



Child and Family Services Reviews

South Carolina

Final Report

2017



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

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Final Report: South Carolina Child and Family Services Review

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of South Carolina. The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually 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 Children's Bureau, 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 South Carolina are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) and submitted to the Children's Bureau on January 31, 2017. 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 results of case reviews of 100 cases (40 foster care and 60 in-home) conducted via a State Conducted Case Review process at Greenville, Pickens, York, Fairfield, Berkeley, Jasper, Horry, Chesterfield, Aiken, and Newberry Counties, South Carolina, between April 1, 2017, and September 30, 2017.
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Attorneys for the agency
 - Attorneys for parents
 - Child welfare agency senior managers and program managers
 - Child welfare agency caseworkers and supervisors
 - Foster and adoptive parents
 - Guardians ad litem
 - Independent living staff
 - Judges
 - Parents
 - Private agency licensing staff

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- Public agency licensing staff
- Relative caregivers
- Representatives from other public agencies
- Representatives from agency staff who monitor group homes
- Service providers
- State licensed/approved child care facility staff
- Statewide assessment and CFSP/APSR authors
- Training staff and external training partners
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, the Children’s Bureau suspended the use of the state’s performance on the national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. For contextual information, Appendix A of this report shows the state’s performance on the 7 data indicators. Moving forward, the Children’s Bureau will refer to the national standards as “national performance.” This national performance represents the performance of the nation on the statewide data indicators for an earlier point in time. For the time periods used to calculate the national performance for each indicator, see 80 Fed. Reg. 27263 (May 13, 2015).

Background Information

The Round 3 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.

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.

The Children’s Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. As such, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides

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tables presenting South Carolina's overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about South Carolina's performance in Round 2.

I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

South Carolina 2017 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

None of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity.

The following 1 of the 7 systemic factors was found to be in substantial conformity:

- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Children's Bureau Comments on South Carolina Performance

The following are the Children's Bureau's observations about cross-cutting issues and South Carolina's overall performance:

In October 2016, the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) entered into a settlement agreement in the *Michelle H. v. Haley* class action lawsuit. The lawsuit was filed in federal court in 2015 due to systemic and practice concerns in the state's foster care system, including but not limited to a lack of appropriate placement resources; placement instability; overdue child abuse and neglect investigations; high caseloads; and failure to provide medical, dental, and mental health care to foster children. Since the lawsuit was filed, DSS engaged in collaborative partnerships with internal and external stakeholders to address the identified concerns. DSS is also developing and implementing a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process that will further support changes made in systems and practices. The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) took place in 2017 in the midst of the DSS's planning, developing, and implementing requirements of the settlement agreement.

Whereas the *Michelle H. v. Haley* Settlement Agreement is focused primarily on the foster care population, the CFSR case record review process includes both the foster care and in-home services populations. At the time of the review, approximately 60% of the open cases in South Carolina were in-home services cases, and the ratio of foster care versus in-home cases in the 100-case review sample reflects this statewide distribution. Aggregate results show that there was stronger performance for foster care cases than in-home cases across all outcome and practice areas. This is a significant finding since most families being served in South Carolina are through in-home services, and these cases showed poorer outcomes across all safety and well-being outcomes.

Case review findings indicate that one of the strongest performing items was related to initiating investigations of child maltreatment reports on a timely basis. DSS struggled in all other safety practice areas, including initial and ongoing assessments of safety/risk concerns in the families and developing and monitoring safety plans to address identified safety concerns. As in other outcome areas, foster care cases fared better than in-home services cases. In 2012, DSS began implementation of a safety practice matrix,

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Signs of Safety, which was utilized to “support the Department’s appropriate response strategy, and to provide a clear understanding of the concepts of protective capacities, child vulnerabilities, safety threats, and risks.” The Children’s Bureau recommends that DSS evaluate implementation of this matrix in addition to continuing to develop its practice model to ensure that safety practices can be strengthened to better support the safety, permanency, and well-being of families.

