New Mexico
Children, Youth and Families Department

Child and Family Services Review
Round 4
Statewide Assessment

Submitted: 07-31-2024

Minor formatting adjustments may have been made to this document for 508 compliance. Content is unaffected.

Table of Contents

Section I: General Information 3
List of Statewide Assessment Participants 4
Stakeholder Engagement 6
Section II: States Vision and Organizational Structure 9
Part 1: Vision and Tenets 9
Part 2: Cross-System Challenges 9
Part 3: Current Initiatives 15
Section III: Assessment of Safety, Permanency, and Well-being Outcomes 18
A. Safety 18
Safety Outcome 1 20
Safety Outcome 2 24
B. Permanency 32
Permanency Outcome 1 32
Permanency Outcome 2 34
C. Wellbeing ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Well-Being Outcome 1 37
Well-Being Outcome 2 49
Well-Being Outcome 3 50
Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factor Functioning 52
A. Statewide Information System 52
B. Case Review System 55
C. Quality Assurance System 72
D. Staff and Provider Training 77
E. Service Array and Resource Development 92
F. Agency Responsiveness to the Community 109
G. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention 118
Appendix A: State Data Profile 127
Appendix B: Stakeholder Feedback Reports 128

Section I: General Information

New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department State Child Welfare Contact Person(s) for the Statewide Assessment:

Milissa Soto
Deputy Director of Office of Performance and Accountability
1120 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe, NM 87501
505-257-8759
Milissa.Soto@cyfd.nm.gov

Noah Brooks
Federal Reporting Coordinator
4501 Indian School Rd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110
505-934-6918
Noah.Brooks@cyfd.nm.gov

List of Statewide Assessment Participants

Provide the names and affiliations of the individuals who participated in the statewide assessment process and identify their roles in the process. Identify individuals with lived experience by including an asterisk (*) after their name.

Name	**Affiliation**	**Role in Statewide Assessment Process**
Noah Brooks	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing/Analysis /Review
Milissa Soto	CYFD/CPS	Core Team Lead/ Writing/Analysis/Review
Sarah Meadows	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing/Analysis /Review
Edie Lewis	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing/Analysis /Review
Brittany Trujillo	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing/Analysis
Heather Carrica	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Esperanza Saiz	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Colinda Vallo	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Grace Nailor	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Kenneth Sidenblad	CYFD/CPS	Information
Christiana Sisneros	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Doug Parson	CASA	Information
Ashley Anaya	UNM Hospital	Information
Kimberly Lucero	Las Cumbres Community Services	Information
Alexis Cdebaca	CYFD/CPS	Information
Ashley O'Bryan	Center for States	Review/Guidance
Kay Massler	Center for States	Review/Guidance
Nancy Morales	Center for States	Review/Guidance
Donalyn Sarracino	CYFD/CPS	Information
Scott Patterson-Alatorre	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Coy Maienza	CYFD/CPS	Information
Sonia Valdez	CYFD/CPS	Information
Reyna Griego	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing/Review
Jan Trujillo	CYFD/CPS	Information
Jami Smith	CYFD/CPS	Information
Cantrell Mosley	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Marianne Hernandez	CYFD/CPS	Information
Jennifer Earp-Archuletta	CYFD/CPS	Information
Alison Paulk	Court Improvement Project	Information/Writing
Karla Young	Contractor	Interviews/Writing
Susan Garcia	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing

Nora Romo	Contractor	Interviews/Writing
Lindsey Davis	CYFD/CPS	Information
Emizael Cordova	CYFD/CPS	Information/Analysis
Veronica Barraza-Lopez	CYFD/CPS	Information/Analysis
David Guzman	CYFD/CPS	Information/Analysis
John “Maxwell” Jacques	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Tricia Fierro	CYFD/CPS	Information
Celestina Garcia	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Anthony Beltran	CYFD/CPS	Information
Brenda Rygg	CYFD/CPS	Information
Larry Lovato	CYFD/CPS	Information
David River	CYFD/CPS	Information/Writing
Sarah Rael	CYFD/CPS	Information
Kathy Luker	CYFD/CPS	Information
Nathalie Daniel	CYFD/CPS	Information/Analysis
Crystil Rosas	CYFD/CPS	Information
Laura Abeyta	CYFD/CPS	Information
Jason Argo	CYFD/CPS	Information
Bernadette Zajac	CYFD/CPS	Information
Serra Dittel Payne	CYFD/CPS	Information
30 Parents*	Lived Experience	Information/Surveyed
30 Resource Parents*	Lived Experience	Information/Surveyed
30 Youth*	Lived Experience	Information/Surveyed
Dona Ana Community Meeting (31 participants)	Community Providers including law enforcement, behavioral health, CASA, and Housing providers.	Information
Bernalillo Community Meetings (40 participants)	Community Providers including behavioral health, foster parents, former foster youth.	Information
McKinley Community Meeting (16 Participants)	Community Providers including Resource Families, Youth with lived experience, CYFD staff members	Information
Beth Gillia	OFRA	Information
Cynthia Aragon	CYFD/CPS	Information
Kelly O’Neill	CYFD/CPS	Information
Brandon Cline	CYFD/CPS	Information

Stakeholder Engagement

Describe how child welfare leadership and staff from all levels of the agency, families and youth, the legal and judicial communities, Tribes, and other key partners and stakeholders were actively engaged in the assessment of the state child welfare system.

Children's Law Institute Conference 2024

The Children's Law Institute (CLI) is a statewide, multidisciplinary conference that brings over 1,000 various professionals together in a unique learning environment focused on improving the health, safety and well-being of the children and families who are involved in- or who are at risk of becoming involved in- state or tribal child welfare or juvenile justice systems in New Mexico. The CLI is organized in a multi-agency collaboration led by the Children's Court Improvement Commission of the New Mexico Supreme Court and is sponsored by the Center of Innovation at New Mexico State University, the NM Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD) Protective Service and Juvenile Justice Divisions, the UNM Corinne Wolfe Center for Child and Family Justice, the Rozier E. Sanchez Judicial Education Center, NM CASA and a number of community organizations.

During the opening remarks, a 45-minute presentation on the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) was given by Christine Kiesel, Esq. from the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) to the reported 931 in-person audience. Two workshops, led by Milissa Soto, Deputy Director of the Office of Performance of Accountability and Edith Lewis, CFSR Quality Assurance Manager, presented on *Round Four CFSR in New Mexico* the subsequent day. Each workshop had a duration of one hour and thirty minutes. A 30-minute Q&A was held after the workshop presentation allowing stakeholders to inquire more about the CFSR process. Those in attendance were provided the opportunity to sign up and participate in Children and Family Service Review Workgroups.

Children and Family Service Review (CFSR) Workgroups

In preparation for the upcoming Child and Family Services Reviews, CYFD put together teams consisting of a variety of stakeholders, including service providers and medical personnel; judges; attorneys (Guardian ad Litems, youth attorneys, and respondent attorneys); youth with lived experience; CYFD subject matter experts; Pueblos, Tribes, and Nations; and many others to gather input on safety, permanency and wellbeing outcomes, in addition to the seven systemic factors. The purpose of these diverse teams was to obtain a multitude of perspectives on how the child welfare system is functioning statewide for each item in the CFSR.

Since there were 36 items to be evaluated, workgroups were created to focus on specific items. In total there were seven CFSR workgroups: a Core Advisory Team, Safety Team, Permanency and Wellbeing Team, Judicial and Court Team, Staff and Resource Parent Training Team, Service Array and Community Team, and Licensing, Retention and Recruitment Team. Each team met about every two weeks for two months for two hours. Teams were able to review the available data and helped identify where there were gaps in the data.

Community Meetings

In recent months, the agency held community meetings were held in different counties around the state with a virtual Teams meeting available for those unable to attend in person. Two community meetings were held in Bernalillo County on two separate dates, for two hours. Dona Ana County and McKinley County each had one community meeting for two hours. A community meeting was also held on Isleta Pueblo and had participation from multiple Nations, Pueblos and Tribes. During these meetings, an overview of the Child and Families Services Review was provided as well as an overview of the recent re-organization of the department. A Q&A portion of the meeting was held at the end where stakeholders were asked questions about different CFSR items for feedback. While these questions were related to CFSR, the Q&A sessions were mostly unstructured to allow stakeholders candid discussions about the child welfare system and follow up questions related to the topics the audience wanted to discuss.

Stakeholder Surveys

In preparation for the upcoming Child and Family Services Reviews, CYFD contracted to conduct individual stakeholder interviews with key groups with lived experience within the child welfare system. Those key groups included parents, caregivers, resource parents, and youth with lived experience.

The interview template was developed in collaboration with Milissa Soto, Deputy Director of CYFD Performance and Accountability, Ashley O'Bryan and Kay Massler from the Capacity Building Center for States, and Nora Romo, contractor reviewer. Nora Romo and Karla Young completed the individual interviews and surveys. Four of the resource parents interviewed were Spanish-speaking and Yolanda Castro de Esquibel conducted these interviews with Karla Young. The survey development, data analysis and report were completed by Karla Young, contractor.

Attempts were made to survey 203 parents, guardians, or caregivers statewide who received services by the agency during the period under review (April 1, 2023 – April 1, 2024), a total of 30 parents, guardians, or caregivers participated in the interview. Of the 30 respondents, 19 were mothers, 10 were fathers, and 1 was a stepmother.

Attempts were made to contact 116 youth, statewide, who met criteria established for interview. 86 of the youth were dropped from the sample for a variety of reasons. Of those dropped from the sample, 58 declined to participate in the process. The remaining 28 youth were dropped after at least three attempts to contact were unsuccessful, the youth was on runaway status and there was no contact information, and in some cases a good phone number could not be identified. A total of 30 youth participated in the stakeholder interview.

Attempts were made to research and/or contact 89 resource parents, statewide, who met criteria established for interview. 41 of the of the potential interviewees were dropped from the sample for a variety of reasons. These reasons included interviewees who could not be reached after three attempts to contact, declined to participate, the resource parents were already interviewed in relation to a different target child, or contact information could not be obtained through

FACTS or BINTI databases. The remaining 18 resource parents were researched but the sample was completed before they were contacted for interview. A total of 30 resource parents participated in the stakeholder interview. In addition, one resource parent called after the review was complete and wanted to participate. Her comments are included in this report, but not in the overall data.

Attempts were made to survey ~1,200 currently employed staff and supervisors/managers from Protective Services Division (PSD), Family Services Division (FSD), Behavioral Health Division (BHD), and supporting offices within CYFD such as the Office of Performance and Accountability, and Office of Tribal Affairs. Of the 323 total responses collected, 195 responses identified themselves as staff members and 128 responses identified themselves as a Supervisor/Manager. Three $25 gift cards were raffled to respondents of the survey to incentivize participation.

Challenges

There were several challenges in engaging stakeholders in the different stakeholder meetings and surveys listed above. One significant barrier is the time commitment required, as many stakeholders have demanding schedules that conflicted with the proposed meeting times or made it difficult to attend the lengthy sessions. The agency made efforts to reduce those barriers by informing stakeholders if they were unable to meet during the proposed time but still wanted to contribute, they could elect to meet individually, either in person, by phone, email, or virtually to provide feedback. No stakeholder elected to do this. Additionally, the lack of compensation for individuals with lived experience often discouraged involvement, as those stakeholders voiced, they did not feel adequately incentivized to participate.

Providing food and beverage, which could enhance attendance and engagement is another logistical challenge that was constrained by budget limitation. Often, the food and beverage provided at these events was bought using personal funds from CYFD leadership. The $25 gift cards to incentivize staff to participate in the staff survey were either bought with personal funds by CYFD leadership or donated by their family members.

The absence of effective polling software hindered our ability to gather real-time feedback and insights during the meetings, reducing the overall interactive experience. Finally, the general lack of interest in many agenda items led to diminished enthusiasm in some groups and possibly lower attendance rates.

Section II: States Vision and Organizational Structure

Part 1: Vision and Tenets

Briefly describe the vision and core tenets of the state child welfare system (i.e., primary programs, including title IV-E prevention programs, as applicable; practice model; structure and approach to drive change) that are designed to produce desired child welfare outcomes and the routine statewide functioning of systemic factors.

Vision

A New Mexico where all children, youth and families are healthy, safe, thriving and strengthened by their culture and community.

Mission

- Nurture the strength and resilience of families.
- Partner with children, families and communities based on trust and transparency.
- Serve by listening and learning from our diverse cultures to keep children, youth and families healthy, safe and thriving.

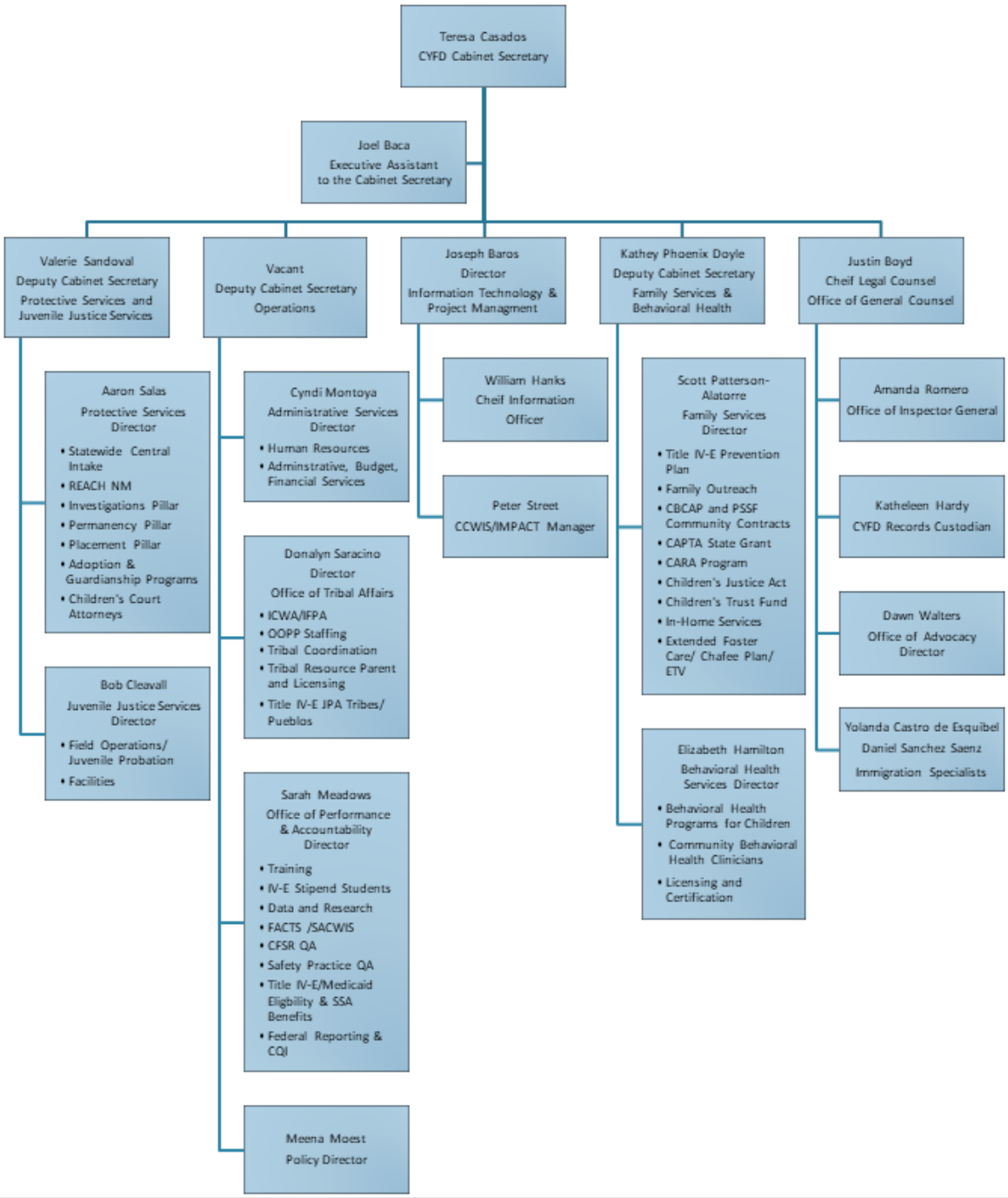
Part 2: Cross-System Challenges

Briefly describe cross-cutting issues not specifically addressed in other sections of the statewide assessment that affect the system's programs, practice, and performance (e.g., legislation, budget reductions, community conditions, consent decrees, staff turnover and workload).

Children, Youth and Families Department Re-Organization

In 2023, New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) began a comprehensive re-organization for the entire department. Some of the most notable changes include the creation of the Family Services Division, which will be discussed in further detail under the current initiatives section and changing management structures throughout the department. See the organizational chart below for the current organizational structure.

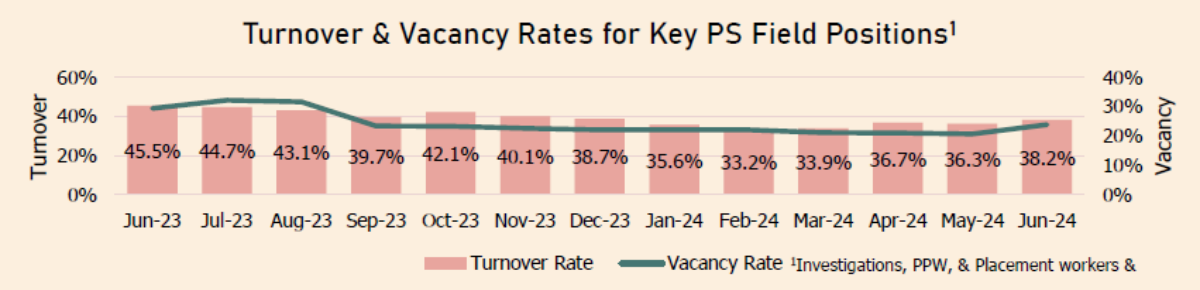
<Chart on Next Page>



As is likely to occur with any significant organizational change, there have been some challenges in implementing the reorganization. The Protective Services Division, in an effort to ensure that managers and leaders at all levels have the expertise and knowledge to provide support to staff, has created ”pillars” of practice, meaning that not only are field staff specialized according to their job title, but their supervisors, managers, and deputy directors are as well. The intent is to ensure consistency and accountability statewide. This has led to the need for increased travel for managers and deputies, and mixed reactions among staff, and CYFD will continue to monitor outcomes to understand the impact of this change.

Retention of Key Staff

Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) continues to struggle with staff turnover agency wide but recognizes turnover in key staff positions—such as investigators, permanency coordinators and placement staff—correlates with less desirable outcomes for families and children. According to data provided by Protective Services (PS) human resources, the turnover rate per month is consistently over 33.2% per month for the last year, peaking in June 2023 at 45.5%.



The vacancy rate in these positions has consistently been between 20-30% for these key field positions. These turnover and vacancy rates contribute considerably to the quality of services provided by the agency. Common feedback from stakeholders provided to the agency is when the worker interacting with the family is consistent, families typically have positive feedback about their interactions with the agency. When families experience high turnover with their workers, feedback has been mostly negative pertaining to lack of communication, not knowing what is expected from them or getting answers for questions they may have.

Staff have the option to participate in an exit interview upon resigning from their position. During the interview, they may opt not to answer any questions or terminate the interview at any time. The average exit interview is between 30-60 minutes. In CY23, 55 exit interviews were conducted consisting of staff statewide; 67% were from Protective Services Division, Behavioral Health Division, Office of the Secretary and Juvenile Justice Division. When individuals were asked about their main reason for leaving the agency, they reported the following:

<Chart on Next Page>

Lack of support from leadership	**19%**
Overworked/workload	8%
New Opportunity	8%
Too many cases/backlog	7%
Mental Health	7%
Personal Reasons	5%
Burn out	4%
Underpaid	4%
Not feeling valued	4%
Environment/Structure of the department/agency	4%
Moving	4%
Due to supervisor	3%
Lack of communication	3%
Work-life balance	3%
Travel requirement in position	3%
Recent Changes	1%
Unfair treatment	1%
Lack of incentive to pursue licensure	1%
No room for growth	1%
Fatality Calls Weigh Heavy on the Heart	1%
Lack of safety	1%
No guidance	1%
On Call	1%
Chaotic Work Environment	1%
Lack of Procedures	1%
Overwhelmed	1%
Retirement	1%

CY23 Exit Interview Data – Workforce Development Bureau

Participants were asked to share their suggestions for improving retention based on their experience. The recommendations were categorized into two groups: tactical solutions and cultural changes. Tactical solutions are changes that can be implemented through processes or initiatives by the agency, while cultural changes refer to recommendations related to the environment and culture of the agency.

Tactical:

- Better reporting system for addressing issues
- Establishing a first responders'' team for on-call positions
- Providing counseling services to staff, especially after they have experienced a traumatic event while working
- Offering more hands-on training
- Offering hybrid schedules
- Providing clearer directions and job descriptions

- Allow units to have downtime or a personal day once a month
- Ensure better time management from leadership to avoid unnecessary overtime
- Ensure compensation for overtime work
- Hold regular meetings to encourage communication between staff and leadership

Cultural:

- Building trust and fostering better employee/supervisor relationships
- Foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork among units
- Creating an environment to gain experience

Insights and Recommendations:

When asked if any measures could have prevented their departure from the agency, 43% of individuals did not explicitly attribute their departure to burnout and possible changes. However, their experiences suggest that burnout was a contributor. For example, they did not identify burnout (question 1) as the primary reason for leaving. However, they provided examples of burnout risk factors throughout the exit interview involving lack of support, heavy workloads, or lack of direction. These findings show that burnout is a significant risk factor for employee turnover.

To improve retention within CYFD, the following recommendations are being made:

1. **Address Workload Fairness**: Implement transparent workload allocation systems to ensure equitable distribution of tasks among employees.
2. **Enhance Support for Work-Life Balance**: Offer flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies. Provide resources for stress management and promote a healthy work-life balance culture.
3. **Invest in Self-Care Initiatives**: Emphasize the importance of self-care through workshops, training sessions, and wellness programs. Promote resources such as counseling services and mindfulness practices.
4. **Improve Working Conditions**: Enhance the physical work environment, safety measures, and address concerns related to personal safety, facilities, and equipment.
5. **Foster a Positive Organizational Culture**: Create a supportive and inclusive culture through team-building activities, recognition programs, and leadership training.
6. **Invest in Training and Development**: Continue investing in employee training and development programs. Offer opportunities for skill enhancement, cross-training, and career advancement.
7. **Address Compensation and Benefits**: Ensure competitive and equitable compensation based on industry standards and performance. Review and enhance benefits packages based on employee feedback and changing needs.
8. **Enhance Leadership Support**: Provide leadership training programs to cultivate supportive and effective leaders. Encourage regular communication and feedback channels between leadership and employees.
9. **Manage Workloads Effectively**: Conduct workload assessments and implement workload distribution and management strategies to prevent burnout.

10. **Prioritize Mental Health and Well-being**: Implement initiatives to promote mental health awareness, resilience-building, and stress management techniques.
11. **Improve Communication and Transparency**: Foster open and transparent communication channels to inform employees about organizational changes and policies.
12. **Create Opportunities for Employee Recognition and Engagement**: Establish formal recognition programs and encourage peer-to-peer recognition to foster morale within the workplace.

By addressing these key areas and implementing the recommended strategies, CYFD can create a more supportive, inclusive and rewarding work environment that promotes employee retention and satisfaction. Regularly soliciting employee feedback and adapting strategies based on their needs and preferences can contribute to a positive workplace culture and long-term retention efforts.

