (19 of 37)                                       | 44.83% (26 of 58)                                     |
| (Question 15B1) Caseworker never had visits with father.   | 9.52% (2 of 21)                                    | 21.62% (8 of 37)  | 17.24% (10 of 58)                                     |
| (Question 15B2) The typical pattern of visits between the caseworker and the father was sufficient.              | 71.43% (15 of 21)                                  | 37.84% (14 of 37)                                       | 50% (29 of 58)  |
| (Question 15D) The quality of visits between the caseworker and the father was sufficient.                       | 72.22% (13 of 18)                                  | 51.72% (15 of 29)                                       | 59.57% (28 of 47)                                     |
| (Question 15B2 and 15D) Both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with the father were sufficient. | 61.9% (13 of 21)                                   | 35.14% (13 of 37)                                       | 44.83% (26 of 58)                                     |
| Item 15 Strength Ratings   | 63.41% (26 of 41)                                  | 46% (23 of 50)  | 53.85% (49 of 91)                                     |

## Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

### Item 16: Educational Needs of the Child

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Question 16A) The agency made concerted efforts to accurately assess the children's educational needs.                    | 85.71% (36 of 42)                                  | 64.71% (11 of 17)                                       | 79.66% (47 of 59)                                     |
| (Question 16B) The agency made concerted efforts to address the children's educational needs through appropriate services. | 81.58% (31 of 38)                                  | 57.14% (8 of 14)  | 75% (39 of 52)  |
| Item 16 Strength Ratings   | 83.33% (35 of 42)                                  | 58.82% (10 of 17)                                       | 76.27% (45 of 59)                                     |

## Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

### Item 17: Physical Health of the Child

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Question 17A1) The agency accurately assessed the children's physical health care needs.  | 94% (47 of 50)                                     | 66.67% (6 of 9)   | 89.83% (53 of 59)                                     |
| (Question 17B1) The agency provided appropriate oversight of prescription medications for the physical health issues of the target child in foster care. | 81.82% (18 of 22)                                  | Not Applicable  | 81.82% (18 of 22)                                     |
| (Question 17B2) The agency ensured that appropriate services were provided to the children to address all identified physical health needs.              | 87.23% (41 of 47)                                  | 75% (6 of 8)  | 85.45% (47 of 55)                                     |
| (Question 17A2) The agency accurately assessed the children's dental health care needs.  | 93.75% (45 of 48)                                  | 75% (6 of 8)  | 91.07% (51 of 56)                                     |
| (Question 17B3) The agency ensured that appropriate services were provided to the children to address all identified dental health needs.                | 93.33% (42 of 45)                                  | 50% (3 of 6)  | 88.24% (45 of 51)                                     |
| Item 17 Strength Ratings   | 82% (41 of 50)                                     | 44.44% (4 of 9)   | 76.27% (45 of 59)                                     |

### Item 18: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

| Practice Description   | Foster Care—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | In-Home Services—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases | All Case Types—<br>Performance of<br>Applicable Cases |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Question 18A) The agency accurately assessed the children's mental/behavioral health needs.   | 90.32% (28 of 31)                                  | 71.43% (15 of 21)                                       | 82.69% (43 of 52)                                     |
| (Question 18B) The agency provided appropriate oversight of prescription medications for the mental/behavioral health issues of the target child in foster care. | 100% (15 of 15)                                    | Not Applicable  | 100% (15 of 15)                                       |

| <b>Practice Description</b>   | <b>Foster Care—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>In-Home Services—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> | <b>All Case Types—<br/>Performance of<br/>Applicable Cases</b> |
|---|---|--|--|
| (Question 18C) The agency ensured that appropriate services were provided to the children to address all identified mental/behavioral health needs. | 67.74% (21 of 31)   | 52.63% (10 of 19)  | 62% (31 of 50)   |
| Item 18 Strength Ratings  | 67.74% (21 of 31)   | 47.62% (10 of 21)  | 59.62% (31 of 52)  |