Case review results show that for foster care cases, placement stability was one of the higher performing practice areas. Half of the children in the case sample had one continuous placement during the period under review, with only 6 of the 40 children in a group care setting, and 95% of the placements were assessed to be stable. In contrast, DSS did not establish timely and appropriate permanency goals in approximately half of the applicable cases and in fewer than half of the applicable cases, DSS and courts did not make concerted efforts to achieve permanency. Of all established goals, some of which were concurrent, the goal of adoption was the most difficult for the agency and courts to achieve; only 1 of the 13 applicable cases with a goal of adoption was rated as a Strength. The Children’s Bureau encourages DSS and the courts to continue to work collaboratively to address the challenges and barriers to timely and appropriate permanency for children in foster care.

Key cross-cutting practices that DSS will need to strengthen are engagement of family members and frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and parents. In many cases, there was an overall lack of frequent and quality caseworker visits. The state should conduct further analyses to determine the impact of caseworker visits on other practice areas, such as safety assessment and planning, assessment of needs, service provision, and engagement in case planning. Strong engagement of families positively affects the agency’s capacity to develop, implement, and monitor safety plans; ensure timely and appropriate permanency; preserve connections; and ensure that individualized services are provided to families. These were all areas that were the lowest performing for South Carolina, and DSS should engage key stakeholders, such as parents, youth, and caregivers, in developing strategies to enhance engagement.

A key systemic factor that affected both the foster care and in-home services cases is Service Array. Although there is an adequate array of services in the state, many of these services are not accessible in certain jurisdictions, especially in the rural areas. When services are not accessible to children and families, services cannot be individualized to meet their identified needs, which may result in a child or family being provided with generalized services that are available in the community rather than services that are truly individualized to the needs of the child or family. This challenge is compounded for parents who may have difficulty paying for their own services. Services these parents can afford may not necessarily be the services they need to truly keep their children safe in their own homes. CFSR results show that Item 12: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents, is the lowest performing item for the state, with the sub-item that examines assessment and service provision for parents being the lowest. Also, results show that the practice of assessing the needs of children and parents is better than the practice of providing them with needed services for all Well-Being items, for both case types. Further analysis will need to be conducted to determine what specific issues affected service provision to families, and DSS will need to continue its work with stakeholders to enhance the accessibility and individualization of services for all children and families served in the state.

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Last but not least, stakeholder interviews and case review findings highlighted significant workforce concerns, including insufficient training of staff, high turnover, and high caseloads. In the cases reviewed, high turnover of workers affected the safety of children and families, resulted in disjointed and inconsistent family engagement/case planning, and delayed service provision. The state has identified workforce as an area of focus in the *Michelle H. v. Haley* Settlement Agreement; the Children's Bureau supports DSS' efforts to continue working on this issue to ensure a well-trained and stabilized workforce. The Children's Bureau also recommends that DSS continue to develop and enhance its infrastructure and leadership capacity to seamlessly integrate and implement multiple initiatives in the state. With stable leadership, effective engagement and partnering with stakeholders, and a functioning CQI process, DSS will be poised to make improvements in South Carolina's child welfare system.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. South Carolina provides an alternative/differential response to, in addition to a traditional investigation of, incoming reports of child maltreatment or children in need of services. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care, in-home, and in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to DSS. The state is encouraged to conduct additional item-specific analysis of the case review findings to better understand areas of practice that are associated with positive outcomes and those that need improvement.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Item 1.

State Outcome Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 73% of the 48 applicable cases reviewed.

Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes.

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State policy requires that all reports of alleged child maltreatment be initiated within 24 hours of the agency accepting the report. Reports indicating immediate present danger must be initiated within 2 hours. All other reports must be initiated within 24 hours. South Carolina defines initiation of a report of child maltreatment as face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim and/or parent or guardian.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 73% of the 48 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Safety statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

State Outcome Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 33% of the 100 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 48% of the 40 foster care cases, 24% of the 51 in-home services cases, and 22% of the 9 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance

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

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 58% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 70% of the 20 applicable foster care cases, 45% of the 20 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 0 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 33% of the 100 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 48% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 24% of the 51 applicable in-home services cases, and 22% of the 9 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6.

State Outcome Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 28% of the 40 applicable cases reviewed.

Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 70% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 56% of the 39 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 6. Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 43% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the Permanency statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

State Outcome Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 41% of the 39 applicable cases reviewed.

Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 7. Placement With Siblings

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 67% of the 18 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,¹ and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 50% of the 24 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 50% of the 10 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

¹ For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

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- In 50% of the 18 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 63% of the 8 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

Item 9. Preserving Connections

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 38% of the 32 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 10. Relative Placement

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 50% of the 38 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father² or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 33% of the 18 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 35% of the 17 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 29% of the 7 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

² For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

State Outcome Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 18% of the 100 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 30% of the 40 foster care cases, 10% of the 51 in-home services cases, and 11% of the 9 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance

Item 12. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents,³ and foster parents (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 18% of the 100 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 30% of the 40 foster care cases, 10% of the 51 in-home services cases, and 11% of the 9 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

Sub-Item 12A. Needs Assessment and Services to Children

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 49% of the 100 cases were rated as a Strength.

³ For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

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- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 55% of the 40 foster care cases, 47% of the 51 in-home services cases, and 33% of the 9 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Sub-Item 12B. Needs Assessment and Services to Parents

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 16% of the 88 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 18% of the 28 applicable foster care cases, 16% of the 51 applicable in-home services cases, and 11% of the 9 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 29% of the 85 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 22% of the 79 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

Sub-Item 12C. Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 66% of the 35 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents⁴ and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 30% of the 94 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 41% of the 34 applicable foster care cases, 18% of the 51 applicable in-home services cases, and 56% of the 9 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 53% of the 62 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 41% of the 83 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 32% of the 66 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

⁴ For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

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Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 54% of the 100 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 65% of the 40 foster care cases, 49% of the 51 in-home services cases, and 33% of the 9 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers⁵ of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 25% of the 87 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 30% of the 27 applicable foster care cases, 20% of the 51 applicable in-home services cases, and 44% of the 9 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 33% of the 83 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 23% of the 65 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Item 16.

State Outcome Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

⁵ For Item 15, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

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The outcome was substantially achieved in 68% of the 41 applicable cases reviewed.

Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 68% of the 41 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 81% of the 31 applicable foster care cases, 25% of the 8 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 2 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 using the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

State Outcome Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 39% of the 88 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 43% of the 40 applicable foster care cases, 37% of the 41 applicable in-home services cases, and 29% of the 7 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance

Item 17. Physical Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 64% of the 73 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 68% of the 40 foster care cases, 62% of the 29 applicable in-home services cases, and 50% of the 4 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 25% of the 59 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 41% of the 29 applicable foster care cases, 12% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases, and 0% of the 5 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

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 and a description of how the rating was determined. The CFSR relies upon a review of information contained in the statewide assessment to assess each item. If an item rating cannot be determined from the information contained in the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau conducts stakeholder interviews and considers information gathered through the interviews in determining ratings for each item.

Statewide Information System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 19.

State Systemic Factor Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Statewide Information System Item Performance

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

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- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders did not demonstrate that the statewide information system, the Child and Adult Protective Services System (CAPSS), can readily identify the four required data elements. Although state policy requires that data be entered into the system within 30 days, CAPSS has alerts and ticklers for some of the data elements, and managers reported using various reports to monitor data entry, stakeholders' information was inconsistent regarding the timeliness and accuracy of data especially on an ongoing basis. Stakeholders said that large caseloads, unavailability of CAPSS at times, and lack of sufficient CAPSS training were barriers to accurate and timely data entry.

Case Review System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

State Systemic Factor Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Two of the 5 items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Case Review System Item Performance

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data in the statewide assessment showed that the state is not effectively ensuring that parents are engaged in the development of case plans. Stakeholders confirmed that parent engagement varies across the state, and is not inclusive of all family members, especially fathers. The state has implemented Family Team Meetings and Family Group Conferencing as tools of engagement, but they are not available statewide. Stakeholders also said that case plans are generic and not individualized to meet the family's specific needs.

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

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- Data and information in the statewide assessment showed that most periodic reviews are held timely. Periodic reviews are conducted every 6 months by the foster care review board. Stakeholders confirmed that a majority of all initial and subsequent reviews are held timely.

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that permanency hearings occur every 9 months. South Carolina provided data showing that initial and ongoing permanency hearings were held timely for most of the children in foster care. Stakeholders confirmed that permanency hearings are occurring timely for all children in foster care across the state.

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment. South Carolina agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Data and information in the statewide assessment showed that the filings of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings are not occurring as required consistently across the state. The state did not provide barriers or challenges to timely filing of TPR petitions.