Kevin S. Settlement Agreement and Corrective Action Plan

The purpose of this agreement was to set forth a plan and process for CYFD and Human Services Department (HSD), now the Health Care Authority (HCA) as of July 1, 2024, to improve the current system of care so that it is trauma-responsive and compliant with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution; the Medicaid Act's Early and Periodic Screening Diagnostic and Treatment Services (EPSDT) and Reasonable Promptness Provisions (42 U.S.C. § 1396 et seq.); and the Indian Child Welfare Act (25 U.S.C. § 1915(a) & (b)).

The Final Settlement Agreement (FSA, also referred to as "Agreement") is organized into five sections. The first section states the goals of the Agreement state the goals and provides a guiding focus on the desired outcomes of the reform. It summarizes the purpose and objectives; provides definitions of terms; and outlines processes, including the appointment and role of the Co-Neutrals, FSA implementation, Performance Standard determinations, and reporting of performance. The remaining four sections of the Agreement are organized by the primary subject areas alleged as deficient in the Kevin S. complaint (codified as Appendices). The four section are the following:

- Appendix A, titled *Trauma-Responsive System of Care*, requires CYFD and HSD to make good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress toward the development and support of a trauma-responsive system of care for all children in state custody.
- Appendix B, titled *Least-Restrictive and Appropriate Placements*, requires CYFD and HSD to make good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress toward the development of a system for placing children in out-of-home care in stable, safe, appropriate, community-based placements in the least-restrictive environment.
- Appendix C, titled *Indian Child Welfare Act*, requires CYFD and HSD to make good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress to serve Native American children and families, build a relationship with each of the New Mexico Tribes and Pueblos,8 and comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act in its letter and intent.

- Appendix D, titled *Behavioral Health Services*, requires CYFD and HSD to make good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress to build a statewide, community-based mental health system that all children and families will be able to access.

Each Appendix includes a set of Implementation Targets (ITs) and Target Outcomes (TOs) toward which the State committed to make good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress. The Agreement, Corrective Action Plan, and additional documentation can be found at: New Mexico CYFD | Kevin S. Settlement Information

As of the time of writing this report, CYFD and HCA have met the overall performance standards of 41.3% (19/46) ITs and 11.7% (6/51) of the TOs.

As part of the Kevin S. lawsuit settlement, a Coordinated Action Pilot group was created in Doña Ana County in October 2023. The Coordinated Action Pilot, consisting of over 35 individuals, met multiple times each month over a nine-month period. The group developed five recommendations as part of the Kevin S. Coordinated Action Plan (CAP).

The following recommendations are summarized below:

1. Ensure CYFD staff support and retention.
2. Recruit, train and support resource (foster) parents.
3. Ensure children have Access to Services.
4. Community support of CYFD and HSD through 3rd party entity – LC3.
5. Ensure Adequate Funding for the recommendations.

Part 3: Current Initiatives

Briefly describe the cross-cutting improvement initiatives (e.g., practice model, new safety model, workforce projects) to provide context for, and an understanding of, the priority areas of focus from the last CFSR that were addressed through the state's most recent PIP. This is an opportunity to highlight current initiatives and progress made toward achieving desired outcomes and systemic change.

Kevin S. Outcomes

Although implementation has been challenging, the new practices outlined in the Kevin S. Settlement should be effective in helping CYFD be more responsive to families and children with behavioral health needs or who are tribally affiliated. The different appendices of the settlement will also help shore up basic practice by standardizing how children's needs are assessed and addressed. The longitudinal impacts may take some time to become evident, and practice changes have been applied somewhat inconsistently; however, staff feedback has demonstrated that most staff agree with the overall goals of the settlement. Finding ways to incorporate new casework practices in addition to current policy and procedure has felt overwhelming to many staff.

Family Services Division

The Department's newest division will take over and expand some of CYFD's existing programs and contracts, such as In-Home Services and Fostering Connections. It will also be responsible for rolling out New Mexico's differential response statewide and standardize the agency's role in working with families who have plans of safe care per the federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recover Act. Services provided in the community that are contractually managed by this division will receive better evaluation and oversight going forward.

NM IMPACT

The Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) is pursuing a new comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS) to help workers provide effective services and to meet federal requirements. The system will replace the 25-year-old legacy Family Automated Client Tracking System (FACTS) and service CYFD's Protective Services and Children's Behavioral Health programs. In 2016, the federal Administration on Children and Families (ACF) announced new rules for states to replace their legacy IT systems, offering a federal funding match for development and operations. The new CCWIS rule aimed to improve the quality of data collected, emphasizing the need for modernization and integration across programs and systems. To meet these requirements, CYFD is pursuing a new modular, integrated system to provide enhanced tools to improve outcomes, increase confidence and data integrity, provide more accurate real-time program reports, and improve efficiencies and productivity at the agency. The system includes functions for data collection, case management, compliance, reporting, and analytics by integrating with other data systems and providing web-based access for caseworkers, service providers, and other stakeholders in the field to update and manage child welfare case information in real time.

The project is part of the Health and Human Services 2020 (HHS2020) initiative, which includes 13 assistance programs serving 1.7 million individuals. HHS2020 aims to establish an integrated, customer-centric health and human services structure to more effectively deliver services. The partner agencies must submit updates to federal partners for project budgets and contracts. A total project cost is still to be determined pending completion of the agency's procurements. Project and agency leadership changes have since resulted in recent improvements to the project, including the adoption of a competitive procurement strategy to meet federal requirements and a simplified cost allocation that improves project risk. In 2023, the project stakeholders renamed the effort the New Mexico Impact Project to reflect this new trajectory.

In January 2022, after 20 months of pending approvals for non-Medicaid portions of the system, New Mexico was the first in the nation to receive approval from four federal agencies for its inter-agency project. The federal approvals will allow CYFD to realize more federal revenues. So far, the total state investment includes $16.5 million in historic funds and $18.4 million in new funds appropriated for FY24.

As noted, the system will allow for data collection and reporting, analytics, and can act as a case management system. It further allows for compliance with new rules and regulations as they change by implementing a modular design, which allows CYFD to alter individual components

of the system—or modules—without affecting the entire system. The new CCWIS will provide timely and accurate information and reporting to facilitate informed decision-making and promote improved access to information for caseworkers. Additionally, the system will accommodate state and federal reporting requirements.

Other key outcomes of this project include:

- Providing a more flexible and mobile workforce using cloud-based technology,
- Promoting improved access to information using mobile, web-based, real-time information resources that allow for increased continuity of care among the families served by the agency,
- Providing the ability to share appropriate data across project partners, federal agencies, the courts, and other external stakeholders, including child abuse data, foster care, and adoption data, etc.
- Improving operational policies and procedures, conducting data clean-up, and updating the network and security.

CYFD will track the outcomes of the project using measures, such as time spent in the referral process, time to permanency, the percentage of children eligible for federal assistance, and other qualitative measures such as confidence in program reports, staff productivity, and informed clientele.

By implementing a CCWIS, states can ensure compliance with federal regulations and standards set by the ACF, which includes meeting specific requirements for data collection, reporting, security, privacy, and interoperability, which are essential for receiving federal funding and maintaining program eligibility. A CCWIS can also help improve efficiency at the agency and, ideally, outcomes for children and families. Until New Mexico can implement a fully functional CCWIS system, the agency will continue relying on its legacy system, FACTS, to provide services and do case management.

New Mexico is one of 20 states developing a CCWIS compliant system, while only one state has implemented a fully operational system. According to the federal Administration on Children and Families (ACF), as of January 2023, Idaho is the only state to implement a fully operational CCWIS-compliant system: the Ensuring Safety and Permanency in Idaho (ESPI) system. The vendor Deloitte reports the new system resulted in a

- 30 percent increase in child welfare staff capacity,
- 82 percent decrease in safety decision backlog,
- 77 percent decrease in time-to- safety decisions (from 57 to 13 days), and
- 10 percent decrease in time to permanency.

It should be noted that, while staff have expressed overall positive feelings about this project due to recognizing the limitations of the legacy system, the process of managing this change has also created significant challenges for the agency. A new case management system requires the expertise of its end users to be successful, and engaging subject matter experts in the Joint Application Design sessions has left some of the most experienced staff unable to attend to their

normal job responsibilities. In some areas, this has exacerbated workloads for other staff and added to the burden of high caseloads caused by staffing vacancies.

Turquoise Care

Turquoise Care is the new name for the New Mexico Medicaid Managed Care program that began on July 1, 2024. Under Turquoise Care, there will be four Managed Care Organizations (MCO's): BlueCross BlueShield of New Mexico, Molina Healthcare of New Mexico, Presbyterian Health Plan, and United Healthcare Community Plan of New Mexico. Managed Care is designed to improve health plan performance, health care quality and outcomes for its members. The vision for Turquoise Care is for every New Mexico Medicaid member to have high-quality, well-integrated, person-centered care to achieve their personally defined health and wellness goals. Presbyterian Healthcare was selected as the MCO to serve and meet the complex needs of most children in state custody. Native American children in state custody have their choice of any MCO or Fee-for-Service.

Workforce

Using a model of "pipeline" professional development, CYFD is working to increase effectiveness by building up our workforce with professionals who have specialized educational backgrounds to understand the complex nature of children and families involved with the child welfare system. PSD is partnering with New Mexico's universities' social work programs on a pipeline program. Students complete their social work practicum within our agency and commit to continuing their careers with CYFD after graduation. This partnership allows us to increase the number of entry-level employees with specialized child welfare training. Practicum experiences include completing a specially designed orientation to CYFD, ongoing professional development training opportunities and sessions with the Regional Coach in the location they are completing their field experiences. Currently, there are five universities with social work programs whom PSD is partnering with.

Re-Organization

In addition to the reorganization of Protective Services' pillars of practice, CYFD has streamlined many administrative tasks previously handled by field managers and supervisors, particularly with regard to hiring and onboarding new staff; contracts management; and invoicing and payment requests. The new Family Services Division will provide more opportunities for primary and secondary prevention programs to flourish so that Protective Services can focus on effective investigations and better outcomes for children in state custody.

Section III: Assessment of Safety, Permanency, and Well-being Outcomes

Safety

The New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) assesses and shares data regarding safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes on a monthly and annual basis with both

internal CYFD staff and external child welfare stakeholders. New Mexico has a dedicated quality assurance team that travels the state performing case reviews in selected counties using the federal On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI). A random selection of In-Home Services cases and Permanency Planning cases are reviewed in a selected county each month. The team visits the scheduled county for that month and spends a week reviewing selected cases and interviewing staff, parents, resource parents and age-appropriate children who are participants in those cases. Cumulative data is collected throughout the year to provide a roll up of annual results for all safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. These results are used in the calculation of targets for safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for the next five years. This data is also used to inform goals and strategies in Section 3 of the 2024-2029 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), *Plan for Enacting the State's Vision*.

The CFSR QA Manager works with the Office of Performance and Accountability Director and Deputy Director to schedule counties across New Mexico annually. The annual schedule includes both of New Mexico's largest metropolitan areas, Dona Ana County and Bernalillo County, and medium to smaller counties to ensure that each county is reviewed once every two years. Ratings (*see Safety, Permanency, and Well-being Outcomes* tables below) are based on the number of cases reviewed for an outcome or item that is rated as "substantially achieved" on the federal OSRI.

Calculation of Target Outcomes Over Next Five Years (2025-2029 CFSP)

CYFD's calculated new target outcomes for the 2025-2029 CFSP Target Outcomes by examining baseline data from 2022 and 2023. It should be noted that CYFD adopted the Round 4 OSRI in the middle of CY 2024, but results were combined to produce a single performance metric for each item *(See Table 1 below).*

In comparing progress made from CYs 2022 to 2023, each OSRI item was categorized as one of the following:

- A decline in performance that was statistically significant (Items 5, 6, 12C, and 14);
- A decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant (Items 1, 4, 8, 11, 12B, 16, 17, and 18);
- An improvement in performance that was NOT statistically significant (Items 2, 7, 10, 12A, and 13);
- An improvement in performance that was statistically significant (Items 3, 9, and 15).

These categorizations are helpful for the agency to set priorities for areas of concern to address, and targets are set in accordance with the better performance between the two years. The tables that follow show each established target based on **achieving a statistically significant improvement** upon the better performance within the baseline data. Targets are rounded up to the nearest percent.

For those items that have already improved in a statistically significant manner from one year to the next (3, 9, and 15), slightly more modest targets have been set. CYFD intends to track year-over-year performance to ensure the agency is making steady progress toward meeting these targets and will note any proposed changes during the five-year period.

Outcome	2022 Performance (Percent Substantially Achieved)	2023 Performance (Percent Substantially Achieved)	Percent Improvement Needed	Target	Does target represent a statistically significant improvement on best-performing year?
Safety Outcome 1	89.1%	84.1%	7.9%	97%	Yes
Item 1: Timeliness of initiation of investigations of reports of child maltreatment, including face-to-face contact	89.1%	84.1%	7.9%	97%	Yes
Safety Outcome 2	57.9%	58.4%	11.1%	69%	Yes
Item 2: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	56.9%	57.1%	17.1%	74%	Yes
Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management	62.0%	73.2%	4.8%	78%	No
Permanency Outcome 1	17.5%	13.8%	12.5%	30%	Yes
Item 4: Stability of foster care placement	75.5%	73.9%	10.5%	86%	Yes
Item 5: Permanency goal for child	79.8%	59.4%	9.2%	89%	Yes
Item 6: Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	38.2%	18.8%	12.8%	51%	Yes
Permanency Outcome 2	52.5%	70.7%	12.3%	83%	Yes
Item 7: Placement with siblings	80.0%	89.4%	7.6%	97%	Yes
Item 8: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	64.2%	56.8%	13.8%	78%	Yes
Item 9: Preserving connections	43.0%	62.1%	7.9%	70%	No
Item 10: Relative placement	60.9%	72.5%	10.5%	83%	Yes
Item 11: Relationship of child in care with parents	62.9%	56.0%	19.1%	82%	Yes
Well-Being Outcome 1	48.8%	41.6%	12.2%	61%	Yes
Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	49.0%	40.0%	11.0%	60%	Yes
Item 12A: Needs assessment and services to children	69.4%	70.8%	10.2%	81%	Yes
Item 12B: Needs assessment and services to parents	47.9%	44.9%	12.1%	60%	Yes
Item 12C: Needs assessment and services to foster parents	81.8%	69.0%	10.2%	92%	Yes
Item 13: Child and family involvement in case planning	60.3%	61.9%	10.1%	72%	Yes
Item 14: Caseworker visits with child	79.3%	67.4%	8.7%	88%	Yes
Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents	40.5%	53.8%	16.2%	70%	No
Well-Being Outcome 2	85.1%	79.7%	8.9%	94%	Yes
Item 16: Educational needs of the child	85.1%	79.7%	8.9%	94%	Yes
Well-Being Outcome 3	58.0%	37.3%	12.0%	70%	Yes
Item 17: Physical health of the child	69.5%	57.4%	11.5%	81%	Yes
Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of the child	55.3%	48.4%	13.7%	69%	Yes

Table 1 – CYFD Data

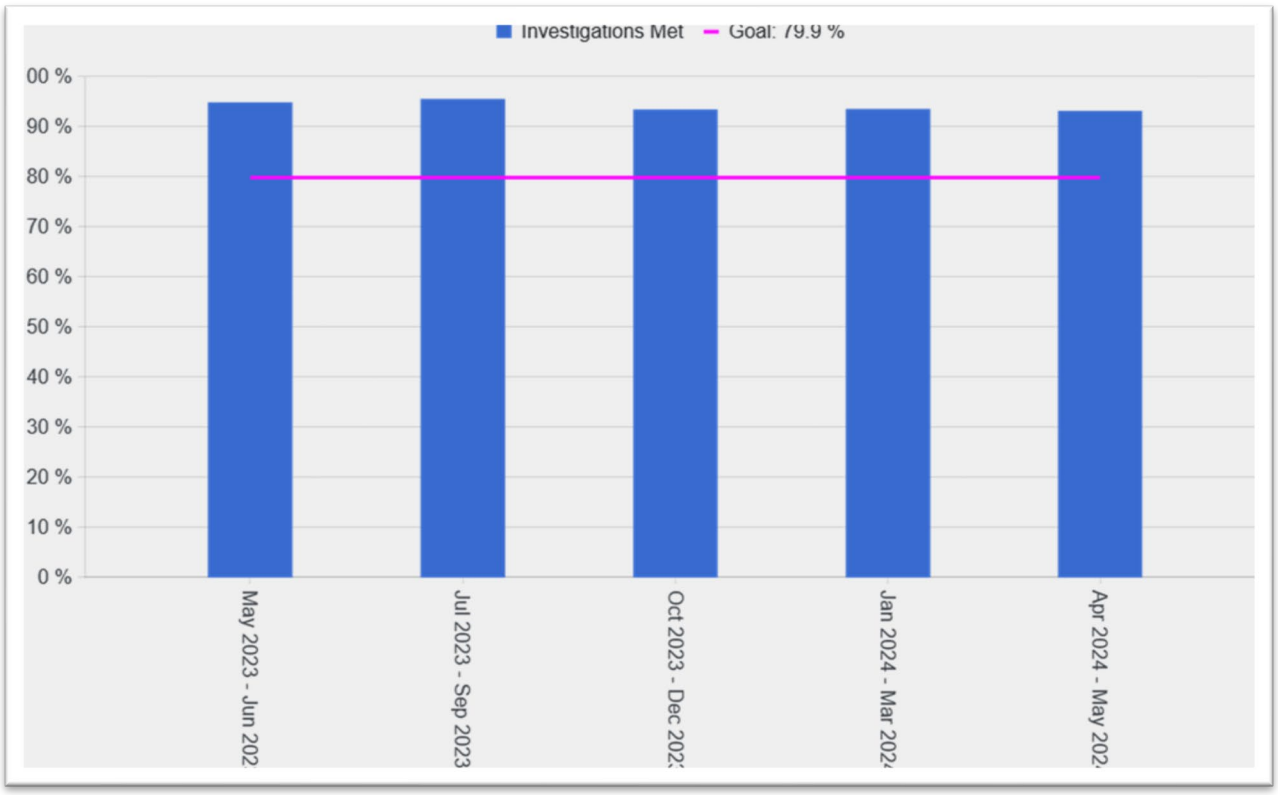
Safety Outcome 1	CY 2021 Rating	CY 2022 Rating	2020-24 (CY 2023) CFSP Final Rating	2020-24 CFSP Target
Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.				
Each calendar year, **92%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Safety Outcome 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	88%	89%	84%	92%
Item 1: Timeliness of initiation of investigations of reports of child maltreatment, including face to face contact.				
Each calendar year, **92%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	88%	89%	84%	92%

Safety Outcome 1/Item 1: Safety Outcome 1/Item 1 had a final rating of 84.1 % for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 92% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed above, Item 1 is categorized as a decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant. However, although the decrease was not statistically significant, CYFD will plan to address both Safety Outcomes as a priority in the 2025-2029 CFSP.

In New Mexico all reports of alleged child abuse and neglect go through CYFD's Statewide Central Intake (SCI) and are either screened in or screened out as not meeting criteria for investigation. The intake supervisor makes the final screening decision as soon as possible but no later than twenty-four hours from receipt of the report. Screening decisions are made immediately on any report containing allegations of present safety threats to a child. When a report is screened in, it is assigned a priority based on the severity and immediacy of reported allegations. CYFD CPS Investigations procedure (8.10.3.9) PR 9-Assignment and Initiation of Investigation and CPS Intake procedure (8.10.2.12) PR 12 – Intake Decision outlines three types of reports/decisions:

1. **Emergency (E) Report/Decision:** When the SCI worker receives a report that meets the criteria of an emergency the SCI worker staffs the report with a SCI supervisor or manager. After staffing, if the report is still determined to be an emergency, the SCI worker assigns the report to the SCI supervisor and/or manager. The SCI supervisor and/or manager then assigns the report to the county's investigation supervisor and/or manager. The investigation supervisor assigns the emergency report to an investigation worker immediately upon receipt of the report from SCI. An emergency report requires an investigation be initiated within three hours of the SCI Supervisor's screening decision.
2. **Priority One (P1) Report/ Decision:** When the SCI worker receives a report that meets the criteria of a P1 status, the SCI worker staffs the report with a SCI supervisor and/or manager. If the report remains a P1 after staffing, the SCI worker assigns the report to the SCI supervisor and/or manager. The SCI supervisory staff assigns the report to the county investigation manager and/or supervisor. The investigation supervisor and/or manager assigns the P1 report immediately upon receipt of the report from SCI. A P1 report requires an investigation to be initiated within 24 hours of the SCI Supervisor's and/or Manager's screening decision.
3. **Priority Two (P2) Report/Decision:** When the SCI worker receives a report that meets the requirements of a P2 report, the SCI worker gives the report to the SCI supervisor and/or manager. If the SCI supervisor and/or manager agrees with the P2 determination, they assign the report to the county investigation and/or manager in FACTS. The investigation supervisor and/or manager or senior PSD investigation worker designated by the investigation supervisor assigns the P2 report no later than one business day of receipt of the report from SCI. A P2 report requires an investigation be initiated within five calendar days of the SCI Supervisor's screening decision.

In addition to CFSR case review data for this item, CYFD's Results Oriented Management (ROM) system, from May 2023 to May 2024, shows timely initiation was achieved 94.1% overall.



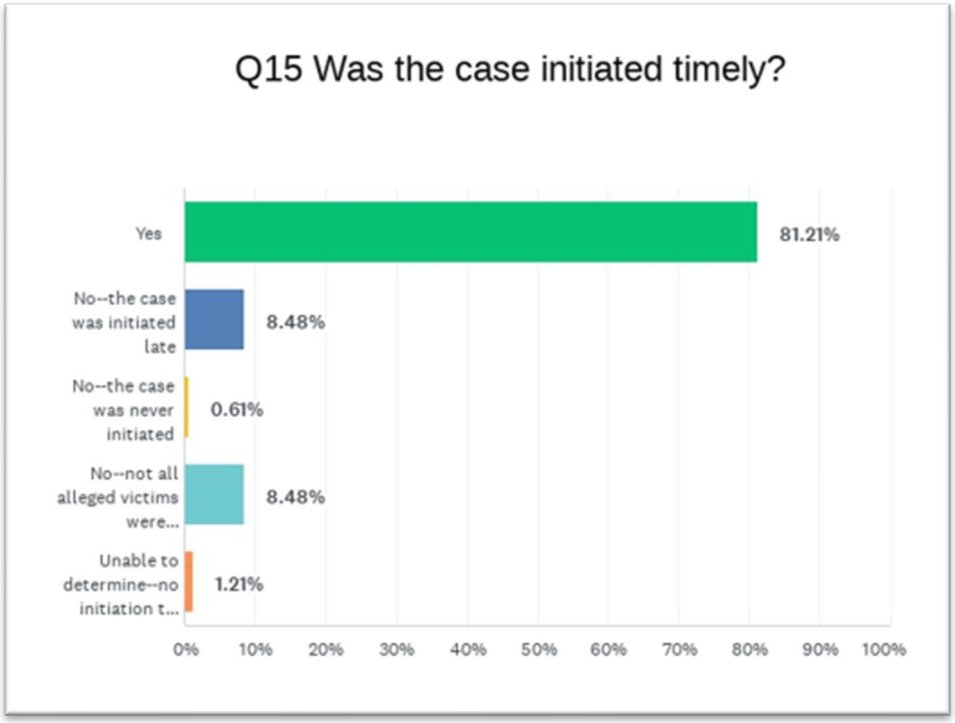
CYFD ROM Data 2023 -2024

Time Period	May 2023 - Jun 2023		Jul 2023 - Sep 2023		Oct 2023 - Dec 2023	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Total Investigations	3166	100 %	5072	100 %	5027	100 %
Investigations Met	3004	94.9 %	4848	95.6 %	4699	93.5 %
Investigations Not Met	162	5.1 %	224	4.4 %	328	6.5 %

Time Period	Jan 2024 - Mar 2024		Apr 2024 - May 2024		May 2023 - May 2024	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Total Investigations	5471	100 %	3753	100 %	22489	100 %
Investigations Met	5123	93.6 %	3498	93.2 %	21172	94.1 %
Investigations Not Met	348	6.4 %	255	6.8 %	1317	5.9 %

CYFD ROM Data 2023-2024

In addition to the ROM data, the newly created Safety Practice Quality Assurance team has been reviewing investigations and collecting data since February 2024. The Safety Practice Quality Assurance team has reviewed 165 investigations from around the state to date. Of those, 81.2% were initiated timely.



CYFD Safety Practice Quality Assurance Team Data

The data tells us that the CFSR and investigation review data is more consistent and likely a more accurate picture of initiation across the state. This is likely due to inaccuracies of the initiation time that is entered in the FACTS system and it not being congruent with the actual initiation time or the initiation time that is in the documented narrative of the investigation, which would account for the higher initiation rates documented in ROM. Often the investigator or the investigations supervisor enters the initiation time in FACTS as soon as the investigation is created in the system; however, the narrative documentation may be entered much later and not match up with the date and time documented in FACTS. This requires the due diligence of the investigator and supervisor to ensure they match prior to closing the investigation.

One procedure that has been implemented to assist in improving timeliness of initiation is the requirement of the pre-initiation staffing, which requires the worker and supervisor to staff the case and review the report and any relevant history prior to initiating the investigation. This helps to ensure that the investigator is aware of when initiation is due, how many victims need to be assessed and where those victims are located.

When initiation will not be achieved prior to the expiration of the time frame, procedures outline initiation through diligent efforts. This requires that the investigator complete a diligent efforts checklist and provide this form to their supervisor and County Office Manager (COM) for approval. Even if approved, the investigator must still make efforts to locate the victim(s) and will continue to staff the case up for further direction. What procedure does not outline is what time then should be entered in FACTS for initiation if diligent efforts are approved. In conversations with staff, some reported entering the time diligent efforts was staffed with the supervisor, some enter the time that it was approved by the COM and others enter the time as one minute after the report was screened in by SCI. This lack of clarity likely contributes to the

inconsistencies in ratings of timeliness of initiation. This needs to be clarified in our procedures to ensure consistency across the state.

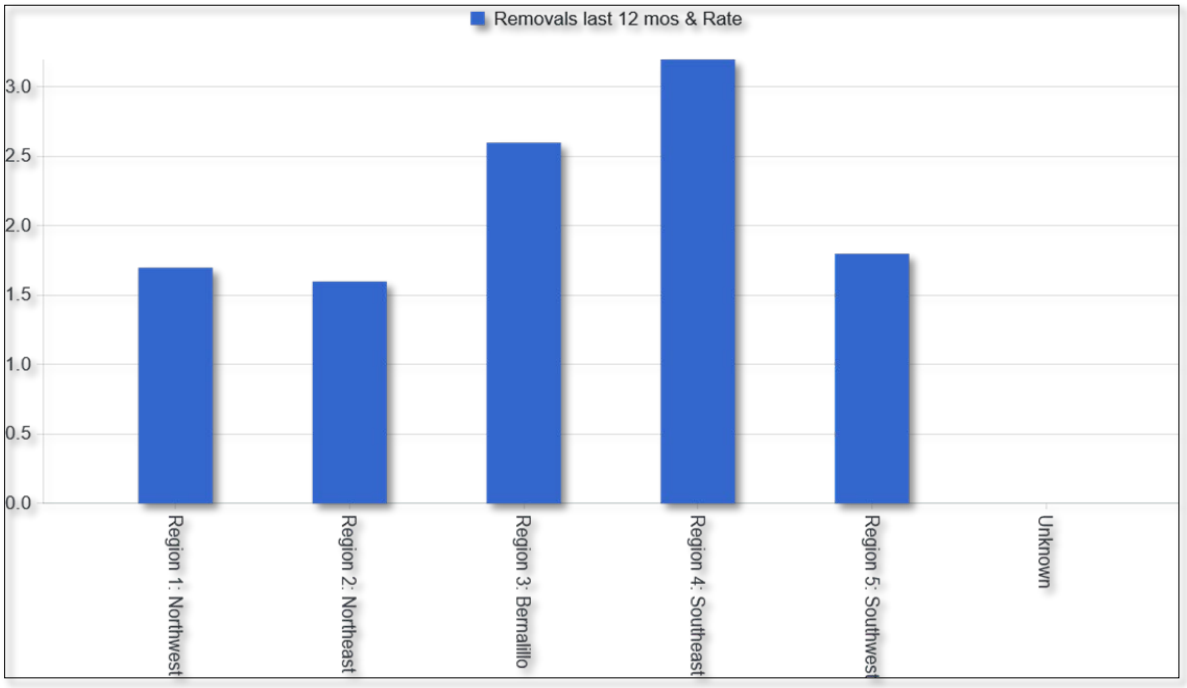
Other barriers to timely initiation that field staff noted are the overall workload and expectations of investigators, including the recent expectation of workers completing daily logs of the tasks they are completing. One noted discrepancy is that the time SCI calls out an Emergency or Priority One to the field is often before the report is entered in our FACTS system, so initiation could be completed before FACTS shows the report as being screened in. This creates a discrepancy in what time is entered for initiation as it cannot be prior to the screen-in time. Finally, lack of clarity in what constitutes diligent efforts and how this should be documented is another barrier the field noted to timely initiation. The investigation is not considered to be initiated timely if the diligent efforts were not appropriately approved or documented. Since there is lack of clarity and consistency as to how diligent efforts are documented, many investigators think they have initiated the case appropriately, but upon review are not given credit due to the missing or inaccurate documentation that requires supervisor and COM approval.

Field staff also noted some strengths to achieving timely initiation are the use of the pre-initiation staffing, the utilization of our FACTS system to locate potential addresses and phone numbers to locate victims, relationships with school systems and local law enforcement to assist in locating victims, and efforts by the investigator that start immediately, even when they have 5 days to initiate. Most investigations are initiated in a timely manner at 81%, though this represents a decline from prior years.

Safety Outcome 2	CY 2021 Rating	CY 2022 Rating	CY 2023 Rating	2020-24 CFSP Target
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.				
Each calendar year, 83% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Safety Outcome 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	57.9%	58.4%	55.4%	83%
Item 2: Services to the family to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.				
Each calendar year, 98% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	60.7%	56.9%	57.1%	98%
Item 3: Risk and safety assessment and management.				
Each calendar year, 79.9% of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 3 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	60.8%	62%	73.2%	79.9%

Safety Outcome 2: Safety Outcome 2 had a final rating of 55.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 83% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. CYFD has consistently underperformed in reaching targets within Safety Outcome 2. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Safety Outcome 2 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan.

The chart below shows the removal rates for 2023. Of note there is a higher rate in the Southeast Region compared to the other regions—even Bernalillo, our largest metro region. This number is determined by the ratio of the number of children entering care (removed) in the year ending in each report period to the number of children in the child population (per 1,000) in the geographic area served by the agency.



CYFD ROM Data 2023

As indicated in the chart on the following page, New Mexico has consistently had a higher number of short stays compared to other states given that our system requires law enforcement to give us custody. At times, law enforcement can insist upon a hold when it is not always necessary, accounting for some of these short stays. These also occur when CYFD cannot reach parents to safety plan but often get a hold of them a short time later; when a hold is taken, but the child runs away so the hold is released; or if the parent lives a distance away and a hold is taken until the parent can come to the child. A long view of the short stay trend indicates that agency efforts to reduce unnecessary short stays have been successful, particularly when we observe the percentage of total entries that last fewer than 9 days.

In the 2023 legislative session, a bill was passed to amend the state's Children's Code that essentially provided more time for the agency to make decisions regarding the release of custody of children placed on a hold, increasing the maximum time to file the petition from 48 hours to

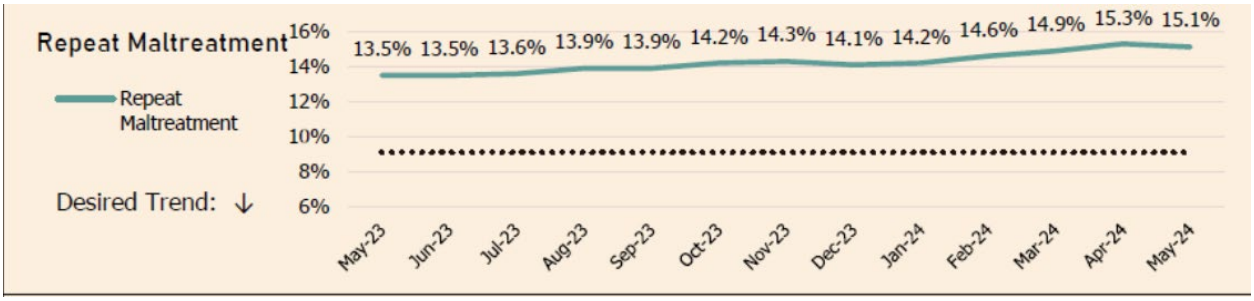
72 hours. While this does not necessarily impact data that tracks children in care for fewer than 9 days, it may provide more time to assess case circumstances; locate non-offending parents; or allow the Department to create safety plans with families, thus reducing unnecessary long-term out-of-home placements.

	SFY 2019	SFY 2020	SFY 2021	SFY 2022	SFY 2023	SFY 2024
All entries	1646	1310	1054	1025	1251	1187
Short stays	746	465	306	295	310	305
% of entries that are short stays	45.3%	35.5%	29.0%	28.8%	24.8%	25.7%

CYFD ROM Data SYF 2019-2024

Additionally, CYFD continues to track the Federal Data Indicators Repeat Maltreatment and Maltreatment in Foster Care.

Recurrence of Maltreatment

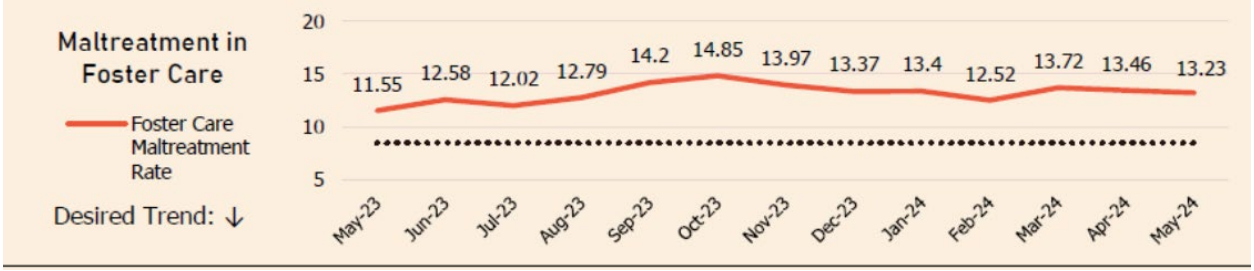


CYFD ROM Data 2023-2024

New Mexico has consistently struggled with recurrence of maltreatment (which is often referred to as "repeat maltreatment" among stakeholders in New Mexico), and is above the federal target of 9.8%. Over the last year, the rates have appeared to increase steadily. This trend seems to track back to whether services are provided to families or not. One Chaves County contract provider reported having a good array of services in the county and having a strong relationship with the local CYFD office which supports them in providing services to families. However, they also noted a lack of data regarding CYFD referrals to their agency versus community referrals. Despite this, Chavez County has a Recurrence of Maltreatment of (57/310) 18.4%, which is higher than the overall state average of 15% and it is not clear why. Some note that the rates of substantiation vary by county which in turn can increase the repeat maltreatment if they are more likely to substantiate in the first place.

The rate of removal is also variable. It is also noted that when a family is referred to Home-Based Prevention Services, whether it is internal or an external contract provider referral, a warm handoff meeting should be occurring in which the family, investigator, and provider all meet in person to transfer the case. It is not clear if these meetings always occur as they are not being tracked. As the rates of substantiations are going up, referrals to Home-Based Prevention Services are going down. One manager noted that referrals to contracted Home-Based Prevention Services are low because the referral form is too long. Recently CYFD Home-Based

Prevention Services have been assisting with completing the referral form, and the feedback is that it's helped with referrals. The intention is that this will be implemented with contacted providers as well to assist in increasing referrals. The hope is that as more families are served either by increasing referrals or serving a wider population by changing the referral criteria, the state will see a decrease in repeat maltreatment.



CYFD ROM Data 2023-2024

Maltreatment in Foster care

When looking at maltreatment in foster care, New Mexico is again above the Federal threshold of 9.8%. One permanency manager felt this is because the current SDM Safety assessment does not fit with permanency cases. The agency is currently working with Evident Change on developing a reunification assessment. We are also currently looking at incident reports and how those are managed with the intent of addressing issues sooner before they result in full investigations of maltreatment by foster parents. One issue that we have noted is that there is a different policy surrounding investigations on foster parents and the SDM safety assessment is not meant to be utilized on foster parents. The agency had worked with Evident Change on creating a substitute care provider safety assessment, but the use of this tool never made it into formal policy and therefore is not used consistently. When comparing substantiations in relative foster homes compared to non-relative homes, relatives have fewer allegations and a lower percentage of substantiations. The hope then is that as relative placements continue to increase; maltreatment should decrease. However, maltreatment in care can also include reports on children who are on runaway status or for incidents that occur during visitation and during trial home visit.

In 2023, the Safety Practice QA team reviewed 24 investigations of substantiated maltreatment of children in care and found that only 8/24 (33%) were on licensed foster parents, the remainder occurred during trial home visit or unsupervised visitation with the parent. A reunification assessment and services provided during trial home visits should hopefully impact this in a positive way. Properly assessing safety prior to a trial home visit and not moving to a trial home visit within six months of removal also had an impact on this. The QA teams have found that permanency staff are under utilizing the formal safety assessment. Policy directs them to complete the assessment prior to each court hearing, prior to beginning of unsupervised visits and prior to beginning a trial home visit but this is not occurring consistently. The hope is that the more the agency becomes policy driven and workers adhere to it, the better the assessments and interventions provided will be.

Item 2: Item 2 had a final rating of 57.1% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 98% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 2 is categorized as an improvement in performance from CY 2022 to CY 2023 that was NOT statistically significant. With the establishment of the Family Services Division as part of CYFD's organizational restructuring and the work on the Title IV-E Prevention Plan, item 2 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan, Section 3 – Plan for Enacting the State's Vision.

CYFD offers Home Based Prevention Services to promote the safety of children, reduce the risk and reduce the recurrence of maltreatment of children by their parent and/or guardian without the intervention of the courts. CYFD Home Based Prevention Services Procedures (8.10.6.8) PR 8 – Purpose of Home-Based Prevention Services outlines the general programs as services that are:

1. an integrated, trauma informed, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing problems in family functioning; and
2. a service provided to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment. Home-Based Prevention Services include In-Home Services (IHS), Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS), Family Support Services (FSS) and Community-based Intervention, Prevention and Reunification (CBIPR) services.

The In-Home Services (IHS) Practitioner functions as a facilitator of change by utilizing the Family Connections evidence-based practice model to aid families in meeting jointly defined goals that eliminate danger indicators, enhance parental protective capacities, and reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, provide the family skills to address crisis, and to modify the situation that led to the need for services. The In-Home Services Practitioner and Supervisor must ensure fidelity of the Family Connections model through utilization and application of the Family Connections Manual.

Despite the existence of Home-Based Prevention Services, CYFD continues to consistently rate below the target rate for Item 2. When considering services to prevent removal, the state of New Mexico overall has a smaller capacity to provide ongoing services through the Home-Based Services program. New Mexico is struggling to find a professional and trained workforce to provide various levels of monitoring or intervention, the state would benefit from building workforce capacity both internally and externally to address behaviors and actions that put children at risk for entering foster care.

One barrier identified is that the CYFD offers Home-Based Prevention Services internally through CYFD and externally through contracted Community Based Prevention, Intervention, and Reunification (CBPIR) providers. CBPIR providers collect data on how many families they serve, but it is difficult to discern trends from the various providers, or their data is incomplete. Inconsistent methods of data collection led to some data quality and completeness issues; in particular, it has been difficult to identify how many families complete the program successfully and then are later reported back to the agency for repeated maltreatment. CYFD has yet to determine how "successful completion" should of a Home-Based Prevention service should be defined or measured. CBPIR providers have performance measures outlined in their contracts,

which are calculated and reported at the end of each fiscal year. These performance measures are based on whether a family has a substantiated maltreatment claim during services or within 6 months after ending services. Another noted issue impacting this item is that, according to our Safety Organized Practice model, services should not be equated with safety. Often, when investigators are asked about safety-related services during the CFSR reviews, they have trouble articulating these services because of this messaging.

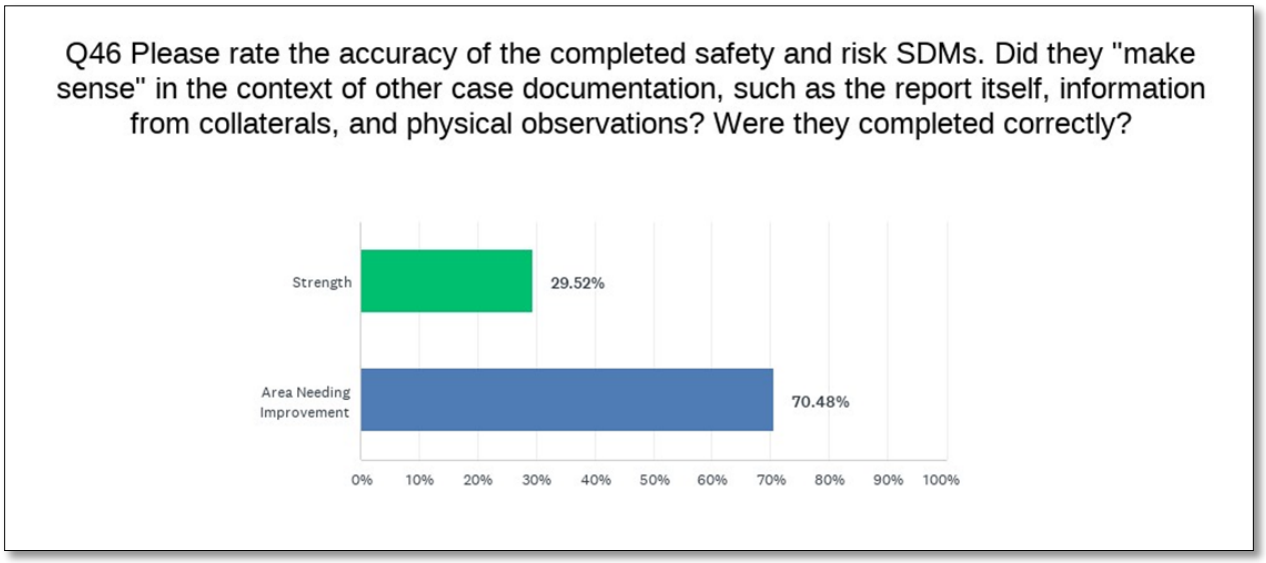
The ability of the investigators to identify appropriate services for the families varies. There is the question of whether appropriate services are being referred to or provided to the family. At times an investigation is closed before the family has been determined as truly safe and the external provider then must call Statewide Central Intake (SCI) to open another investigation. In some cases, due to minimal services in the area, families can be referred to the same services repeatedly with the hope of a different outcome. Investigators commented on the lack of "teeth" to get families to engage in services.

IHS and IFSS are voluntary programs, however families may believe participation is *obligatory* and not *voluntary,* and fear their children being removed from them; or families are reminded the services are voluntary and then disengage. Families engage with voluntary services until investigations close their case and then the family withdraws their participation. It does not appear that we are currently collecting data as to why families choose to disengage from internal or contracted external providers. IHS and IFSS serve families that have been identified as high risk by the SDM assessment, but the hope is to expand to possibly provide services to families that are at low or moderate risk to possibly prevent them from becoming high risk. It would benefit CYFD to ensure appropriate referrals are being made to Family Support Services.
The CFSR QA team also notes that repeat maltreatment is occurring as the in home services programs, are often not addressing the core reasons for agency involvement around safety and high risk factors. In many cases, they are not making concerted efforts to work with the family to mitigate those factors and reduce the chances of maltreatment along with further reports and concerns of abuse/neglect of children within the family home. In home services is often found providing hard services to the families around their needs versus their risks.

Item 3: Item had a final rating of 73.2% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 79.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. Although there is improvement in the rating, there are still areas of concern that have been noted by CYFD. The CFSR QA unit has found that often staff are completing informal assessments of safety accurately, however struggle in completing the formal SDM assessments accurately. At times the formal assessment does not match with what the actions taken in the case suggest. Item 3 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Services Plan, Section 3 – Plan for Enacting the State's Vision.

CYFD utilizes the Structured Decision Making (SDM) model for safety and risk assessment assessments. CYFD also utilizes safety plans when there is a danger indicator present, but the child can be maintained in the home via a 21-day safety plan. CYFD also utilizes 5-day respites as part of a safety plan, in which a child may stay with someone the parent identifies for 5 days. In addition to the CFSR QA data, the CYFD Safety Practice Quality Assurance team has been

reviewing investigations and collecting data since February 2024. Since February 2024, the team has found that 70.48% of cases reviewed showed that CYFD are not completely the SDM accurately or correctly.



CYFD Safey Practice Quality Assurance Team Questionnaire Data February 2024 to May 2024

Many of the field staff struggle with completing these formal tools timely and accurately. In discussion with staff, some noted that risk and safety is the first thing taught in New Employee Training, a time when a worker learns a lot in a short period, and it is not taught in the context of the life a case and when it should be utilized. It is also noted that after this initial training, there is not a refresher training option for staff and supervisors to really review the policy and procedures on how to complete these tools correctly. Supervisors must approve these assessments and so they approve them even when they are inaccurate. Errors often found include not completing the assessment on the correct household (the allegation household), not identifying the caregivers accurately (only those in the same household), not including all the children in the assessment, and not correctly identifying the danger indicators.

There are also errors in the outcome itself, where we are deeming children unsafe but not documenting a removal or removing children but deeming them safe with a plan or deeming them safe with a plan but not documenting an actual safety plan. Safety plans seem to be underutilized as they are either not documented correctly or the investigator is incorrectly completing the safety assessment, removing children when a plan could be completed or completing a safety plan but not calling it as such. Investigators also struggle with completing assessments at key points in the case to reflect change over time. We often see only a single assessment for an investigation which is what policy requires, but it also directs us to complete them due to changes in circumstances or household composition. Some investigators found it helpful to carry copies of the full safety assessment tool with them in the field or bookmark the manual on their phones, but this is not an overall practice. Supervisors also noted that sometimes there is a discrepancy in the assessment an on-call worker does and then what is assessed at follow up by the primary investigator. Often for on-call, the workers responding may be

permanency or placement workers, and therefore not as well trained in investigations and the safety assessment.

The CFSR QA team also notes that permanency is not adequately assessing the safety of children that remain in the home when siblings are in care and at times In Home Services will wait for investigations to respond rather than addressing concerns in the moment, which all impact this item. Evident Change has also advised that the SDM tools are not appropriate for our prevention providers but there is not another tool that can be utilized at this time. With such a large number of safety assessments not being completed accurately, this also impacts measurements of repeat maltreatment and maltreatment in foster care.