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.

- South Carolina 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 and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state has a process in place to provide notice of hearings, which includes language regarding the right to be heard. However, data in the

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statewide assessment showed that less than half of foster parents surveyed reported always or usually being notified of hearings.

Quality Assurance System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 25.

State Systemic Factor Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as Area Needing Improvement.

Quality Assurance System Item Performance

Item 25. Quality Assurance System

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) 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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state's quality assurance system is not functioning effectively statewide. Although the state has a statewide case record review process that evaluates the quality of services provided to children and families, the process does not have a feedback loop focused on program improvement. Additionally, the state does not have a process to share data with both internal and external stakeholders and to engage them effectively in continuous quality improvement activities.

Staff and Provider Training

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

State Systemic Factor Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

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Staff and Provider Training Item Performance

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although the state has a training certification system in place to train new staff, case managers are required to carry caseloads before they complete initial training. There are also concerns about the quality of the training and its effectiveness in preparing staff with the skills and knowledge required for their positions. The state does not track training for private agencies.

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 staff⁶ that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews showed that the state's staff and provider training system does not have a process in place for tracking ongoing training for case managers, supervisors, and contracted providers. There is no formalized mechanism to identify individual training needs. The state was not able to provide data regarding the effectiveness of training, and stakeholder feedback was mixed as to the effectiveness of the training in meeting the ongoing needs of staff.

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.

⁶ "Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.

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- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although initial and ongoing training requirements are in place for foster and adoptive parents and approved facilities staff, the state does not have a tracking mechanism to ensure that training requirements are met. Stakeholders reported that the training may not adequately prepare foster and adoptive parents with sufficient skills and knowledge to fulfill their roles. Trainings on caring for children with special needs, children ages 0-5, older youth, and those children who identify themselves as LGBTQ were identified as needed.

Service Array and Resource Development

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

State Systemic Factor Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although the state has an adequate array of services, there were significant differences between the services offered in the metro areas and those available within the rural areas of the state. There were gaps and waitlists for transportation, mental health services, domestic violence services, housing for youth transitioning out of care, independent living services, services for children and parents who have special needs, services to families providing kinship care services, substance abuse services, and services for families whose first language is not English. Some stakeholders also noted that in different parts of the state, parents may have difficulty accessing services due to payment issues, which affected their abilities to safely maintain their children in their homes or to work toward reunification.

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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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and gathered during interviews with stakeholders showed challenges in providing individualized services across the state due to a lack of available resources. Limited access to some services results in generic case plans that do not meet the unique needs of families. Families are referred to services that are available rather than services that are needed.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

State Systemic Factor Performance

South Carolina is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance

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 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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that the state engages with numerous stakeholder groups to discuss and develop the state's strategic plan. Stakeholders confirmed that they attend stakeholder meetings and have the opportunity to provide input.

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.

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- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed challenges in coordinating with other federal programs. With the exception of Medicaid, the state was unable to provide data or information to demonstrate its efforts to coordinate with other federally funded programs. Stakeholders provided inconsistent information regarding such coordination.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

State Systemic Factor Performance

South Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Two of the four items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Item Performance

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state is ensuring that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster homes and child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. Monitoring processes are in place to ensure that standards are being met.

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

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- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state complies with federal requirements for criminal background checks. The state has a case planning process in place that functions statewide to address any criminal history concerns to ensure the safety of children in foster care. Stakeholders confirmed that the state monitors compliance with the process.

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state does not have a process in place to ensure that diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive parents that reflects racial and ethnic diversity of children in foster care is occurring statewide.

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.

- South Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment. South Carolina agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that there is not an effective process in place to utilize cross-jurisdictional resources to support the permanent placement of waiting children. The state does not track the timeliness of completion of foster or adoptive home studies requested by other states.

Appendix A

Summary of South Carolina 2017 Child and Family Services Review Performance

I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items

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.

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1 Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	73% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	73% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 2 Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	33% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	58% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	33% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of South Carolina 2017 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	28% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	70% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	56% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	43% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2 The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	41% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	67% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	38% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	50% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	33% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of South Carolina 2017 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1 Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	18% Substantially Achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	18% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	49% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	16% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	66% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	30% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	54% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	25% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	68% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	68% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of South Carolina 2017 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	39% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	64% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	25% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children’s Bureau 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 Children’s Bureau 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 Children’s Bureau 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 Children’s Bureau must find that the item is functioning as required.