Permanency

Permanency Outcome 1	CY 2021 Rating	CY 2022 Rating	CY 2023 Rating	2020-24 CFSP Target
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.				
Each calendar year, 45.7**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Permanency Outcome 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	21.25%	17.5%	13.8%	45.7%
Item 4: Is the child in foster care in a stable placement and were any changes in the child's placement in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s)?				
Each calendar year,75.9 **%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 4 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	75%	75.5%	73.9%	75.9%
Item 5: Did the agency establish appropriate permanency goals for the child in a timely manner?				
Each calendar year, 78.2**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 5 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	77.4%	79.8%	59.4%	78.2%
Item 6: Did the agency make concerted efforts to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child?				
Each calendar year, 57.1**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 6 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	35.9%	38.2%	18.8%	57.1%

Permanency Outcome 1: Permanency Outcome 1 had a final rating of 13.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 45.7% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. CYFD has seen a decreasing performance in reaching the target for Permanency Outcome 1. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Permanency Outcome 1 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan.

Item 4*:* Item 4 had a final rating of 73.9% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 75.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD was just slightly under the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 4 is categorized as a decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant.

Protective Services Placement and Permanency Pillar staff have reported reduced unplanned moves for children placed with relatives and fictive kin and have reported increased stability for children and youth placed with relative and fictive kin. Many permanency supervisors and workers agreed that "kids just do better when they are with relatives." Despite the positive steps

in placement stability, there is work to be done for older youth who have higher behavioral and mental health needs. The CFSR QA team noted the areas needing improvement were due to unplanned placement moves that were unrelated to the youth's needs or goals to achieve permanency. Additionally, as recognized in the Kevin S settlement agreement, older youth with higher behavioral health needs are often ending up in office stays, moving from shelter placement to shelter placement, or lingering for long periods of time in multiple in state and out of state Residential Treatment Centers. These unplanned and continuous placement moves have a negative impact on placement stability, but more importantly are damaging to the youth's safety and overall well-being and adding additional trauma to these youth's lives.

Item 5*:* Item 5 had a final rating of 59.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 78.2% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a significant decrease in performance in calendar year 2023 and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, Item 5 is categorized as a decline in performance that was statistically significant. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Item 6 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan.
The CFSR QA team found that Protective Services has continued to do well establishing appropriate case goals for children first entering foster care, however, there are continued issues related to timely change of plan when reunification is no longer an option and issues related to timely motion to terminate parental rights. Courts often provide parents with more time to work on reunification past the established federal timelines, especially when parents begin to really engage in the case plan late in the case. This often occurs when parents who struggle with substance abuse disorder need more time due to delays in accessing treatment or relapse resulting in more time in treatment programs. This continues to be an item of struggle for the state with Protective Services continuing to address barriers presented by the courts related to change of plans. This is an item in need of collaboration with parents with lived experience, Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Office of Family Representation and Advocacy.

Item 6*:* Item 6 had a final rating of 18.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 57.1% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 6 is categorized as a decline in performance that was statistically significant. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Item 6 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan.
The CFSR QA team reviewed many cases in the last year where children were in care beyond Title IV-E Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regulations. There continue to be children in care beyond 36 months and efforts to achieve permanency seemingly are not being pursued. Some of the themes noted by the CFSR QA team were that that CYFD was not making steps toward finalizations of adoption and guardianship cases, the courts are not moving cases along, CYFD has delayed the Change of Plan Staffing, scheduling issues or no docket time with the court and delays in Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) hearings, adjudication hearings are not completed or are delayed and not completed timely, the court not accepting CYFD change of plan, CYFD not making steps toward dismissal of cases, inaccurate and poor quality reports to the court, and TPR overturned by the appellate court.

The CFSR QA also notes that for Item 6 another factor contributing to delays is worker turnover for attorney's as many counties have a legal representative desert, if you will, and are working with attorneys from other areas who are rotating the through the counties within a region.

Permanency Outcome 2	CY 2021 Rating	CY 2022 Rating	CY 2023 Rating	2020-24 CFSP Target
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.				
Each calendar year, 72.3**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Permanency Outcome 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	62.5%	52.5%	70.7%	72.3%
Item 7: Placement with Siblings				
Each calendar year, 90.9**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 7 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	79.6%	80%	89.4%	90.9%
Item 8: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care.				
Each calendar year, 66.7**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 8 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	64.7%	62.4%	56.8%	66.7%
Item 9: Preserving Connections.				
Each calendar year, 66.8**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 9 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	48.7%	43%	62.1%	66.8%
Item 10: Relative Placement.				
Each calendar year, 69.5**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 10 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	68.7%	60.9%	72.5%	69.5%
Item 11: Relationships of children in care with parents.				
Each calendar year, 96.9**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 11 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	75%	62.9%	56%	96.9%

Permanency Outcome 2: Permanency Outcome 2 had a final rating of 70.7% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 72.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD just missed the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. Case review data shows improvement in CY 2023 for items 7, 9 and 10. This is likely due to concentrated efforts to place and license with relatives and fictive kin. CYFD is still struggling with items 8 and 11 and is likely due to difficulty engaging parents in the case. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for improving engagement with parents will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan.

Item 7: Item 7 had a final rating of 89.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 90.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see an increase in performance in the last three years, coming in slightly under the target set for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 7 is categorized as an improvement in performance that was not statistically significant.

The permanency pillar and placement pillar have worked over the past year to keep siblings in foster care together. In the southwest area of the state, permanency supervisors report that the increase of relative and fictive kin homes has helped with sibling placement and that working with the parent and relative in putting supports in place have helped in ensuring that siblings can safely stay together while in foster. Additionally, New Mexico Treatment Foster Care Agencies have agreed to place siblings in Treatment Foster Care together even when the sibling does not qualify for Treatment Foster Care. Permanency supervisors have also stated that more work has been done in training and supporting licensed resource homes in taking siblings groups and ensuring that those placements are appropriate for all siblings in the group. In Lea County, permanency workers are working to keep connections and frequent visitation between siblings (when appropriate and safe) when siblings are not placed together. In these cases where there are large sibling groups, the permanency staff ensure that daily to weekly connection is occurring. CFSR QA would like to see more in agency efforts to normalize TFC and meeting children's mental health needs with work around the child returning to the previous foster home setting so that going to TFC does not constitute a disruption in the placement, but rather a pause, especially with a pre-adoptive home, and siblings can remain together on their permanency path.

When older youth in foster care do not want to live with younger siblings, the Fostering Connections staff work with youth to choose housing options appropriate for their age and emotional and behavioral development. Fostering Connections staff work with permanency planning workers to maintain and/or repair those relationships. Lastly, many relative resource parents have stated that the availability and support around daycare for children, when the relative resource parent must work has helped with willingness to take sibling groups.

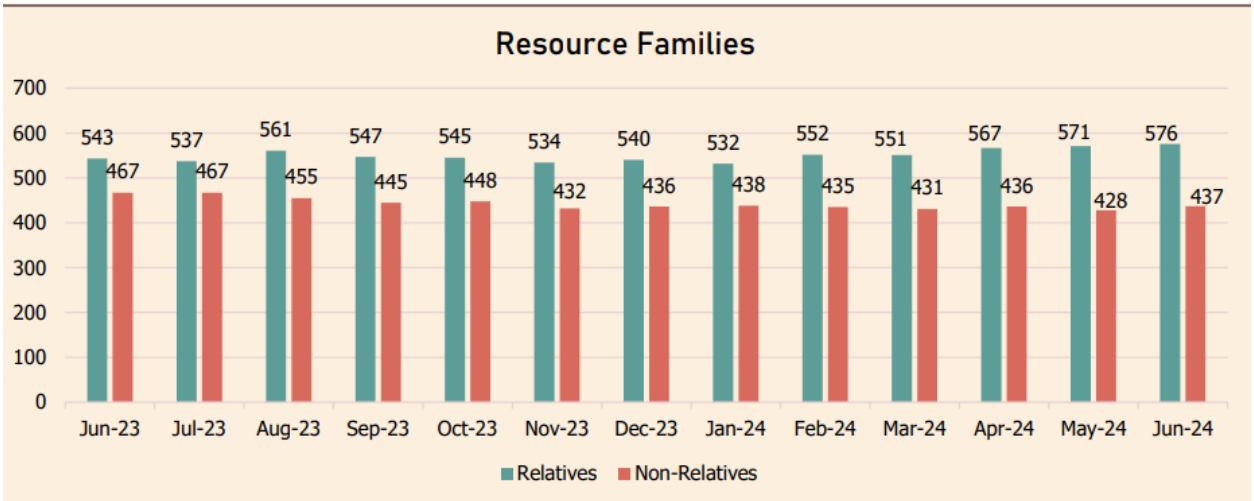
Item 8: Item 8 had a final rating of 56.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 66.7% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a decrease in performance from CY 22 to CY 23 and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 8 is categorized as a decline in performance that was NOT statistically significant. The decline in performance could be attributed to the difficulty in engaging parents and ensuring that visitation is frequent (more than once a month) and visits are of good quality. When youth with lived experience were asked about visits with parents and siblings, they provided the following feedback:

- Youth visited with dad and brothers twice weekly at same time. Visits were at the father's home, unsupervised. Youth never felt unsafe during these visits.
- Youth visited with an older 19-year-old brother, on occasion in the place where the brother lives. Never felt unsafe with brother.
- No visits with mom or stepdad. Youth lives with one sibling. Youth has requested to have visits with half siblings but is unsure where they reside; visits have not occurred.

- Youth lives with siblings in relative foster home. Visits tended to be in the home for the holidays, no safety issues.

***Item 9**:* Item 9 had a final rating of 62.1% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 66.8% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw an increase in performance from CY 22 to CY 23 and came in slightly below the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 9 is categorized as an improvement in performance that was statistically significant. The improvement is most likely due to increased placement with relatives and fictive kin. Permanency supervisors report that relatives are more likely to preserve connections for children in foster care.

***Item 10**:* Item 9 had a final rating of 62.1% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 66.8% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw an increase in performance from CY 22 to CY 23 and came in slightly below the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 9 is categorized as an improvement in performance that was statistically significant. The improvement is most likely due to efforts over the past year to increase placement and licensure with relatives and fictive kin.



CYFD ROM Data 2023-2024

***Item 11**:* Item 11 had a final rating of 56% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 96.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. As discussed in the methodology section above, item 11 is categorized as a decline in performance that was not statistically significant. The decline in performance is most likely due to difficulty in engaging parents or in finding parents when they seem to disappear after children are taken into custody. This may also be due to lack of effort to keep up connections between children and parents when a parent is incarcerated. CYFD recognizes there needs to be improvement in the communication and engagement of parents who are incarcerated. Analysis and strategies for improving performance for Item 11 will be addressed in the 2025-2029 Child and Family Service Plan. The CFSR QA team noted that the areas needing improvement in the

relationship of child in care with parents included counting video or telephone contact as visits rather than face-to-face contact between children and parents. In addition, parents are not being invited or encouraged to participate in school activities and case conferences, doctor's appointments with the child, or engagement in the child's after-school activities or hobbies. While there have been some strong and positive examples of foster parents providing mentoring and serving as role models to the parents, this practice needs to be consistently applied so that there are more opportunities for foster parents and parents to participate in appointments and activities of the child in care together.

Well-Being Outcome 1	CY 2021 Rating	CY 2022 Rating	CY 2023 Rating	2020-24 CFSP Target
Well-being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.				
Each calendar year, 76.1**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Well-being Outcome 1 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	55.8%	48.8%	41.6%	76.1%
Item 12: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents.				
Each calendar year, 82.3**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 12 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	56.7%	49%	40%	82.3%
Item 13: Child and family involvement in case planning.				
Each calendar year, 89.3**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 13 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	74.6%	60.3%	61.9%	89.3%
Item 14: Caseworker visits with child.				
Each calendar year, 92.5**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 14 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	81.7%	79.3%	67.4%	92.5%
Item 15: Caseworker visits with parents.				
Each calendar year, 73.1**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 15 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	60.7%	40.5%	53.8%	73.1%

Well-Being Outcome 1*:* Well-being Outcome 1 had a final rating of 41.6% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 76.1% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a consistent decline for this outcome and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Item 12*:* Item 12 had a final rating of 40% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 82.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. This item is broken out into three subsections: 12A – Needs Assessment and Services to Children, 12B – Needs Assessment and Services to Parents, and 12C – Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents. For sub-item 12A, there was a slight increase in performance from CY 2022 (69.4%) to CY 2023 (70.8%). Performance for sub-item 12B decreased from CY 2022 (47.9%) to CY 2023 (44.9%). The most significant decrease occurred in performance for sub-item 12C going from 81.8% in CY 2022 to 69% in CY 2023.

Sub-Item 12A: Although there was a slight improvement in performance in this Sub-Item, the improvement was not statistically significant, and the agency has not met the set goal. This Sub-Item pertains to the assessment of needs and provision of services to meet the needs of the child. Major themes identified by the CFSR QA team include the following. 1) The agency, both in foster care and in-home services cases, do not consistently engage children in intensive interviews to assess their needs; the CFSR QA team has observed a trend that field workers are increasingly spending less time (and less "quality" time) with the children on their caseload. This appears to be due to staffing and training issues within the agency. Field staff have expressed frustration with staff turnover rates, which exacerbates retention issues. The CFSR QA team has also observed that field staff appear not to have been provided adequate on-the-job training to reinforce the skills and practices learned in new hire training, particularly around the assessment of needs and provision of services as it relates to Item 12. 2) CYFD is focused on meeting children's concrete needs, but does not consistently address social and emotional needs, such as opportunities for socialization, engagement in groups/teams/activities, self-esteem building, and social competency development. 3) CYFD is struggling to provide adequate life skills and prepare youth for transition into adulthood. The agency has established policy and practice around providing these services to youth, especially for those youth who will reach the age of majority while in foster care, but the field has not been adequately trained to provide all the information and services that are available to children and youth transitioning out of foster care.

Sub-Item 12B: The CFSR QA team noted that the areas needing improvement in this item (Needs Assessment and Services to Parents) include not making efforts with parents who are not engaged, particularly as it pertains to in-home services; and not working with the secondary parent or parent not residing in the home, especially parents who are incarcerated. In addition, when the plan has been changed from reunification, CYFD is not continuing to work with parents and addressing their needs. CYFD needs to follow up on recommendations from formal assessments conducted with parents and work to ensure those recommendations are followed. When efforts are made, they are minimal and do not meet the standard for concerted efforts.

Sub-Item 12C: There was a significant decrease in performance in this Sub-Item, and the agency has not met the set goal. This Sub-Item pertains to the assessment of needs and provision of services to meet the needs of foster parents. Themes identified by the CFSR QA team include the following. 1) There is a lack of collaboration between the permanency and placement units when working with foster parents. 2) while there is an increase across the state in placing

children with relatives, there is a lack of caseworker finesse in working with the family's and in taking the extra time needed to hear them out, to explain the processes within the agency that impact them, with a struggling workforce and workers spread thin in their time and schedules, this concept with relative resource parents is lacking. 3) Due to exceptionally high worker turnover, there is less communication between caseworker and foster parents and less follow-up in assessing and responding to their needs- this issue can also be tied to issues with disruption in placements (Item 4). The agency used to have placement specialist workers to go in and support foster homes that struggled to meet children's need, but this concept has slipped, and the positions are no longer available. Sometimes caseworkers recognize that there are issues in the home but are not addressing it and not providing supports to the foster parents to maintain the placement. The agency has offered things like family counseling to improve relationship with the child and foster parents, but this is not a common practice and there is little in the way of guidance to further support foster parents.

Resource parents were interviewed about their experiences with CYFD; many of the review were positive and it appears there are conversations occurring to address foster parent needs, however, it does not appear that these conversations, referrals, supports, and informal assessments are being recorded in the case record.

Interview with Resource Parents (Visits)

During the review period, how often did you meet with your CYFD placement worker in person? (N=30)		
Never	3	10%
Less than Monthly	5	16.67%
At least Monthly	20	66.67%
More than Monthly	1	3.33%
Declined to Answer	1	3.33%

What was the typical duration of in person visits with the CYFD placement worker? (N=30)		
More than an hour	4	13.33%
At least an hour	11	36.67%
30-59 minutes	10	33.33%
15-29 minutes	2	6.67%
Less than 15 minutes	0	0%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	1	3.33%

Selected Comments from Resource Parent Interviews:

- At least monthly but more often if I needed help.
- The Treatment Foster Care (TFC) agency placement worker conducted these visits.
- The placement worker has visited the home maybe 3 times during the PUR.
- Once a month and then a 5-day visit after a child is placed in the home. "Placement worker is best worker this resource parent has ever had".

- The resource parent said a placement worker visited her every 2-3 months over the past year. She said that there was very little contact with the prior worker, but the current worker is more consistent and visits every 2 months.
- The placement worker visits the home every other month. Resource parents also see placement worker at events such as court, but full discussions take place during the home visits only.
- My worker typically visits for 1.5 to 2 hours. We talk in depth. She gives me support and I can vent.
- The visits are typically 45 minutes to one hour. The placement worker and the PPW visit together. The worker accommodates the resource parents' schedule.
- They arrive and say hi. They ask about me and my husband. They ask about the kids. They ask if there is anything new. They ask if there have been any changes or problems. The new worker does not speak Spanish, so this has been an issue.
- Worker interviews resource parent with what seems like standardized questions, there is a walkthrough of the home, looks at bedrooms, and confirms exit plans if needed in emergency.
- Worker and worker/supervisor came to home and asked how children were doing, interacted with the children, made sure house was in order and there was working water and electricity, assess the bedroom of children so it is safe, checked on emergency list and for escape route in emergency.
- Talking to the children, talking to resource parent, informing of upcoming court hearings for children. Currently working with a staff person on guardianship requirements.
- Placement worker would ask if checks were coming in regularly for the care of the target child. The worker would ask if resource parent needed referrals. The worker would have conversations with everyone in the household. Also discuss the target child's school status, behavioral issues, and medications.
- The placement worker asked how the girls were doing, how the relative resource parents were doing, observed the home environment and if there were safety concerns.
- The placement worker asks about the children and meets with them individually. She asks about safety issues. She checks the home including the refrigerator, door alarms, and bedrooms. She checks all the medications and their storage and counts their pills. (Treatment Foster Care Agency Resource Parent)
- The worker checks in on how I am doing and how the kids are doing and what their needs are. I have teens and she is really good at sharing everything with the youth, so they know what is going on.
- The worker spends time individually with me and asks about my needs. We review how the kids are doing. She makes time to spend with each child individually. She usually brings a toy or game. She has a very good relationship with the kids.
- The worker sits with me and asks about my needs. We talk about each child and their needs. She walks through the home and interacts with each child.
- We would sit at the table and talk about how things were going and how the target child was doing. We would review any paperwork. They would ask about my needs.

- The workers arrive on time as scheduled. The PPW and placement worker meet with resource parents and talk about how the kids are doing and the PPW meets with the children individually and tours the home.
- The worker visits with me and talks with all of us together. She talks with the kids individually. She asks about our needs.
- The worker always asks me how I am and tours the home. The visits are great. The worker is really supportive and cares about me. My house is a little crazy as I have six kids and lots of animals. I enjoy the visits with my worker.
- Worker visits involve seeing how kids were doing, discussion about renewing licenses, saw driver's license, talked about training.
- The worker has standardized questions that she asks and notes on the computer during the visits. Visits includes how it is going, do you have any needs, are there any outstanding payment issues from doing respite, if the child had concerning behaviors, and placement worker spends play time with the children. If the child is verbal, placement worker spends individual time with the child. Worker peeks around the house to observe for any changes.
- The worker asks if everything is well. She asks what I need. She looks in the children's room. She sees what I have in the home and observes the children. She asks questions. She uses a questionnaire.
- Placement worker talks about children's appointments for dental care, well child checks, schooling, and anything that is going on with the children or the family. Talk about the scheduled visits for the following month.
- The placement workers answer questions regarding the target child, where visits are to take place, any concerns the resource parents have. Also talk about reimbursement of expenses such as crib, car seat and travel expenses.
- During visits, they went over concerns regarding the child(ren), needs of child(ren) or the resource parents, walk through of the house if there were new kids in the home, court if there is an upcoming hearing, engage with the children, and talk about school and day care.
- Resource parents and placement worker talked about was going on with the children and visits with family who reached out. Visits were usually in the dining room or living room so the worker would walk through the house and see the children's rooms.
- Placement worker asks about all the children in the home, how the RP is doing, if the RP needs anything from the placement worker, if the RP needs anything from the agency, if RP needs any help.

Item 13*:* Item 13 had a final rating of 61.9% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 89.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Parents were interviewed about their experiences with CYFD and case planning. The data below indicates that many parents are not part of the case planning process, and some parents are receiving copies of their case plans from their attorneys.

Interview with Parents (Case Planning)

Thinking about case planning with CYFD, were you able to provide input into your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	7	23.33%
No	23	76.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Parent Interviews:

- The parent "talked to the worker about the case plan before the worker put the plan together but the worker pretty much told mom what needed to be done".
- Discussions about case planning have not occurred. The workers are not responsive to the parent. Parent was incarcerated for fines and agency refused to reschedule a meeting to discuss the mediation between the relative foster parents and parents. The agency supervisor has lunch with the relative foster parents so there appears to be a conflict of interest.
- The worker and parent talked about progress that has been made, mom's recovery, unsupervised visits, attendance at NA meetings. These issues have been addressed during the monthly home visits between parent and worker. The worker and parent talk about these issues and tasks as they have been completed.
- The worker encourages parent to continue working on the plan and the services. The worker provides a lot of encouragement for the parent to make progress towards reunification.
- It is very difficult for parent to reach the worker, so no discussions have occurred about case planning.
- The workers were trying to find places that would take mom for inpatient services, but the services did not work out for health reasons as they don't provide good medical care.
- The worker talks about the need to attend more of the children's appointments and need to continue showing behavioral changes which mom doesn't really understand what that means as she left the baby's daddy, has housing, and is financially stable now.
- The parent had a few conversations with worker about case plan and typically just reviewed what was left to be done.
- Case planning items are discussed in court and mom attends all hearings. The worker tells mom what the plan contains after the plan is presented to judge.
- The parent and worker talk about what parent needs to do, worker talks with mom about what is left on treatment plan and the need for housing before transition home can begin.
- The parent asked the worker repeatedly what parent needed to do, but worker never got back to the parent about what needed to be done, no follow-up from worker. Parent consistently was told to keep doing what she is doing with UA's and medication management.
- There are no discussions about case planning with the workers due to multiple workers assigned.
- The parent tells the worker what his treatment plan is via the inpatient program. The worker is happy and proud of the work the parent is doing, then adds to the list of the things that are in the case plan. The parent and worker review the plan.
- The parent stated that the same plan is reviewed during every visit. In court, workers report that the parent hasn't met goals on case plan which parent disputes.

- There were one-way conversations of parent giving the worker information. Parent felt that it was a template of basic needs that all parents participate in, i.e. counseling, taking kids to places and not defined for this parent.
- The worker goes through the itemized case plan. Worker says where they are doing great or discusses when the issues need to be addressed more or differently to accomplish the goal. The parents can give input and opinion.

Interview with Parents (Case Planning)

Have you been provided a copy of your case plan each time it is updated? (N=30)		
Yes	13	43.33%
No	17	56.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Parent Interviews:

- The parent's attorney provided the parent with the case plan not the worker. This parent stated that she has not received paperwork from the agency about why they took custody of child in the first place.
- The Court told parent that agency sent document to wrong address in neighboring community although the parent said the case record contained the correct address.
- The agency record had the wrong address on file as it was recorded as the neighboring community when they could have looked at prior family record for correct address. This stepmother did not receive a case plan as a result.
- Only one time during the period under the review that the parent received a copy of the treatment plan.
- Parent said that workers may have emailed case plan to the old address as parent kept telling workers that it was an old email address. Parent never received a case plan at the new address. Parent told workers "At least 20 times of the new email address."
- Last received copy was at beginning of case.
- The parents have not had copy of case plan since 2021.
- The parent may have received the case plan from his attorney last week but parent plans to set appointment with attorney to review the case plan.

Youth with lived experience were interviewed about their experiences with CYFD and case planning. The data below indicates that many youth are to some extent, part of the case planning process. It does appear through interviews that youth are not always receiving copies of case plans.

Interview with Youth (Case Planning)

Thinking about case planning with CYFD, were you able to provide input into your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	20	66.67%
No	10	33.33%

Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Youth Interviews:

- Youth is not aware of case plan.
- The entire time in custody, youth wanted to be emancipated and was told that she was in custody and unable to care for self. Youth is currently trying to get in contact with her worker to find out what she needs to do as youth wants to have it planned and mapped out.
- Case plan is about adoption and behavior. Youth thinks CYFD is working on a new case plan as he heard foster parent and caseworker talking about that. Youth was able to give input: worker asks if he wants to be adopted, yes, and why. The youth reported giving input about finishing family therapy and beginning individual therapy.
- Youth stated she provided input but felt stressed as there was not a lot of time to process the information when certain meetings and discussions were occurring. Youth was able to talk about services and progress with the worker.
- Youth had input into case plan, but agency staff were poor at putting services in place. i.e., family therapy was court ordered 1.5 years, but CYFD did not set it up and youth found a therapist on her own.
- Case planning was poor, and the youth believed the staff were not really there to support the youth. Youth would tell the staff one thing that he wanted to pursue, and they would do something else even though they asked his opinion in the first place. Youth did not feel he was at all heard about case planning.
- The worker asked what he wanted as he was 16 years old and had good input. Youth talked to worker about strengths and needs. Talked about the progress he was making.

Interview with Youth (Case Planning)

Have you been provided a copy of your case plan each time it is updated? (N=30)		
Yes	12	40%
No	18	60%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Youth Interviews:

- Youth received plan via email.
- Youth did not receive copy of case plan but believes the relative foster parent had a copy.
- Maybe was provided it in book of documents foster parent was given but not given to youth.

Item 14*:* Item 14 had a final rating of 67.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 92.5% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Caseworker visits with children has been an area of concern over the past year, CYFD has struggled to meet the threshold required for the Monthly Caseworker Visit Formula Grant within Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. Looking at Chart 1 below, it appears the decline started in September of 2023, and has remained flat hovering in the upper seventieth percentile. This could

be due to turnover or could be linked to the major reorganization of CYFD investigation, permanency, and placement units being divided into pillars. The intent of the pillars was to allow workers to concentrate on their tasks and their caseload' one of the unintended consequences was the not having a unifying County Office Manager in the office to provide guidance to the workers in that offer. With the pillars there are 3 different managers that float between county offices in their respective regions.

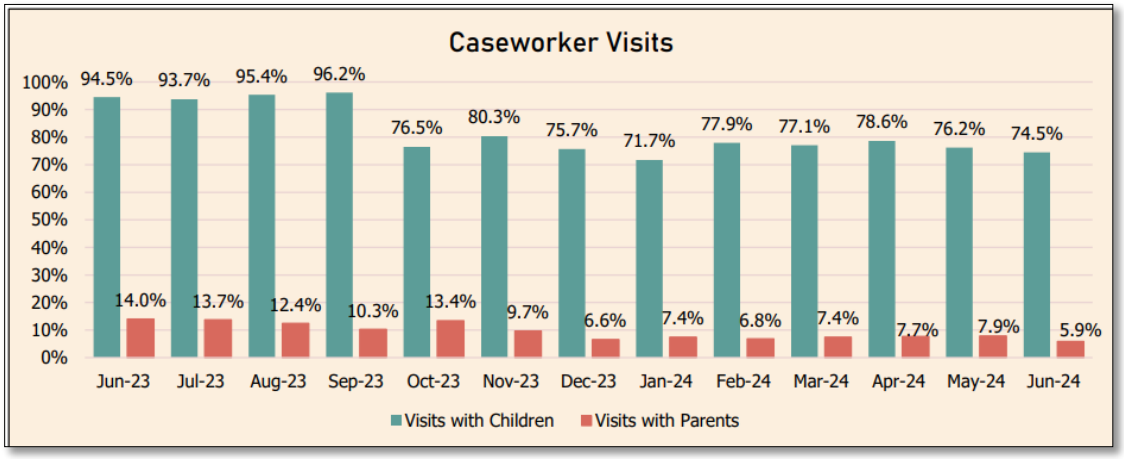


Chart 1 – CYFD ROM Data

Interview with Youth (Visits with Caseworker)

During the review period, how often did you meet with your CYFD worker in person? (N=30)		
Never	2	6.67%
Less than Monthly	9	30%
At least Monthly	19	63.33%
2-3 Times per Month	0	0%
Weekly	0	0%
More than Weekly	0	0%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Where did in person visits with the CYFD worker typically take place? (N=30)*		
Foster Home or Placement	25	83.33%
Home of Parent/Guardian/Caregiver	0	0%
CYFD Office	3	10%
Community Setting	2	6.67%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

*Note: Interviewee were able to identify more than one setting where visits typically occurred, therefor the total number and percentage exceeds 30.

What was the typical duration of your visits with the CYFD worker? (N=30)		
More than an hour	2	6.67%
At least an hour	4	13.33%
30-59 minutes	17	56.67%
15-29 minutes	2	6.67%

Less than 15 minutes	3	10%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Did the CYFD worker meet with you individually and alone during at least a portion of each visit? (N=30)		
No: There was no alone time during any visits	2	6.67%
Sometimes the worker met alone and individually	7	23.33%
The worker always met with me alone and individually	19	63.33%
Not Applicable: No Visits	2	6.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Youth Interviews:

- The worker "would go to youths' room, ask if she was ok, and ask if there were any changes from last visit." Youth stated, "I wish I was over exaggerating, but it was exactly like that." Youth believed she could trust only 1 of 4 workers who were assigned as primary but not the others. -Youth said she could be honest with just 1 of 4 of those assigned workers. Youth hasn't met current worker who was assigned more than a month ago.
- The former worker asked if she felt safe or needed anything. Also asked about any upcoming appts and checked how the youth was doing. The current worker assigned 2 months ago has not had in person visits with the youth.
- Worker asked how things were going, had the youth sign a form that verified the worker visited with the youth, and worker would ask if the youth had a copy of the bill of rights.
- Worker has a set of questions about grades, if they feel safe in the home, if they wish they lived with their mother or somewhere else. Visits were mostly about school and which school is the best option for the youth. Asked how cheer and competitions were going.
- Visits were always short. Visits were pleasant, the worker discussed the same things every month, however nothing was done to help youth and always the same discussion.
- The worker is super friendly. They typically sat at table and had group discussion with youth, aunt, and uncle then worker meet with youth individually. During individual time, they talked about how it was going, basics about his situation and visits were thorough. Youth stated the worker is "very cool."

CFSR QA has noted that in home service caseworkers still struggled to conduct individual visits with children, one on one, during their home visits with the family, impacting the quality rating in the item. Permanency workers have been opening templates in the system to indicate that they have seen children monthly, but specific notations of those interactions are lacking, putting the actual contact into question, and the frequency of the monthly visits have been seen declining as the work-force is stretched thin.

Item 15: Item 15 had a final rating of 53.8% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 73.1% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

CYFD has work to do in increasing the number of visits with parents. One trend seems to be difficultly in engaging and visiting with parents that are incarcerated or when parents are out of state. Parents stated during interviews that visit were not consistent and that often it was difficult to get a hold of the worker or often not sure who their worker is.

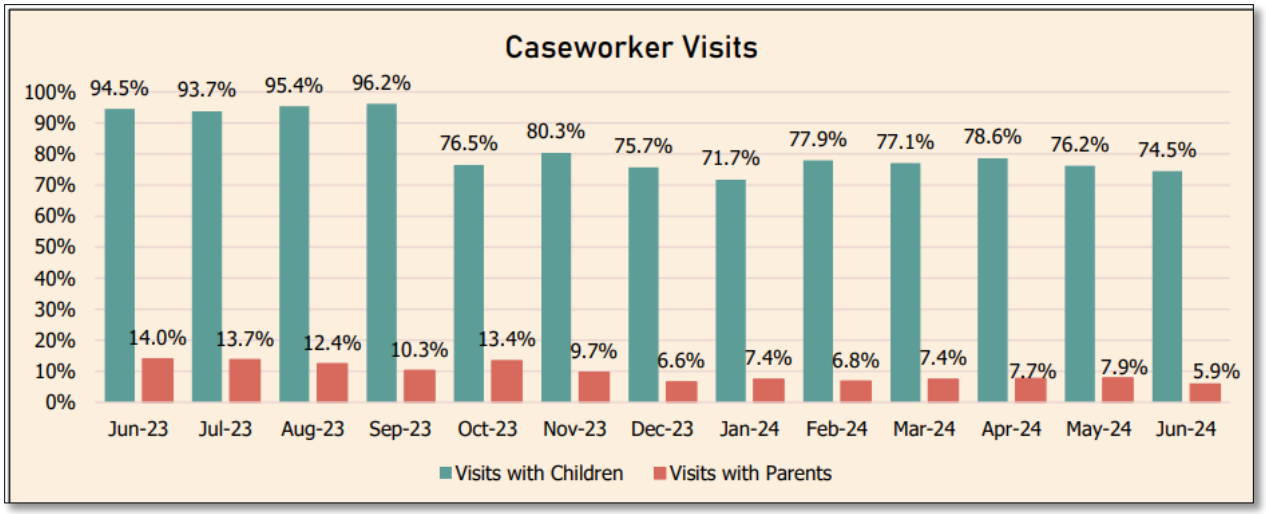


Chart 1: CYFD ROM Data

Interview with Parents (Visits with Caseworker)

During the review period, how often did you meet with your CYFD worker in person? (N=30)		
Never	10	33.33%
Less than Monthly	15	50%
At least Monthly	4	13.33%
2-3 Times per Month	1	3.33%
Weekly	0	0%
More than Weekly	0	0%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Where did in person visits with the CYFD worker typically take place? (N=30) *		
Home	13	43.33%
CYFD Office	13	43.33%
Community Setting	0	0%
Court	0	0%
Not Applicable: No Visits	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

What was the typical duration of your in person visits with the CYFD worker? (N=30)		
More than an hour	0	0%
At least an hour	5	16.67%

30-59 minutes	6	20%
15-29 minutes	5	16.67%
Less than 15 minutes	4	13.33%
Not Applicable: No Visits	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Selected Comments from Parent Interviews:

- During the PUR, maybe met with worker in 6 of the 12 months.
- No contact with CYFD worker since right before start of PUR. The parent went to office once during PUR, was given hair follicle test and told them it would show as positive. There was no contact in follow-up to tell parent of the test results or next steps. The case has been open for 35 months. There is an adoption plan, but no termination of parental rights (TPR) motion filed.
- Met with the supervisor one time about 2 months ago. There have been no other visits from any CYFD staff. I was incarcerated for part of PUR.
- The worker had face to face visits with parent maybe 3 or 4 times in past 12 months. Half of the time, visits were scheduled and not unannounced visits. The parent said it would have been crucial to do unannounced visits, especially in preparation for THV and during THV.
- Worker brought children to parents' home for visits, but the worker sat in car during visits and at end of visit, took children back. No in person discussions about the case. (Reviewer note: kids in care 52 months, TPR motion filed in March 2023 and no advancement since then).
- 6 in-person visits in PUR. When worker sets a home visit with the parent, the worker does not notify the parent that he will not be coming to the home visit
- Visits between parent and worker were coincidental and not planned by the worker. The worker frequently says that they need to meet but this has not occurred.
- The worker reported that they have no contact info for the parent, but they know where she lives, works, have her phone number and still no contact.
- There was one worker that met with the mother face to face during the PUR.
- Mom moved to another state in 2019. Worker has planned 3 trips during PUR to visit mom in the state mom resides but then cancelled those trips. The parent does not know why trips were cancelled.
- The parent has moved several times during PUR with no home visits on a reunification plan. The parent was in jail for 4 months during PUR.
- The worker has visited parent once in office to make calendar for visits. All other visits are in the home.
- Most visits were in the home with a few visits in the office.
- There has only been 1 visit in the home and all other visits have been in the office when the mom demanded a meeting.
- The parent stated that the visits are only long enough "to shut the mother up so she will leave the office."
- The worker scheduled an appointment with parent to talk about services, but it was cancelled and was not rescheduled. The visits lasted for maybe 5 minutes and were not planned but more coincidental type meetings. The visits were very brief. There were no home visits in PUR.

- The worker did a walk through the home, which was 10 minutes. The other visits were a bit longer than 10 minutes but less than a half hour.
- Visits typically were for 10 minutes.

Well-Being Outcome 2	CY 2021 Rating	CY 2022 Rating	CY 2023 Rating	2020-24 CFSP Target
Well-being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.				
Each calendar year, 87.6**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Well-being Outcome 2 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	82%	85.1%	79.1%	87.6%
Item 16: Educational needs of the child.				
Each calendar year, 87.6**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 16 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	82%	85.1%	79.1%	87.6%

Well-Being Outcome 2/Item 16: Well-being Outcome 2/item 16 had a final rating of 79.1% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 87.6% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a decline for this outcome/item from CY 2022 (85.1%) to CY 2023 (79.1%) and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. Well-being outcome 2/Item 16 was one the only item that was rated as substantially achieved during Round 3 of the Child and Family Services Reivew.

The decline in this item can mostly be attributed to the challenges faced with workforce, post-COVID pandemic. Following the covid pandemic CYFD has had difficulty in filling vacancies and retaining the existing workforce. For workers who are new to the field, the training received is insufficient to adequately prepare them for the "real life" events that happen in the field. New workers are required to receive training in curriculums in a classroom setting which does prepare new workers for the field work they are hired to perform. Without the field training, the new worker is ill prepared to fully understand their role in the educational system and how they can positively advocate on behalf of the client. For the more seasoned worker, the challenges identified are related to excessive caseloads and their inability to properly fulfill every need for every child. Moreover, seasoned workers are unable to share their experience in the field and mentor new workers because they are inundated with managing their own caseload. This is problematic. Consequently, the children who need educational assessments, advocacy and educational services do not receive the services they need during the schoolyear. Other trends witnessed by the CFSR QA is the lack of follow-up by in-home services workers with educational services or not addressing education if it is not an issue/concern identified in the referral or if the parent indicates there are concerns. Many times, children with educational concerns are not identified until the QA reviewer identifies a concern during the QA review and raises the concern to the worker/supervisor (i.e. failing grades, child is retained, special/developmental needs, new/existing individual education plans).

The strength in this item comes from the early intervention service referrals performed with children below the age of 3. Although CYFD is strong in the submission of these referrals, there are issues with follow-up by workers after the referral is sent and accepted by the provider. Many times, the CYFD workers do not follow-up with the provider about the type of services being provided to the child or additional concerns that may have been identified during the service provision period.

Well-Being Outcome 3	CY 2021 Rating	CY 2022 Rating	CY 2023 Rating	2020-24 CFSP Target
Well-being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.				
Each calendar year, 74.9**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Well-being Outcome 3 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	52.5%	58%	37.3%	74.9%
Item 17: Physical health of the child.				
Each calendar year, 83.3**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 17 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	75.3%	69.5%	57.4%	83.3%
Item 18: Mental/behavioral health of the child.				
Each calendar year, 84.3**%** of cases reviewed will rate as "substantially achieved" for Item 18 in the CFSR OSRI to meet or surpass the Target.	60.9%	55.3%	48.4%	84.3%

Well-Being Outcome 3: Well-being Outcome 3 had a final rating of 37.3% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 74.9% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD saw a decline from CY 2022 (58%) to CY 2023 (37.3%) for this outcome and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP.

Item 17: Item 17 had a final rating of 57.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 83.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. The CFSR QA team found that Protective Services has gone down in this area from 2020 – 2024 due to barriers created by COVID-19 that severely impacted the agency's ability to secure well-child checkups and dental screenings. As providers opened up for services in 2022, CYFD had gotten out of the habit of scheduling these physical and dental exams. This occurs when employees do not have the ability to access these services, such as during COVID, and they fall out of practice of scheduling them and monitoring them. The agency was also impacted by its inability to receive documentation from medical and dental providers during the Covid pandemic. Providers did not have the staff or resources to provide CYFD with medical or dental records. After the pandemic, CYFD staff were out of the habit of obtaining records from providers and reviewing them. The CFSR QA team has found that Protective Service staff are relying on the foster parents to schedule and follow-up on these services.

Even staff who were able to stay on top of making referrals for these services, long wait lists or lack of appointment availability were often a barrier. As part of the implementation of the Kevin

S Settlement, CYFD reached an agreement with the state's Department of Health to help get these appointments accomplished timely through the strategic use of county Public Health offices. This has led to a recent improvement of outcomes related to children receiving well-child checks within 30 days of entering out-of-home placement.

Item 18: Item 18 had a final rating of 48.4% for the 2020-2024 Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP); the target for this item was set so that 84.3% of cases (or higher) would rate as substantially achieved in the Federal On-site Review Instrument (OSRI). CYFD has continued to see a decrease in performance in the last three years and did not meet the target for the 2020-2024 CFSP. The agency has continued to struggle to meet the goal for Item 18. The CFSR QA team has identified a primary cause of this struggle as a lack of training and understanding of the agency's policy regarding Medication Oversight. In an effort to meet the standard in the Children's Code that children are to be free from unnecessary or excessive medications, CYFD has implemented policy outlining specific steps to be taken when a child is recommended or prescribed psychotropic medication, including a requirement that the agency approve any medication and medication changes through a discussion with the prescribing provider, parent/guardian/custodian, and the supervisor on the case within seven calendar days of the recommendation. In addition, the policy requires the agency to document the child's medication in the case management system and in each court report, including medications, changes in medications, impact, and side effects. It has been observed by the CFSR QA team that field staff is either unaware of the policy requirements regarding psychotropic medications, or the standard is not enforced through supervision and on-the-job training. In an effort to alleviate the detriment on the agency's performance in this Item caused by a lack of understanding of this policy, the CFSR QA team has provided copies of the policy to each county selected for CSFR, as well as reviewed the policy with each county prior to the onsite review. The CFSR QA team has also observed that this Item is affected by a lack of assessment of children's mental health needs if there are no immediate and pronounced concerns, even when a history of childhood trauma is known to the agency, such as exposure to domestic violence, parentification of children, maltreatment in childhood, and changes in caregiver. CYFD does not consistently engage children in informal assessments of mental health needs, such as through intensive interviewing, during visits with children. Additionally, there are limited resources in the state for children's mental health, particularly for infant mental health, and there are few options for nontraditional therapies, such as equine therapy, art therapy, music therapy, or "e-therapy," which has caused these options to be explored less frequently and less diligently by field staff than traditional therapeutic interventions, such as psychotherapy and psychotropic medication.

Section IV: Assessment of Systemic Factor Functioning

Statewide Information System

Item 19: Statewide Information System

How well is the statewide information system 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?

Relevant Procedure:

- 8.8.2.14 NMAC: Data Collection and Management Information
- 8.10.8.10 NMAC: Out of Home placement
- 8.10.8.31 NMAC: Documentation and Confidentiality

Procedure Summary:

Protective Services Division (PSD) staff shall collect client and services information and records that information in the agency's management information system, the Family Automated Tracking System (FACTS). PSD shall produce reports containing statewide or county-based data for use in monitoring and tracking performance and outcomes**.** PSD shall maintain the case record, which consists of both the electronic record and the paper case record. The case record is a working tool and shall contain all documents necessary for the provision of services, which includes but is not limited to; the legal status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of the child while in custody.

All new out of home and childcare (in home) placements, changes of placement, or closures will be entered into FACTS within 24-48 hours of entry into custody or change of placement. All other entries into FACTS will be updated within five business days of an action or discovery of information.

Round 3 Performance and Background:

In Round 3 of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), New Mexico's performance for Item 19 was an Area Needing Improvement. Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders indicated that although the state could readily identify most of the required information on children in foster care, the system was not functioning statewide to ensure that child placement location information was routinely up to date.

In response to the statewide information system rating as an area needing improvement in round 3 of the Child and Families Services Review. CYFD created a program improvement plan and goal to improve the timeliness and accuracy of data entered in FACTS through increased training and staff coaching. Training consisted of monthly webinar sessions on key data entry and case management activities in FACTS, 12 hours of training during new employee training, coaching on data entry within one month of completing new employee training, and monthly reports to management for the purpose of improving data quality.

Analysis:

Family Automated Client Tracking System (FACTS) is New Mexico's federally approved Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) and is the source of data for federal National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting requirements. This system permits CYFD employees the capability to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is in foster care. According to the most recent data profile (February 2024) submitted to the Children's Bureau, data submitted by the State exceeds the AFCARS and NCANDS standards specified in 45 CFR 1355.46.

Program Type	Report Period	Submission Date	Status	Records	All Elements Compliant
AFCARS - Adoption Assistance	2024A	05/08/2024	Active	2,821	Compliant
AFCARS - Out of Home Care	2024A	05/08/2024	Active	2,542	Compliant
AFCARS - Adoption Assistance	2023B	11/13/2023	Active	2,836	Compliant
AFCARS - Out of Home Care	2023B	11/13/2023	Active	2,561	Compliant
AFCARS - Adoption Assistance	2023A	08/10/2023	Active	2,616	Compliant
AFCARS - Out of Home Care	2023A	08/10/2023	Active	2,341	Compliant

AFCARS Submission - Portal

Protective Services Division (PSD), including Statewide Central Intake (SCI), Investigations, Permanency Planning, Placement, and Legal staff utilize FACTS as their primary information system. PSD is the primary division responsible for documenting the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months) in foster care. Policy, noted above, provides direction for staff on data entry into FACTS detailing which information is required to be documented and any applicable timeframes in which that data must be entered into the information system.

All foster care placements entered into FACTS are tied to the financial, level of care, and licensing portions of the system. This ensures placements are valid and licensed, and that appropriate payments are issued on a timely basis.

A critical ability of FACTS is the ability to extract and export data reports in real time. CYFD has operational research analysts who are responsible for routinely reviewing, developing and facilitating data analysis and reporting with the various divisions within CYFD, including PSD. These analysts are also responsible for submitting data for various federal mandated reports, such as NCANDS, AFCARS and NYTD reports. Utilizing software that identifies reporting errors, they work collaboratively with field staff to update information and ensure the final submission exceeds the federal data quality checks.

Quality Assurance review the accuracy of both the electronic and paper case files during the on-site reviews. In addition to the QA review, a legal review and permanency review are conducted, assessing specific items related to timely court hearings and permanency goals. These assessments verify the accuracy of demographic information, custody entry/exit dates, permanency goals recommended by the agency and ordered by the court, in addition to the licensed placement of the child.