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of South Carolina 2017 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 26 Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of South Carolina 2017 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28 Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Service Array and Resource Development	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 29 Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30 Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of South Carolina 2017 CFSR Performance

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

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

III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators⁷

The state's performance is considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator and provides contextual information for considering the findings. This information is not used in conformity decisions. State performance may be statistically above, below, 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 Children's Bureau did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Recurrence of maltreatment	9.1%	Lower	6.1%	5.6%–6.5%	FY14–15
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	7.64	6.08–9.60	15A–15B, FY15

⁷ In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. The syntax revision is still underway, so performance shown in this table is based on the 2015 Federal Register syntax.

Appendix A: Summary of South Carolina 2017 CFSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	Higher	59.0%	57.2%–60.8%	13B–16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	43.6%	Higher	37.1%	34.0%–40.2%	15B–16A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	24.9%	22.3%–27.7%	15B–16A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	7.8%	6.5%–9.3%	13B–16A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	6.25	6.01–6.50	15B–16A

* Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is derived from a multi-level statistical model and 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 more fair comparison of state performance against national performance.

** 95% Confidence 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 for State Performance: 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.

Appendix B

Summary of CFSR Round 2 South Carolina 2009 Key Findings

The Children’s Bureau conducted a CFSR in South Carolina in 2009. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children’s Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

Identifying Information and Review Dates

General Information
Children’s Bureau Region: 4
Date of Onsite Review: July 27–31, 2009
Period Under Review: April 1, 2008, through July 31, 2009
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: December 16, 2009
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: March 16, 2010
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: February 1, 2011

Highlights of Findings

Performance Measurements
A. The state met the national standards for three of the six standards.
B. The state achieved substantial conformity with none of the seven outcomes.
C. The state achieved substantial conformity with five of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: South Carolina 2009 CFSR Key Findings

State's Conformance With the National Standards

Data Indicator or Composite	National Standard	State's Score	Meets or Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)	94.6 or higher	97.2	Meets Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.81	Meets Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	140.4	Meets Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	91.2	Does Not Meet Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	77.0	Does Not Meet Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	74.2	Does Not Meet Standard

State's Conformance With the Outcomes

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: South Carolina 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

State's Conformance With the Systemic Factors

Systemic Factor	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Statewide Information System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Case Review System	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Quality Assurance System	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Staff and Provider Training	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Service Array and Resource Development	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Achieved Substantial Conformity
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Achieved Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: South Carolina 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Key Findings by Item

Outcomes

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	Area Needing Improvement
Item 2. Repeat Maltreatment	Strength
Item 3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
Item 5. Foster Care Re-entries	Area Needing Improvement
Item 6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 7. Permanency Goal for Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives	Area Needing Improvement
Item 9. Adoption	Area Needing Improvement
Item 10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	Strength
Item 12. Placement With Siblings	Area Needing Improvement
Item 13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 14. Preserving Connections	Area Needing Improvement
Item 15. Relative Placement	Area Needing Improvement
Item 16. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	Area Needing Improvement
Item 17. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster	Area Needing Improvement
Item 18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	Area Needing Improvement
Item 19. Caseworker Visits With Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 20. Caseworker Visits With Parents	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: South Carolina 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 21. Educational Needs of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 22. Physical Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement
Item 23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement

Systemic Factors

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 24. Statewide Information System	Strength
Item 25. Written Case Plan	Area Needing Improvement
Item 26. Periodic Reviews	Strength
Item 27. Permanency Hearings	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
Item 29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services	Strength
Item 31. Quality Assurance System	Strength
Item 32. Initial Staff Training	Strength
Item 33. Ongoing Staff Training	Strength
Item 34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
Item 35. Array of Services	Strength
Item 36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement
Item 37. Individualizing Services	Area Needing Improvement
Item 38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength
Item 39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
Item 40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength
Item 41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength

Appendix B: South Carolina 2009 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 42. Standards Applied Equally	Strength
Item 43. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Strength
Item 44. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	Area Needing Improvement
Item 45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Strength