CYFD continues to address limitations regarding data entry errors as stated, if the information being entered into FACTS is not accurate, then the data reports exported from FACTS will subsequently also not be accurate. Utilizing data validation methods, these inaccuracies can, in some instances be identified rather quickly and easily. For example, by exporting an all children in custody report and filtering the report to only show ages greater than 18 will identify adults listed in CYFD custody and allow for verification of extended foster care placement, delays in entering dismissal orders, or errors in data entry where a parent may have accidentally been selected as the child entering custody. These data quality checks require constant concerted effort from the agency to ensure accuracy of the data within the system.

Another limitation identified is the management reporting software, Result Oriented Management (ROM) may oversimplify the complexity of individuals ethnic background by only reporting one ethnicity when multiple have been selected in FACTS, Hispanic taking priority over other ethnicities, potentially overlooking the nuanced intersectionality of identities and experiences.

Although FACTS does have data validation methods, such as not being able to enter a future date for something that has occurred, it does have its limitations. During the review, it was discovered that FACTS allows workers to place adults into CYFD custody, and entering a permanency hearing after a dismissal order has been entered will reflect the child as in CYFD custody when they are not. Through manual data validation methods, both of these are easily identified and can be corrected, but it does take concerted effort to routinely check and notify workers of potential data entry errors.

State Response [to Rating]:

New Mexico can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is or has been in foster care for the preceding 12 months despite the limitations identified above. In recent federal mandated reports, New Mexico has consistently submitted reports detailing all required data elements with an error rate below the standard. Although identified limitations include accuracy of the data entry, New Mexico has several data validation measures in place to review and correct inconsistent data within the information system in a timely manner. New Mexico assesses the state's performance on Item 19 as a **strength**.

Case Review System

Item 20: How well is the case review system 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?

Relevant Procedures:

Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.12) PR 12 – Case Planning
Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.13) PR 13 – The Permanency Plan

Procedure Summary:

Permanency Planning PR 12 outlines the requirements for the Initial Assessment Plan (IAP) conference. The IAP conference establishes the child's initial permanency plan and develops the initial assessment plan for the child and parent.

The initial assessment plan is developed with the parent, guardian or custodian and child at the IAP conference when it has been determined that continued custody is required to protect the child. The investigation worker assigned to the case is responsible for the development of the IAP. The initial assessment plan:

1. identifies the reasons the child came into PSD custody;
2. identifies safety threats and the risk of harm that brought the child into PSD custody;
3. identifies the protective capacities of the parent, guardian or custodian that will mitigate identified safety threats;
4. identifies relatives or fictive kin for purposes of connections or placement options;
5. identifies the child's current placement; 6. establishes a visitation schedule;
6. establishes the initial permanency plan for the child
7. identifies the educational decision maker; and
8. identifies any needed assessments for the child, parent, guardian or custodian and this information is provided to the CCA.

Permanency Planning PR 12 – Case Planning also informs workers to meet with each parent, guardian, or custodian prior to the dispositional hearing to develop the case plan. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity to review the initial assessment plan and develop a case plan for each child, parent, guardian, and custodian. The case plan identifies the on-going services needed by the child and the parent, guardian or custodian to achieve the child's permanency plan and mitigate safety threats. The case plan is reviewed and revised as needed prior to any court hearing. The case plan includes:

1. Identification of the permanency plan for the child, including any changes to the permanency plan;
2. Specific steps to address needed changes in behavior by the parent, guardian or custodian related to identified safety threats, steps to strengthen protective capacities, and on-going assessment of how identified steps are being met;
3. On-going evaluation of child's needs and placement supports;
4. Identification of and on-going evaluation of the child's medical, dental, behavioral/mental health, and educational needs;

5. Identification and on-going evaluation of the parent, guardian or custodian's needs to strengthen protective capacities and ability to maintain a safe relationship with the child;
6. Identification of responsible parties for case plan steps; and
7. A visitation schedule for parents, siblings, and other important connections in the child's life.

Permanency Planning Procedure PR 13 - The Permanency Plan reflects PSD's efforts to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of a child during its intervention with the child and the child's parent, guardian or custodian. The child's permanency plan is chosen at the initial assessment planning conference and is based upon PSD's initial assessment of the child's safety, permanency and well-being needs, the child's vulnerability to his or her home life, and the protective capacities demonstrated by the child's parent, guardian or custodian. The activities and steps in the case plan support the achievement of the established permanency plan.

Round 3 Performance and Background:

New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Data and information provided in the statewide assessment and supported through stakeholder interviews indicated that New Mexico has policy and procedures to support the development of timely case plans, particularly before initial hearings. However, information in the statewide assessment and confirmed through stakeholder interviews indicated that the development of the case plan jointly with parents was a challenge to accomplish because many plans were similar and did not reflect the unique concerns of the child and family.

Analysis:

Currently there is not an effective review that easily confirms all case plans are developed jointly with parents and guardians. In preparation for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review, CYFD has been interviewing a randomly selected number of parents who were involved with CYFD. Some of the preliminary feedback is that case plans feel very canned, repetitive, or some parents are not sure what is in their case plan. There have been a few parents that have commented that their worker was very good at talking about the case plan with them during the case. As evidenced by the responses from parents below, CYFD needs to improve efforts and processes around involving parents in the case planning process.

Stakeholder Questions on Case Planning - Parents

Thinking about case planning with CYFD, were you able to provide input into your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	7	23.33%
No	23	76.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Comments from Parents:

- When new workers receive the case, they say the record is incomplete and case planning has not occurred with the parent.
- The worker develops plan with no parent input.
- The parent has agreed with the services in the case plan. The parent has been able to express his needs and what he did not need, i.e. anger management. The parent also was able to talk about involvement in parenting program prior to children entering custody and was willing to do parenting program again.
- The worker did not involve this stepparent in case planning. The worker wanted the stepmother's husband to agree for his wife.
- The workers did not help much while the parent resided in the other state. The workers said they were too busy and kept forgetting to request a worker in that state. The parent did not get any support from the workers. The workers told the parent what they wanted her to, but several different workers would attend planning meetings with no consistency and no understanding of what was happening in the case.
- The parent has not attended any case planning meetings as the agency workers use what is said in those meetings against the parent. The parent would only attend with her lawyer present, and agency said that was not feasible so planning meetings are no longer occurring.
- There are some discussions about case planning, but the main goal is to get children back, but it has been difficult as everyone is fighting against this parent. Every time there is meeting or court hearing, everyone is arguing. It is hard as they only have 30 minutes in court, always having to continue hearings as the agency didn't file report or discussions are not finished in the allotted time. The parent stated it is not fair that all these continuances have occurred. She has heard that agency prolongs cases, then TPR's which is not what mom wants. She is working hard.
- Worker tells parents what is required to do with zero input from parent.
- Lack of communication with worker during period under review.
- The parent states he did not have a voice. The Judge doesn't even let parent talk.
- Communication was lacking with "zero to none" occurring with worker. The worker developed plan and told dad what he needed to do. The dad engaged in rehab and after care on his own.
- The worker develops the case plan, gives to parent via court as parent attends all hearings virtually, and parent is expected to abide by the plan. The worker does not discuss or ask for the parents' opinion about the case plan at any point.
- The parent was not given opportunity to provide input and instead the plans were developed "off her actions". Although the parent did not provide input to the plan developed by workers, the parent agrees with the items.
- The parent only provided input at meetings when asked by facilitator, worker attended the meeting, but there was no one on one discussion with worker before or after these meetings.
- The agency told parent what he needed to do and there was no input from the parent.

- The parent provided input regarding the ongoing need for rehabilitation. Video visits with the children have started recently for once weekly. The parent is unclear about what the children's case plans are. The parent talks to the worker about the services he is participating in in an inpatient program and the worker "adds them to the list".
- The mom was able to choose if she wanted to continue with the In-Home Services twice per month through another agency during the period under review. All the other services were chosen by the worker and the court.
- The workers developed case plans and gave plan to the parent. The parent told workers that he had completed some of the services, but they made him do more of the same services. The parent believes he can evaluate progress and stated that he is 'making a lot of improvement but the workers don't see progress.
- The parent provided the bare minimum as was handed the treatment plan and told to work the plan and that she could not just check off boxes. As a result, parent was anxious to get involved in services. The worker didn't ask what was learned, what was achieved. The parent believes worker was not in contact with provider as the provider told mom there was no contact with the worker.

The Parents were asked to describe a typical case planning discussion with their CYFD worker. This is a sample of their responses:

- The parent "talked to the worker about the case plan before the worker put the plan together but the worker pretty much told mom what needed to be done".
- Discussions about case planning have not occurred. The workers are not responsive to the parent. Parent was incarcerated for fines and agency refused to reschedule a meeting to discuss the mediation between the relative foster parents and parents. The agency supervisor has lunch with the relative foster parents so there appears to be a conflict of interest.
- The worker continues to talk about the parents' need for training but there is no direct observation to indicate that the parents need training. Worker has not observed the parents in the parenting role with the child and instead takes the word of the ARCA staff.
- The worker and parent talked about progress that has been made, mom's recovery, unsupervised visits, attendance at NA meetings. These issues have been addressed during the monthly home visits between parent and worker. The worker and parent talk about these issues and tasks as they have been completed.
- The worker encourages parent to continue working on the plan and the services. The worker provides a lot of encouragement for the parent to make progress towards reunification.
- It is very difficult for parent to reach the worker, so no discussions have occurred about case planning.
- Discussed with the worker the case plan and progress being made.
- The workers were trying to find places that would take mom for inpatient services, but the services did not work out for health reasons as they don't provide good medical care.

- The worker talks about need to attend more of the children's appointments and need to continue showing behavioral changes which mom doesn't really understand what that means as she left the baby's daddy, has housing, and is financially stable now.
- The parent had a few conversations with worker about case plan and typically just reviewed what was left to be done.
- Case planning items are discussed in court and mom attends all hearings. The worker tells mom what the plan contains after the plan is presented to judge.
- The parent and worker talk about what parent needs to do, worker talks with mom about what is left on treatment plan and the need for housing before transition home can begin.
- The parent asked worker repeatedly what parent needed to do, but worker never got back to the parent about what needed to be done, no follow-up from worker. Parent consistently told to keep doing what she is doing with UA's and medication management.
- There are no discussions about case planning with the workers due to multiple workers assigned.
- The parent tells worker what his treatment plan is via the inpatient program. The worker is happy and proud of the work the parent is doing, then adds to the list of the things that are in the case plan. -The parent and worker review the plan.
- The worker followed up in conversation about how mom was doing on the case plan, they talked about the services, they talked about how parent was doing at work as well.
- The parent stated that the same plan is reviewed during every visit. In court, workers report that the parent hasn't met goals on case plan which parent disputes.
- There were one-way conversations of parent giving the worker information. Parent felt that it was a template of basic needs that all parents participate in, i.e. counseling, taking kids to places and not defined for this parent.
- The worker goes through the itemized case plan. Worker says where they are doing great or discusses when the issues need to be addressed more or differently to accomplish the goal. The parent can give input and opinion.

Administrative Office of the Courts Judicial Officer Interview

At the end of May 2024, the Court Improvement Project (CIP) Director with the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts interviewed Judicial Officers on cases in the past year. Below are the interview questions and responses provided:

What are some strengths that you have observed in the case planning process?

Judicial Officers see the outcome of those meetings at the custody hearings. At the Second Judicial District, parties are collaboratively working on the case planning process. For a long time, "cookie-cutter" plans were proposed. Now, judicial officers can ask the agency why they are asking for a certain plan, and the agency can respond to the basics. As there are few objections by the parent attorneys, it is assumed that parents were involved. Attorneys are involved in the case planning process in the Seventh Judicial District.

What are some suggestions that you would offer to improve the case planning process?

Judicial Officers should ask the parties if the plan was developed in a collaborative way.

How are case plans for children and families documented in your jurisdiction?
Case plans are seen as part of court report. Occasionally, a parent will object to something; in those plans, and the court will look to see if the order was approved by all parties. If so, then the court asks why it was approved by all parties when one parent was objecting.

Do you believe that the case plans for children and youth on your caseload includes services that are important and relevant to their wellbeing?
The Court and parties need the court report from CYFD ahead of time; however, this is a big challenge. Regarding children, it is very difficult for children to get therapeutic services in place. CYFD will make referrals and get them on the waitlist, but it can be months before a child sees a provider. This appears to be a Systemic issue in New Mexico in obtaining appropriate therapeutic resources.

Do you believe that the case plans for families on your caseload includes services that are important and relevant to improving their parenting capacity?
Parents are not getting all the services needed, and there are issues with the lack of services. It is an internal battle for the CYFD to seek in-patient treatment. Have also seen some "rubber stamping," for example, there are some services made part of every case plan such as domestic violence treatment when domestic violence wasn't part of the issue for removal.

CYFD makes a lot of referrals, but there is not a lot of effort afterwards (i.e. follow-up, help, warm handoff). This is likely due to the agency being understaffed and the high turnover causing a lack of experience.

What are some primary reasons fathers are not as engaged in case planning as mothers? (This was a finding in CFSR Round 3.)
There is more resistance from CYFD to reunifying with fathers, and fathers seem to be supervised longer for trial home visits. Fathers of color have even more efforts to overcome to reunify with children. There is a lack of effort to seek out fathers and talk to fathers. For example:

- Dad is named in the motion but there are no initial efforts to find him. Months and months into a case, they are suddenly trying to find him.
- Attorneys sometimes ask the agency if they have looked on social media for the father, and they have not.
- There is a lack of push back when mother says she doesn't know who/where the father is.

There is a presumption that incarcerated parents cannot be engaged. Some CYFD staff act like incarceration is a full stop to engagement. For example, one day in two different hearings, one PPW will say a dad is incarcerated so they cannot speak with them, and in next case the PPW will share there was difficulty using the app, but they have been in contact. In some cases, incarceration can be a "communication benefit" because you know where they are.

What are some barriers to developing a Case Plan?
Case planning does not contain all necessary information, can feel very repetitive and may not address issues that brought the children into custody, don't address the needs of the whole families, and does not have buy in from all family members.

State Rating:
Item 20 within the case review system has been assessed as an **area needing improvement**.

Item 21: How well is the case review system 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?

Relevant Procedures:
Child Protective Services Legal Services Procedures (8.10.7.119) PR 19 – Documentation to the Court

Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.15) PR 15 – Initial Judicial Reviews, First Permanency Hearing and Subsequent Hearings.

Procedure Summary:
Permanency Planning Procedure PR 15 outlines that the initial judicial review is held within 60 days of the disposition. The CYFD Permanency Planning Worker (PPW) is responsible for following up with community providers, such as medical and mental health providers and teachers, to review the case plan for the parent, guardian or custodian and the child to assess the relevancy, progress and appropriateness of case plan activities and the child's permanency goal. The PPW is responsible for completing the court report, located in FACTS, and is responsible for filing the report with the court five days prior to the hearing

The initial permanency hearing occurs within six months of the initial judicial review or no later than 12 months after the date the child entered foster care, whichever occurs first. The PPW is responsible for completing the court report, located in FACTS, and is responsible for filing the report with the court five days prior to the hearing

The court holds subsequent review hearings every six months when a child is in PSD custody; depending on the date the child entered custody, the court holds a hearing every 6 months that could be the permanency hearing or a subsequent judicial review. The PPW is responsible for completing the court report five days prior to ongoing judicial hearings and permanency hearings.

Child Protective Services Legal Services Procedures (8.10.7.119) PR 19 – Documentation to the Court states that the PW prepares the judicial review report to document the progress or lack thereof in the case and presents this report to the court prior to each judicial review and the permanency hearing. The report includes:

1. The child's safety and risk of future abuse or neglect;
2. The child's permanency plan;
3. Reasonable efforts made to achieve the child's permanency plan;

4. A description of the child's placement including consideration of the ability of the placement to meet the child's needs, least restrictive and close proximity;
5. Parent(s)'s compliance with the court ordered treatment plan;
6. Modifications to the treatment plan if required; and
7. If the child's plan is adoption, efforts made to identify a permanent home for the child.

Round 3 Performance and Background:

New Mexico received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Data in the statewide assessment and clarified through stakeholder interviews demonstrated that periodic reviews were occurring routinely throughout the state. The state uses scheduling orders to schedule hearings in advance and reports to alert the agency and courts of hearing time frames.

Analysis:

Over the last year, the Title IV-E/Medicaid unit in tandem with Children's Court Managing Attorneys and Children's Court Attorneys have been conducting legal reviews following the same schedule and using the same case sample list (omitting In-Home Services cases) as the CFSR QA case review. This data is currently being analyzed for use in the New Mexico's Statewide Assessment in preparation for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review. Although CYFD has seen consistent hearing happening every 6 months, there could be improved documentation of these hearings. There has also been a trend of hearings not happening in a timely manner due to court delays and the need for more docket time.

Administrative Office of the Courts Judicial Officer Interview

At the end of May 2024, the Court Improvement Project (CIP) Director with the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts interviewed Judicial Officers on cases in the past year. Below is the interview question regarding Item 21 and the response provided:

Do you believe that court hearings are held on behalf of the children on your caseload every six months?

Yes. In the Odyssey system, some of the permanency hearings entered will say "Held," but there are no findings from the hearing; it appears to be a review status and not a permanency hearing.

State Rating*:* Item 21 within the case review system has been assessed as an area needing improvement due to the need for better tracking and evaluation of how often judicial reviews and permanency hearings are occurring. New Mexico believes hearing are occurring every 6 months, but it appears they are not always being captured accurately in the FACTS system or the Odessey System. CYFD will also need to update the Legal Case Review tool to improve data collection.

Item 22: How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

Relevant Procedures:
Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.15) PR 15 – Initial Judicial Reviews, First Permanency Hearing and Subsequent Hearings.

Procedure Summary:
Permanency Planning Procedure PR 15 provides information on the pre-permanency meeting, the initial permanency hearing, and ongoing subsequent judicial review hearing and permanency hearings.

The pre-permanency meeting occurs prior to the initial permanency hearing. Participants invited include the: Permanency Planning Worker (PPW), the PPW supervisor, the Children's Court Attorney (CCA), court appointed special advocate (CASA), respondents, resource parents, respondents' attorneys, youth attorney, the guardian ad litem and the child, if appropriate. Notice of this meeting is provided to all parties by the CCA. The pre-permanency meeting gives participants an opportunity to settle issues pertaining to the recommended permanency plan prior to the initial permanency hearing

The initial permanency hearing occurs within six months of the initial judicial review or no later than 12 months after the date the child entered foster care, whichever occurs first. The PPW is responsible for completing the court report, located in FACTS, and is responsible for filing the report with the court five days prior to the hearing

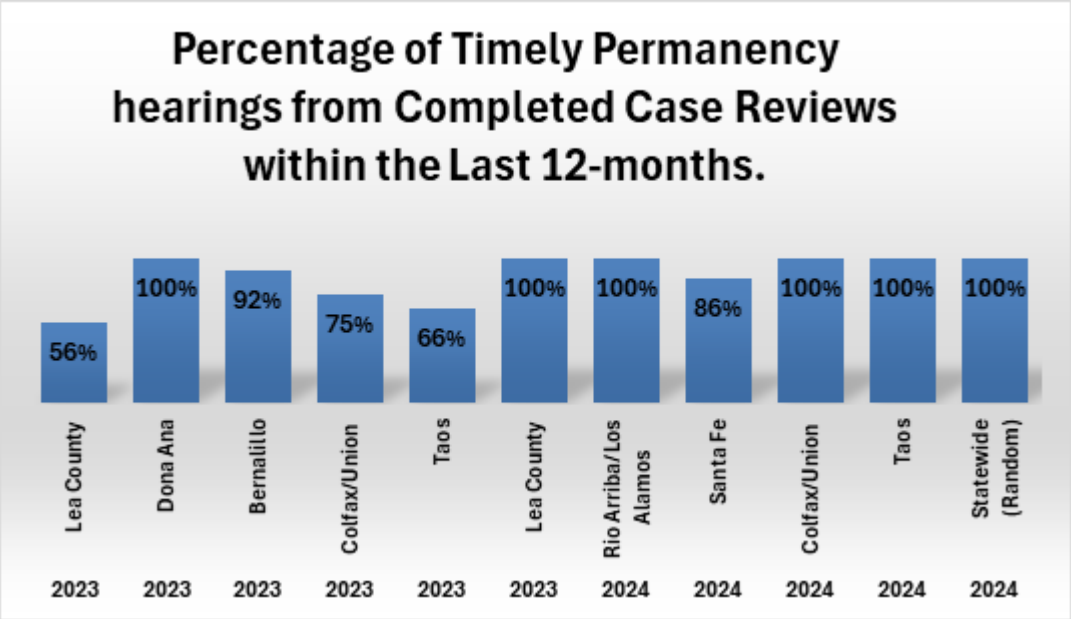
The court holds subsequent review hearings every six months when a child is in PSD custody; depending on the date the child entered custody, the court holds a hearing every 6 months that could be the permanency hearing or a subsequent judicial review. The CYFD Permanency Planning Worker (PPW) is responsible for following up with community providers, such as medical and mental health providers and teachers, to review the case plan for the parent, guardian or custodian and the child to assess the relevancy, progress and appropriateness of case plan activities and the child's permanency goal. The PPW is responsible for completing the court report, located in FACTS, and is responsible for filing the report with the court five days prior to the hearing

Round 3 Performance and Background:
New Mexico received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Data in the statewide assessment and supported through stakeholder interviews demonstrated that initial and ongoing permanency hearings were occurring timely in the majority of cases. The state uses scheduling orders to schedule hearings in advance and FACTS tracking reports to alert the agency and courts of hearing time frames.

Analysis:
Item 22 is reviewed as part of the Legal Case Review that happens in tandem with the monthly CFSR QA reviews. The legal review follows the same schedule and uses the same case sample list (omitting In-Home Services cases) as the CFSR QA case review.

The case review system is functioning statewide as a Strength and is ensuring that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

Permanency hearings are documented in FACTS and a copy of the court orders located in the hard file. As shown in the table below, 88.6 % of children had timely permanency hearings. Specific reasons as to why some permanency hearings were not held in a timely manner may be due to continuances, preparation for court, or not having all parties present.



CYFD Legal Case Review Data 2023-2024

Strengths and Challenges Identified During the Legal Case Review: Overall most of the cases reviewed are held on a timely basis within the 12-month period. Some challenges identified include staff shortage and their ability to maintain adequate coverage for other counties outside their jurisdiction. Additional challenges include systematic issues such as continuances, docket issues, and client legal representation.

Administrative Office of the Courts Judicial Officer Interview
At the end of May 2024, the Court Improvement Project (CIP) Director with the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts interviewed Judicial Officers on cases in the past year. Below is the interview question regarding Item 22 and the response provided:

Do you believe that continuances of hearings negatively impacts timely permanency?
Yes. The root of the issue is not the continuance itself, but that CYFD is not prepared to move the case forward. Most common reasons for continuance are that the CYFD does not have a court report and/or when a report is submitted, no work has been done with the family to support what is in the court report.

Hearings are also continued due to the respondent attorney, guardian ad litem, youth attorney, or client not being present. There are a few respondent attorneys who request continuances

continually or don't show up to court; this is not happening all the time, but when it does, it is detrimental to the case.

There have also been a few instances when CYFD does not get the finding of "reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan," CYFD wants to push for trial home visit instead of trying again to meet reasonable efforts or Termination of Parental Rights.

Stakeholder Questions on Case Planning Progress Toward Permanency – Parents

In preparation for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review, CYFD interviewed a randomly selected number of parents who were involved with CYFD.

Do you understand the purpose and content of your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	20	66.67%
No	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Comments from Parent Interviews:

- The parent stated the plan was to help keep everything in order and to keep the children safe.
- The parent stated that the case plan is not consistent with what is told to the parent or court.
- Parent states that he asked about an action plan to have child returned to the home. The parent was told there was not a plan to return child to their home and only considering placement of child with other parent in another state.
- Parent understood plan to address issues that are keeping her from having children in the home.
- The parent understands that case plan would identify what steps need to be taken to have children returned to her care.
- According to the agency, plan is developed to address parent child relationship and bring the child back into the home in reunification with the parents. This was not what happened in the case.
- Parent does not understand the purpose and content but knows it has all been done as the worker has told the parent that the parent has checked off all the boxes.
- Parent stated purpose is "to make treatment plan on how to move forward, talk about barriers and what needs to occur."
- Parent understood that these were the things she needed to do to get kids back home. The mother set up counseling for kids and no ongoing services were needed.

Stakeholder Questions on Case Planning Progress Toward Permanency – Youth
In preparation for Round 4 of the Child and Family Services Review, CYFD interviewed a randomly selected number of youth who were involved with CYFD.

During the review period, did you know what your permanency goal was? (N=30)		
Yes	25	83.33%
No	5	16.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Comments from Youth Interviews:

- Youth thinks permanency goal is Independent Living as worker talked to Youth Attorney about plan but not to directly to youth.
- Permanency goal is currently adoption but will be switched to guardianship as he is residing with relatives and doesn't see need for adoption as a result.
- Age out at 18.
- Initially goal was reunification, but then changed after 14 months as goal didn't work. Now the goal is guardianship. As youth is over 14, she stated that she has a lot of say in case plan, goals, and outcomes.
- Youth stated permanency goal is to stay in relative foster care until 18 or after until ready to emancipate. However, FACTS record indicates the permanency plan is reunification.

State Rating:
Although there are issues with continuances and there are improvements that need to be made in preparation for court and ensuring the court report accurately reflects what is happening in the case, there is an indication that permanency hearings are occurring every 12 months. Additionally, parent and youth interviews indicate there is knowledge of case goals and permanency goals. Despite some of some of the extenuating circumstances that occur in tandem with the permanency hearing, permanency hearings are happening, therefore the state has determined that this item is in substantial conformity.

Item 23: How well is the case review system functioning to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?

Relevant Procedures:
Child Protective Legal Services Procedures (8.10.7.22) PR 22 – Termination of Parental Rights
Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.12) PR 13 – The Permanency Plan
Procedure Summary:

A motion to terminate parental rights may be filed at any stage of the abuse or neglect proceedings. CYFD only pursues motions to terminate parental rights when the child's plan is adoption or when it is clinically indicated. Based upon the written recommendations of the child's mental health provider, the Permanency Planning Worker (PPW), in consultation with the supervisor may recommend termination of parental rights for a child who does not have a plan of adoption. The PPW holds a staffing to include the PPW supervisor, children's court attorney, and the child's mental health provider to consider termination of parental rights. The CYFD worker documents the staffing in the Meetings window in FACTS. If the decision is made to pursue termination of parental rights absent a plan of adoption, the CYFD worker justifies the decision in the case record and, through FACTS documents the request for termination.

The Permanency Planning Worker (PPW) requests the children's court attorney files a motion to terminate parental rights. Within 15 days of the request, the children's court attorney schedules a conference with the PPW and PPW supervisor to review the information collected and identify any information that is lacking. The PPW, PPW supervisor and the children's court attorney establish time frames not to exceed 30 days for the submission of the remainder of the information.

The children's court attorney files the motion to terminate parental rights at the earlier of the following:

1. Within 45 days of the change of plan to adoption;
2. Within 30 days of the receipt of all necessary information for filing the motion from the CYFD worker;
3. Within 60 days of a judicial determination that further efforts to reunify would be futile;
4. Within 60 days of a judicial determination a child less than one year old has been abandoned.

In the case of a child who has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, CYFD files a motion to terminate parental rights by the end of the 15th month in foster care, unless the child is being cared for by a relative or CYFD has documented compelling reasons for not filing. Entry into foster care is defined as the earlier of 60 days from the date of removal from the home or the date of the first judicial determination of child abuse or neglect. Sixty days before the start of the 15th month as above defined, the PPW, PPW supervisor and children's court attorney meet to determine whether the permanency plan is or will be changed to adoption and a motion for TPR filed. If the plan is not adoption, then CYFD presents to the court documentation of the compelling reasons why a motion for termination of parental rights will not be filed by the time the child has been in foster care for 15 out of the most recent 22 months. This is done either by a CYFD report to the court, at a permanency hearing, or by a notice pleading filed by the children's court attorney if there is no permanency hearing scheduled prior to the end of the 15th month.

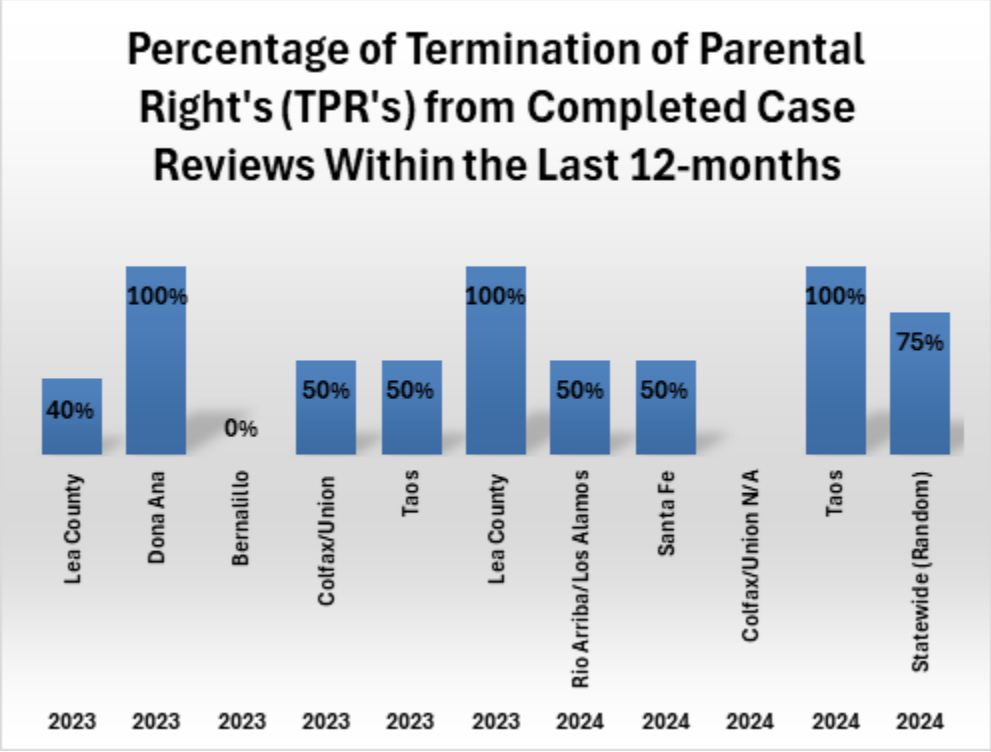
A change of plan staffing is scheduled at any time in a case when a change in the child's permanency plan is indicated. The change of plan staffing may coincide with other staffings or meetings or may be held as a separate event. A change of plan staffing is held within 10 days of

any permanency hearing if the court orders a plan different than the one recommended by CYFD.

Round 3 Performance and Background:
New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. In the statewide assessment, New Mexico provided information that revealed delays in filing for termination of parental rights (TPR) in appropriate circumstances. Stakeholders confirmed that the state does not file TPR petitions in a timely manner and that delays are the result of a recent shortage of agency attorneys and delays in providing services to parents with a plan of reunification.

Analysis:
Item 23 is reviewed as part of the Legal Case Review that happens in tandem with the monthly CFSR QA reviews. The legal review follows the same schedule and uses the same case sample list (omitting In-Home Services cases) as the CFSR QA case review.

Item 23, Filing of TPR, is mixed as functioning across the state for ensuring that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions; however, data reflects an area needing improvement for the average. As shown in the below table, Dona Ana, Lea County (second review cycle), and Taos counties are performing well, while Bernalillo, Colfax/Union, Rio Arriba/Los Alamos, and Santa Fe are not completing TPR timely. The state performance regarding timely TPR was 62%.



CYFD Legal Case Review Data 2023-2024

Strengths and Challenges Identified During the Legal Case Review: New Mexico had three counties at 100% and the Statewide review at 75%, the remaining counties were at or below 50%. Some challenges identified is lack of documentation for change of plan staffing to determine timeliness of the filing of the termination of parental rights, lack of communication between change of plan staffing and TPR, lack of communication to the court through court reporting, and lack of documentation in the FACTS system.

State Rating: Item 23 within the case review system has been assessed as an area needing improvement due to the need for better tracking and communication on filing for Termination of Parental Rights, and the need for better communication and documentation to the court.

Item 24: How well is the case review system 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?

Relevant Procedures:

- NMAC, Child Protective Legal Services, Section 20 – Notice and Opportunity to be Heard at Reviews.
- Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.14) PR 14 – Adjudication and Disposition
- Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.15) PR 15 – Initial Judicial Reviews, First Permanency Hearing and Subsequent Hearings

Procedure Summary:
Permanency Planning Procedures PR 14 and PR 15 instruct CYFD workers to provide notification prior to hearings. Foster parents, pre-adoptive parents or relatives providing care to the child, as well as the designated tribal agent of the Indian child's tribe or pueblo are given notification of hearing at least seven days prior to the hearing. The PPW will ensure that the hearing notice is being sent to the foster care placement's correct address. Foster parents, pre-adoptive parents or relatives providing care to the child, as well as the designated tribal agent of the Indian child's tribe or pueblo are given notice of the opportunity to be heard at the hearing.

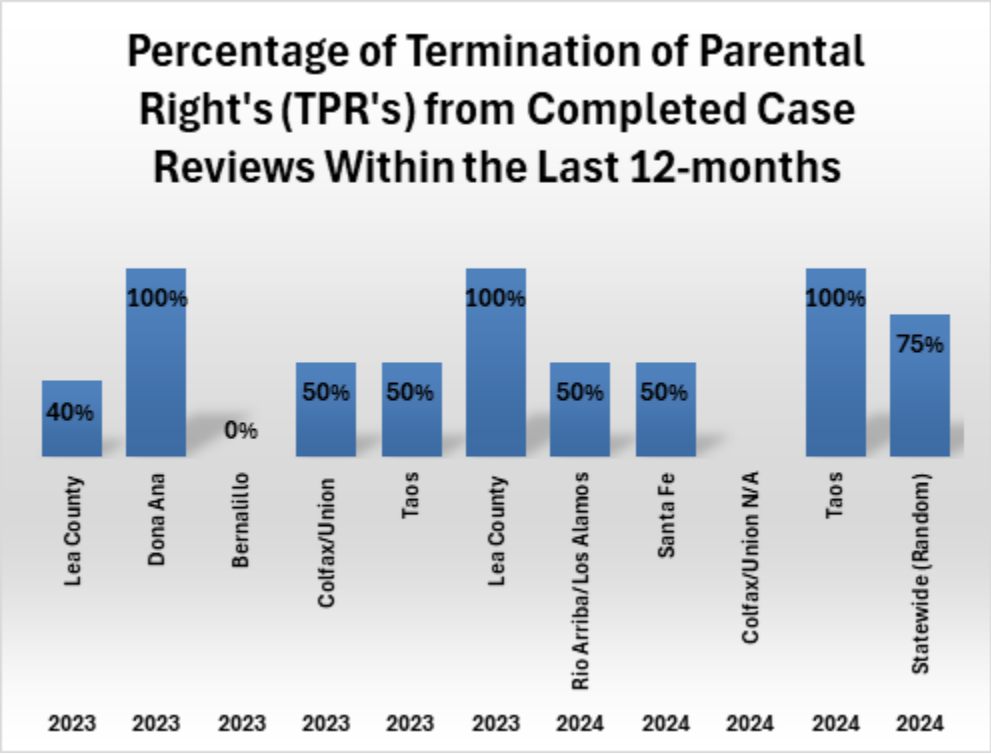
The New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) also provides that PSD shall give notice to all parties, the child's guardian ad litem or youth attorney if 14 years or older, the child's court appointed special advocate, the contractor administering the citizen review board, the child's resource family, pre-adoptive parents, or relative or fictive kin caregiver, of the time, place and purpose of any judicial review hearing held pursuant to the Children's Code, Subsections A or B of Section 32A-4-25 NMSA 1978, including hearings held after a termination of parental rights has occurred. Notice to the child's resource family, pre-adoptive parents, or relative or fictive kin caregiver shall include notice of the right to be heard at the review hearing. Such notice does not confer the right to stand as a party to the case.

Round 3 Performance and Background:
New Mexico 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 confirmed through stakeholder interviews indicated that although caseworkers often notify caregivers verbally of reviews or hearings, the practice is inconsistent and not always timely. The process for providing written notice to caregivers is hampered by incorrect placement locations in the agency's statewide information system. Stakeholders report that when notice is provided, caregivers are afforded their right to be heard.

Analysis:
Item 24 is reviewed as part of the Legal Case Review that happens in tandem with the monthly CFSR QA reviews. The legal review follows the same schedule and uses the same case sample list (omitting In-Home Services cases) as the CFSR QA case review.

Item 24, Notice to Foster Parent, Pre-Adoptive Parents, and Relative Caregivers, examines the process by which the agency ensures 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.

Currently, there is no data tracking for this process. The legal administrator and/or case worker prints and mails a copy of the notice to the caregiver. In the table below, data reflects that 32 % of the resource parents received notification of hearings held in respect to the child as documented in the file. This is an area needing improvement.



CYFD Legal Case Review Data 2023-2024

Strengths and Challenges Identified During the Legal Case Review Some counties in New Mexico have established a process to verify notifications were sent to resource parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers, in the case file. The challenge continues to be that not all counties provide verification of notices being sent and there is not a consistent process throughout the state.

State Rating: Item 23 within the case review system has been assessed as an **area needing improvement** due to lack of data available to assess the state's compliance with resource parent notifications, as well as qualitative data indicating that this aspect of casework is often lacking.

Quality Assurance System

Item 25: Quality Assurance System
How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it is:

1) Operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the 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

Relevant Procedure:
8.8.2.18 NMAC: Quality Assurance

Procedure Summary:
The Quality Assurance (QA) unit staff provide ongoing case reviews to ensure that families served by the Protective Services Division (PSD) are provided quality services in all counties in New Mexico. The QA unit conducts county-based quality assurance reviews in at least one county per month, reviewing at least 12 randomly selected cases from a sample of eligible cases served by the office. Annually statewide, at least 144 cases are reviewed. At the end of the on-site review, an exit conference is held to share the preliminary results with staff. The QA unit provides written reports to managing staff and executive leadership with results of the review identifying strengths and areas needing improvement.

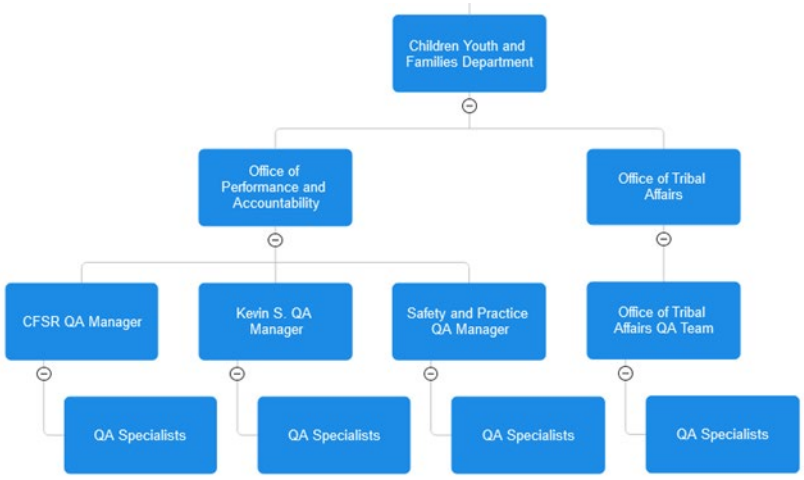
Management and Supervisory staff within the office develop and implement county-based program improvement plans to address areas needing improvement identified in the quality assurance review.

Round 3 Performance:
New Mexico's Quality Assurance (QA) System was found to be in substantial conformity with Federal Requirements in Round 3. New Mexico has a constellation of QA and CQI activities that together form a functioning system of QA. The state produces monthly management reports that address casework practices. The state produces quarterly and annual reports for the state and counties to monitor trends and engage stakeholders in identifying the state's performance and need for program improvements. A CQI workgroup monitors CQI activities and includes representatives from all regions in the state, workers, supervisors, and managers. The state has an ongoing qualitative case review process that uses the federal CFSR Round 3 Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions (OSRI). The process was demonstrated to CB as functioning, having good inter-rater reliability and appropriate application of the OSRI.

Analysis:
New Mexico has continuously been conducting Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) case reviews since Round 1 starting in 2000 as a pilot project. These reviews have been ongoing, non-stop, occurring monthly through QA traveling onsite to the identified counties being

reviewed. The QA team has utilized the Round 4 Federal On-Site Review Instrument and Instructions (OSRI) tool to assess safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes in cases since April of 2023.

New Mexico has 4 specialized QA Teams evaluating different criteria for a comprehensive assessment of performance. They include the CFSR QA Team, Safety and Practice QA Team, Kevin S. QA Team, and Office of Tribal Affairs QA Team. Although each team is separate and specialized, they work collaboratively to assess cases to the highest standards, ensuring compliance with state policies, procedures, laws and regulations as well as federal rules, laws and regulations. See the organizational structure below for the QA system.



Jurisdictional Operation

New Mexico is organized into 13 judicial districts covering the 33 counties within the state. The Quality Assurance System is operating and functioning statewide to ensure all jurisdictional districts covered by the Child and Families Services Plan are being reviewed to evaluate the quality of services being provided.

Evaluation Standards

New Mexico utilizes the federal evaluation standards set forth by Children and Families Services Review On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI). Prior to the State-led assessment, 50% of cases being reviewed were also being reviewed by the Children's Bureau after the QA unit reviewed the cases. The Children's Bureau was then providing their feedback on the review, enhancing the skills and confidence of the QA unit leading up to the State-led assessment.

When conducting the CFSR reviews, the QA team utilizes peer reviewers which they pair with for the purpose of reviewing. Peer reviewers are often other state employees from the many services of protective services division but have also included contracted service providers, in-home service workers and others. Prior to participating in an on-site review, all QA staff and identified peer reviewers will complete required training, including training modules offered through the Children's Bureau Online E-Training Platform and group learning sessions, lasting approximately seven hours. QA staff have additional training requirements including

supplementary mock case review, presenting case ratings, and completing a post-training multiple choice assessment.

Evaluation standards within the OSRI include elements of child safety, permanency, and child and family wellbeing, as well as an assessment of services and whether the services being provided to the family meet their identified needs.

In addition to using the OSRI to assess the safety and permanency of children in New Mexico, the CFSR Statewide Data Indicators are used as methods of evaluation within the child welfare system upon their publication each six months in February and August. New Mexico began evaluating the targeted counties exactly one year out from the state-led assessment. This allowed New Mexico to get a base line data profile with the round 4 OSRI tool, strengthening the assessment of strengths and area's needing improvement.

Strengths and Needs

After the cases have gone through the primary and secondary review process, items are identified as a strength or an area needing improvement based on supporting evidence.

To promote CQI and the transparency of the review process, the QA Team has opened all review related meetings to county management, supervisors, and staff. County staff are invited to attend and participate in the planning meetings for the case staffing's during review week, debriefings, the QA roll-up meeting, the exit conference, and the post review meeting with the second level consultant reviewer. County staff have continued to provide positive feedback about this change to process and have identified these meetings as important learning opportunities for staff.

On Tuesday-Thursday, the reviewers meet as a team to present brief case presentation and the outcome ratings upon completion of the case review process. At minimum the participants in the debriefing are the On-Site Team Lead, the reviewers, and county management. Other agency staff and contracted providers may be invited to the debriefings at the discretion of county management and the site lead. Reviewers may be excused from attendance in order to complete case-related interviews if no other alternative exists. The case debriefings are limited to 1 hour followed by a brief question and answer period. The purpose of this process is to promote consistency in the case review, build staff capacity, and provide case related feedback to the county. This will not be a time for additional information gathering for purposes of the review, as the review is complete by the time the team attends the staffing.

On Friday morning of the review week, the On-Site Team Lead facilitates the Roll-up Meeting. The reviewers and the county office manager or designee are required to participate in this meeting. Other agency staff and stakeholders may attend at the discretion of the site lead and county office manager. The purpose of this meeting is to review the item and outcome ratings to compile preliminary data, identify trends including areas of practice strength and areas needing improvement, and prepare for the exit meeting.

Reporting

Open Meetings: To promote CQI and the transparency of the review process, the QA Team has opened all review related meetings to county management, supervisors, and staff. County staff are invited to attend and participate in the planning meetings for the case staffing's during review week, debriefings, the QA roll-up meeting, the exit conference, and the post review meeting with the second level consultant reviewer. County staff have continued to provide positive feedback about this change to process and have identified these meetings as important learning opportunities for staff.

Timely Reports: The QA Team has committed to sending finalized reports to the county within six weeks of the review. In the last year, these final reports have been sent within three weeks of the review. The county is provided with the data from each review as well as the individual review instruments.

The final report includes quantitative and qualitative data from the review. The Report includes the following sections:

1. A summary of the review process and the sample
2. A summary of the information presented at the entrance meeting.
3. An overview of the strengths and challenges that were identified during the review, including promising practices and practice initiatives.
4. A summary of stakeholder involvement and service array if available.
5. The case rating data for foster care cases
6. The case rating data for the In-Home Services cases
7. The case rating data for prior county reviews
8. The annual case rating data
9. The case rating data from prior federal reviews
10. Any supplemental review data gathered during the review.

In addition to CFSR QA Reports, routine management reports are sent out statewide on a monthly and quarterly basis with performance data indicators to provide a continuous evaluation method on CFSR related items along with general operating data. These reports detail statewide outcomes and county specific outcomes. All executive leadership, managerial staff and supervisors have access to the Results Oriented Management (ROM) system which contains data dashboards on federal performance measures, and county specific data that is routinely up to date. This allows for leadership to stay up to date on performance measures related to their service areas and track progress on program improvements.

Program Improvements

Following each QA review, the QA manager sends all finalized OSRI's and other important reports to the COM and Regional Manager so that the information can be used to develop a County Improvement Plan (CIP). Each QA team member is assigned a region, and that worker will reach out to their COM's to be a support throughout the implementation of their County Improvement Plan. Each QA team member offers ongoing consultations that can help support

the implementation of their individual plans and can offer guidance on best practices, policy and procedures, and overall answer any question regarding Federal Requirements for better outcomes for children and families served.

Following the review, the County Office manager and the county team develop their CIP. The plan should focus on two to three primary areas of attention and include measurable goals for progress. The QA team and other Office of Performance and Accountability staff are available to the county to provide technical support in developing the plan using the systematic CQI problem-solving process, including Adaptive Leadership and the Office Hours framework, training and coaching, and monitoring of progress.

State Response [to Rating]:
New Mexico's QA unit operates in all jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Families Services Plan (CFSP) are provided. The QA unit 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) as demonstrated by being approved by the Children's Bureau to conduct a state-lead CFSR. Utilizing the federal On-Site Review Instrument (OSRI) the QA unit identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system. After reviews, the QA unit provides relevant reports to staff, supervisors, management and executive leadership in a timely manner. Following each review, a County Improvement Plan (CIP) is collaboratively created to address areas needing improvement. Systems and data reports are in place to allow management staff to routinely track county specific data to determine the effectiveness of those improvements. New Mexico has assessed the state's performance on this systemic factor continues to be **a strength.**

Staff and Provider Training

Item 26: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions?

Relevant Procedure:

- 8.8.2.21 NMAC: Qualifications and Training of Staff
- 8.8.2.23 NMAC: Employee Safety
- 8.8.2.27 NMAC: CYFD Supervision Framework

Procedure Overview:

Pre-Service Training is for all new social and community services coordinators working in a PSD county office, Statewide Central Intake, and other staff as determined by supervisors and managers. Staff must complete the Pre-Service Training before they are eligible to have a primary case assignment in FACTS. PSD Pre-Service Training, also commonly referred to as NET (New Employee Training) and includes, but is not limited to, five weeks of classroom training, including one week of legal training, and three weeks of on-the-job training (OJT). Placement and In-Home Services staff shall complete additional pre-service training in those specialty areas as soon after employment as possible.

Supervisory Training is available for all new PSD supervisors and managers. Supervisors and Managers must begin the nine-day PSD Supervisory Core within six months of commencing supervision or management responsibilities.

Round 3 Performance:

New Mexico 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 through stakeholder interviews revealed that the agency's newly implemented training program did not equip all new staff with the array of skills needed to do their jobs in all practice areas. Stakeholders reported that the new training program did not sufficiently prepare workers providing in-home and permanency services. Additionally, stakeholders said that training in areas such as policy, procedure, and FACTS was needed early in their careers. New Mexico did have a mechanism for tracking attendance and completion of initial training, and workers are not assigned caseloads until training is completed.

Analysis:

Staff Training: Currently, Protective Services Department (PSD) has a training and staff development program that supports the goals and objectives of the Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP). Because our training program is responsive to the CFSP, we utilize a continuous quality improvement model, thus utilizing state data to inform necessary practice change, which often includes training. The training program is based on a continuum of professional development strategies, including self-paced learning, coaching, culture shift, and development through supervision. Training activities are designed to support safety, permanency, and well-being of children and PSD's CFSP Plan for Improvement goals. The workforce is led through

individual and group development that is role-specific and focused on trauma responsiveness. Individual training requirements and completion are tracked through CYFD's learning management system, Cornerstone.

Initial Staff Professional Development: All new CYFD employees, including PSD staff, attend New Employee Onboarding within their first 2 weeks of employment. The week-long program provides staff with the information they need to start their CYFD careers successfully as well as an introduction to key concepts and skills that will be reinforced as the staff moves into their division-specific training programs. New employees of PSD are sent within their first 30 days of hire to the New Employee Training (NET). NET was launched in January 2020. In 2024, the program was revamped and launched to be more interactive and adult-learning-based. In addition, the program has migrated from a virtual format back to an in-person format and re-introduced the simulation lab that provides new hires the opportunity to practice new skills and receive real-time coaching and feedback.

The NET training emphasizes seven foundational areas of knowledge for entry-level workers: Cultural Humility, Child Welfare History and Values, ICWA/IFPA, Engagement, Interviewing, Assessment, Ethics, and Organization. The seven foundational areas were determined via an assessment of training. Focus groups with PSD leadership, regional-based Coaches, and supervisors provided feedback used to guide the curriculum development. Regular summative evaluations are administered to determine the lasting quality and effectiveness of the training. Findings are used to make needed updates to content and delivery methodologies.

Employees complete five weeks of classroom and experiential training with corresponding on-the-job training, followed by a comprehensive self- and supervisor-driven assessment of skills facilitated and evaluated by their regional-based coach. An Individualized Development Plan results from the assessment. The new hire, supervisor, and coach work together to develop job proficiency during the new hires' first six months. The new hire also participates in role-specific Peer Learning Networks regularly. These sessions provide an opportunity for new hires to learn from each other with the guidance of a regional coach.

NET is designed for the new hire to receive the fundamental skills and knowledge needed to achieve safety, healing, permanency, and well-being for all New Mexico children. NET is module-based, so that employees who do not meet the baseline of knowledge, according to their supervisor, can return to take modules where they need support. Modules included are:

Child Welfare Values and Laws	Overview of Mental Health, Domestic Violence, and Substance Abuse; and Connection with Child Welfare
ICWA/IFPA Requirements	Family Engagement
Protective Services Best Practices	Adolescent Engagement
Cultural Humility	Child Maltreatment
Safety Organized Practice and Structured Decision Making	Genograms
Ethics	Trauma and Trauma-Informed Practice
Motivational Interviewing	Managing a Caseload
Documentation	Protective Services Legal 101
Emotional Intelligence	

The on-the-job training is a combination of self-paced learning and intentional engagement between the new employee, supervisor, and senior worker. Each week is guided by an on-the-job manual that provides learning activities via online training, shadowing, observing, case review, guided interviews with co-workers, and other activities. The sequence of activities corresponds with the order of the NET modules.

Employees meet with a Regional Based Coach during their on-the-job training weeks. Utilizing an assessment tool, the Coach guides the new employee to determine the learning needs of the employee post-completion of NET and how to best build those needed competencies. The assessment was developed in collaboration with the Center for States and mirrors the seven foundational areas of knowledge for Caseworkers on a continuum from Novice to Advanced to Master. The self-assessment results, input from the supervisor, and guidance from their regional coach are used to create an Individualized Development Plan for the new hire. This provides a concrete plan of ongoing training, coaching, and group involvement to continue building their understanding of and ability to implement child welfare best practices for safety, permanency, and well-being over the following six months. The employee has the opportunity to continue working with the Coach individually and is required to attend the Peer Learning Networks for the first six months of their employment. They may utilize their Coach and attend Peer Learning Networks throughout their CYFD career. Ongoing participation is highly encouraged.

The Coach serves as the new employee's professional development partner, thus setting and supporting goals for their professional development to build knowledge, skills and abilities aligned with an array of child welfare models. The Coach works with the employee to develop vital job knowledge, system knowledge and best practice skills.

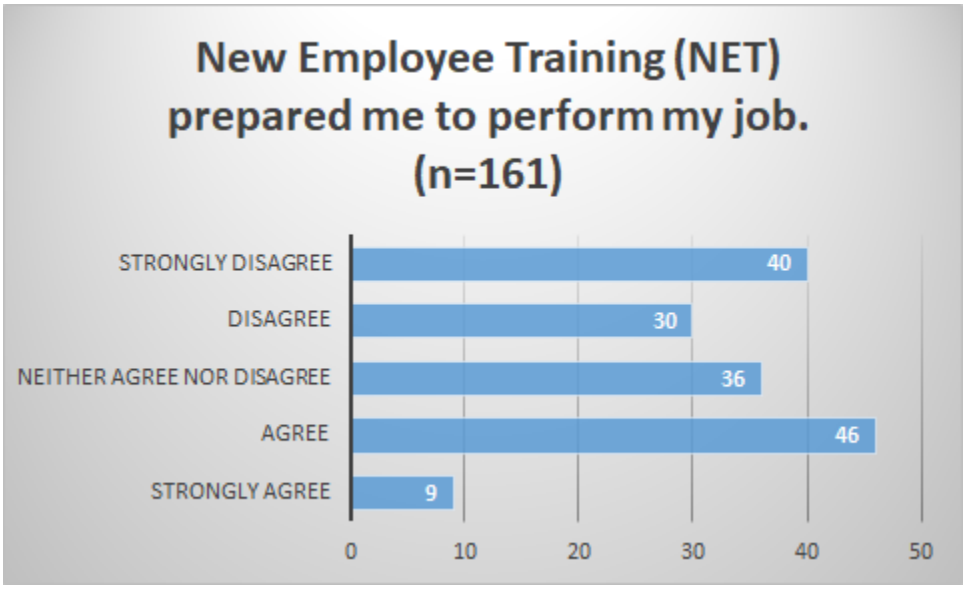
Throughout 2021 and 2022, CYFD worked to develop and finalize a cross-departmental Trauma-responsive Training and Coaching Plan which was approved by the Co-Neutrals of the Kevin S.

Settlement Agreement in December of 2022. The Training and Coaching Plan directs CYFD''s Workforce Development Bureau to develop and provide:

- Novice Trauma-Responsive training for all new and existing CYFD staff interacting with children, youth, and families;
- A trauma-responsive coaching tool to incorporate trauma-responsive conversations into individual and regional coaching plans;
- Ongoing advanced level trauma-informed and trauma-responsive care training for CYFD staff and leaders; and
- Additional leadership level opportunities and resources for supervisors and managers to develop skills needed to guide staff's development of a trauma-responsive care approach.

All new and existing CYFD workers will complete 2.5 hours of introductory-level/novice Trauma-Responsive Training. All new workers will receive coaching during their first six months. A minimum of two (2) coaching sessions are required for all new Protective Services Department (PSD) hires. Coaching is extended to all existing PSD staff, supervisors and leaders. As of April 1, 2022, supervisors, leaders, or workers can request coaching services using Cornerstone, the Workforce Development learning management system. This provides greater access to coaching services and an improved method of determining coaching needs, including coaching regarding trauma. The full training and coaching plan can be found here: Implementation Target A 2.1 Outline.

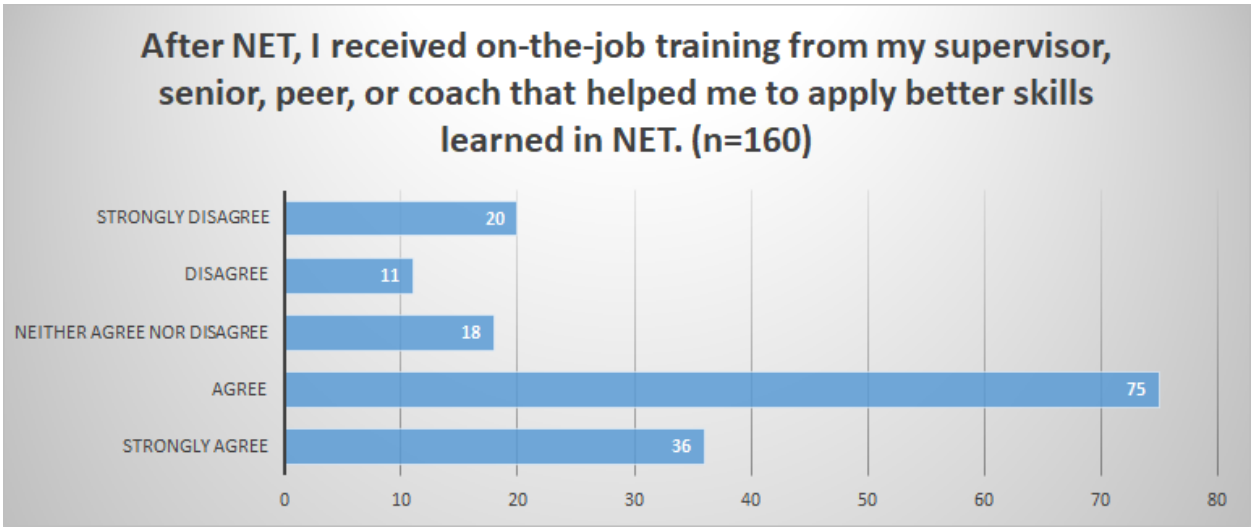
Current staff, consisting of behavioral health, family services, investigations, legal, permanency, placement, SCI, and supporting offices were surveyed about their experiences while being employed with the agency. There was a total of 323 respondents, 195 staff and 128 Supervisors/Managers from approximately 1200 surveyed, a response rate of ~26.9%. Their feedback about NET is shown in the figures below.



CYFD CFSR Staff Survey

Staff were able to provide open ended feedback as to what is going well and what could be improved, some of the themes that were consistent with feedback is NET is perceived as overwhelming with the amount of information covered in the time allotted and several employees report NET needs to be redesigned to meet the needs of the staff. Staff have criticized trainers in NET for deferring questions to their office supervisors as they feel this leads to conflicting information or differing practices between offices. Staff have also expressed wanting NET to be organized chronologically and go through the life of a case from start to finish. Staff feel the current structure is out of order, causing confusion for new workers.

Staff report a higher quality of on-the-job training after going through NET as seen in the figure below.



CYFD CFSR Staff Survey

In 2023, the Workforce Development Bureau (WDB) offered a diverse range of New Employee Training (NET) programs to ensure that new hires are adequately prepared to deliver high-quality child and family services. To determine the percentage of new employees who completed the NET sessions, we calculate the total number of completions and compare it to the total number of enrollments across all NET courses. A total of 407 training sessions were conducted, with a total enrollment of 19,885 employees. Out of these, 9,429 employees successfully completed their training, resulting in a completion rate of approximately 47.42%. A limitation of this data is being unable to deduplicate enrollment by employee, meaning if a worker signed up for a course, had to drop, then signed up again later and completed the course, they would count twice for enrollment and once for completion, contributing towards the seemingly low completion rate.

Having identified courses with lower completion rates, targeted improvements are being made to boost engagement and training efficacy.

In preparation for the Statewide assessment, interviews were conducted with lived experts with experience in the child welfare system. Attempts were made to survey 203 parents, guardians, or caregivers statewide who received services by the agency during the period under review (April 1, 2023 – April 1, 2024), a total of 30 parents, guardians, or caregivers participated in the

interview. Of the 30 respondents, 19 were mothers, 10 were fathers, and 1 was a stepmother. Parents reported mostly negative feedback when asked if they felt their CYFD worker was adequately trained and prepared to work with them. 73.33% (22/30) reported they did not feel their worker was adequately trained or prepared while 26.67% (8/30) reported their worker was adequately trained and prepared to work with them. When asked if they felt their worker was adequately trained and prepared to work with their children, 66.67% (20/30) reported “No” while 33.33% reported "Yes”" their worker was prepared and trained.

A total of 30 youth with lived experience, between the ages of 15 to 18 were also surveyed and provided their feedback on staff training. 70% (21/30) reported they thought their worker was adequately trained and prepared to work with them while 30% (9/30) did not.

States Response [to rating]:
New Mexico has an initial pre-service curriculum that is provided to all new employees who perform services on behalf of the agency. Staff receive training in accordance with the established curriculum and timeframes for the provision of initial training. Training evaluation and feedback loops are in place to monitor the quality of training to assess how well the initial training addresses basic skills and knowledge for staff to carry out their duties. Stakeholders reported mixed feedback about the quality of NET providing the basic skills and knowledge necessary for workers to fulfill their job responsibilities. New Mexico lacks the ability to reliably determine the completion rate of required trainings and does not have a reliable way to measure new employees' basic skills and knowledge before they are allowed to be the primary worker assigned to a case. New Mexico rates this item as an **area needing improvement**.

Item 27: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?

Relevant Procedure:

- 8.8.2.23 NMAC: Employee Safety
- 8.8.2.27 NMAC: CYFD Supervision Framework

Procedure Overview:
All social and community services coordinators working in Protective Services Division (PSD) county offices, Statewide Central Intake, and other staff as determined by supervisors and Managers shall participate in in-service training as required by PSD management. In addition, the PSD worker must meet any other training requirements set by their supervisor.

Supervisory Training is available for all new PSD supervisors and managers. Supervisors and Managers must begin the nine-day PSD Supervisory Core within six months of commencing supervision or management responsibilities.

Round 3 Performance:
New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the Statewide Assessment Instrument and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews showed that the agency lacks requirements for ongoing training and does not provide sufficient opportunity for ongoing training that equips the staff and supervisors across the state with the skills necessary to perform their work. New Mexico has not developed criteria to assess the knowledge and skills obtained as a result of participating in ongoing training.

Analysis:
On-going Workforce Development: (WDB) provides multiple opportunities for ongoing professional development of the PSD Workforce. Training is set up to meet the core competencies of each PSD role; ensuring staff have the skills and knowledge needed to carry out service duties included in the CFSP.

Professional development needs are determined by division leadership. This is done by reviewing the data to align professional development with the progress on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. Other strategies for determining professional development needs include reviewing promising best practices literature and seeking out feedback from external partners and consultants. Identified topic areas for professional development are provided by the WDB or external nationally or locally recognized experts. WDB works closely with workgroups and leadership to determine which roles of the workforce need each training, how often and at what level training should be provided, and what practical implementation support should be included to support the transfer of learning into practice change.

Professional development can be self-driven for individual employee needs or supervisors can determine additional development needed. There is a catalog of over 70 training opportunities

available to staff, either online or in the classroom. Employees also work with Regional Coaches using a self-reflective model to identify needed areas of improvement. Employees can self-refer to the Coach if or when they feel they are having difficulty with a specific competency or want to work on building their skill with a particular tool. A supervisor can also refer an employee to the Coaching program if they have assessed a need for additional learning support. Coaches increase the ability of the employee to provide support to families, resource families and children/youth improving outcomes and interactions with the PSD.

E-learnings are provided through Cornerstone, a cloud-based software accessible for all employees and providers to complete online training modules. There are currently over 500 available trainings; most are self-paced allowing individuals to pause and resume at a later time to remain flexible with their schedule. Additional online and in-person trainings are offered through the State Personnel Office (SPO). These trainings tend to be more comprehensive courses comprised of several modules and on average take ~10 hours to complete. These trainings are available to all New Mexico state employees for on-going training and professional growth.

In February 2021, PSD launched the new Supervisory Practice Framework. This knowledge and skills framework trains Supervisors to develop a holistic approach to managing employees, including Administration, Support, Education and Trauma Responsive. New Supervisors are required to complete training within 90 days of their hire. Employees who see themselves as Supervisors in the future are encouraged to take the training to prepare them for the role. The framework builds up our supervisors to manage their teams with child welfare-specific approaches and builds accountability for the ongoing professional development of their staff in their role. The Supervisory Practice Framework continues to be held regularly. Starting in FY23, new leaders completing the training are invited to participate in a Supervisor Peer Learning Network (PLN) group that will focus on support and problem-solving challenges new leaders face. Attendance has steadily increased with upwards of 30 leaders attending each monthly PLN session.

In May 2023 a Leadership Mentorship Program was launched. New supervisors are paired with existing experienced high-performing leaders. The pairs meet bi-weekly for a 4-month period. The new leader sets clear objectives and goals. The Mentor provides support toward reaching those goals. While we are in the process of piloting the program, we believe the program will increase the competency and retention of new leaders.

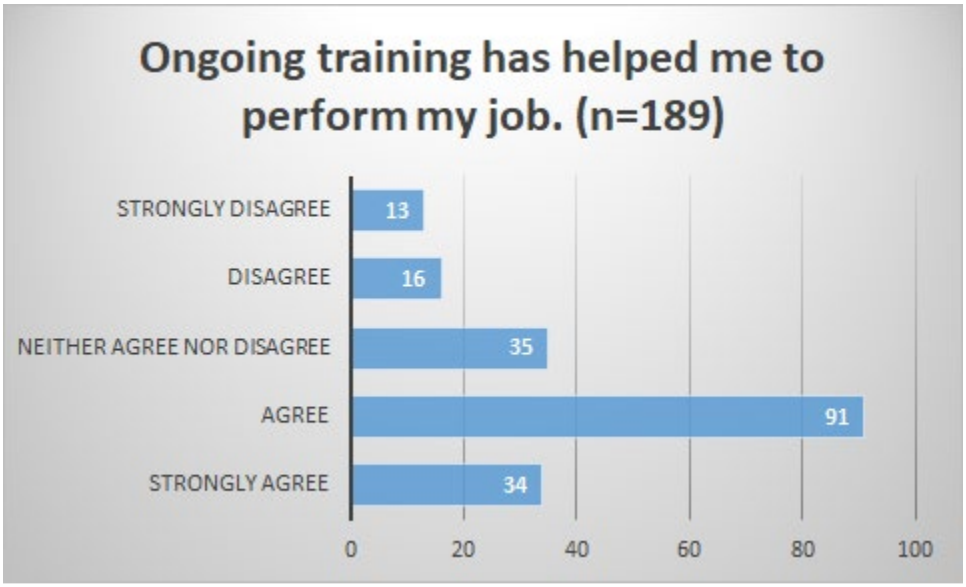
PSD continues to look closely at ways that consistent fidelity to models can improve outcomes to support safety, permanency, and well-being for children. We have selected multiple models of practice that can increase the effectiveness of our workforce. We remain grounded in the Safety Organized Practice and Structured Decision-Making safety and risk assessments as the core foundation of practice. Ongoing training and coaching with Evident Change for the workforce. In addition, we have implemented the following to build our workforce's core competencies and effectiveness:

- Safe and Together: The Safe & Together™ Model is an internationally recognized suite of tools and interventions designed to help child welfare professionals become domestic violence informed.
- Quality Parenting Initiative: QPI, the Quality Parenting Initiative, is a national movement for foster care change, made up of a network of states, counties and private agencies committed to ensuring that all children in care have excellent parenting and lasting relationships so they can thrive and grow.
- Individualized Planning Process: The Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group offer assistance to agencies and organizations seeking to improve their ability to protect children from harm, making team-based decisions work for children and families. The Individualized Planning Process is currently being trained and implemented throughout the state.

Evaluation of Professional Development: WDB takes responsibility for increasing the effectiveness of the PSD workforce. Continuous quality improvement of our work is essential to ensure this. WDB uses a 5-level evaluation model that extends beyond the Kirkpatrick Learning Evaluation method to better assess employee gains and retention of skills. All facilitated training programs utilize a summative assessment to determine the learning of participants. Self-paced learning activities incorporate summative assessment checks throughout modules and post-completion. WDB team members are committed to building their skills to meet our workforce's needs best. The WDB undergoes quarterly quality assurance reviews to improve facilitation, training, and coaching skills. WDB is currently working with the Center for States to build the efficacy of the Coaching program by creating a Coaching Evaluation. In addition, WDB regularly participates in training opportunities to build knowledge and skills relevant to child welfare and the field of professional training and coaching.

In FY 2022, WDB divided its training into specialized units of workforce training, resource parent training, leadership training, and coaching unit. This restructuring is based on an assessment of our training practices that determined ways we could shift our structure to capitalize on our key strengths. Each team works closely to ensure that all audiences, staff, resource parents and leaders, needs are addressed and met. Workgroups contain representation from each unit and act in the best interest of their specific audience in the design process. In addition, others such as PSD staff, tribal representatives, resource parents, youth and others are invited to participate in workgroups, steering committees, and review panels.

Staff were surveyed for their feedback on ongoing training, most state ongoing training has helped them perform their job as seen in the figure below.



CYFD CFSR Staff Survey

Staff were able to provide open-ended feedback as to what they thought were going well or area's needing improvement with the agency, these are a few responses related to on-going training.

- Using Cornerstone for administrative training for the department. Many of the trainings within Cornerstone are heavily protective service field staff orientated. This is not applicable to all pillars of CYFD, nor applicable for administrative positions.
- Improve training on Policy/Procedure and best practice particularly in the areas of case planning and ASFA timelines; 6 month or 1 year follow up NET training to ensure new workers are utilizing the skills presented in NET instead of following bad practice inherited from office culture.
- CFSR peer reviewer training should become a requirement for field staff after 1 year of employment so they can get a better understanding of what is expected from them after they gain a basic understanding of their job.

States response [to rating]:

Although the agency provides a diverse set of trainings and e-learnings through cornerstone for all employees to enhance their skills and knowledge, all on-going trainings are optional. With the exception of trainings identified on the individual level by the workers supervisor/manager but the agency lacks the ability to measure the effectiveness of the trainings. Staff reported mostly positive feedback for ongoing training providing skill and knowledge to help them with professional development. However, Staff have also provided feedback that high caseloads prevent them from utilizing the on-going trainings available to them. New Mexico has assessed On-going Staff Training as an **Area Needing Improvement.**

Item 28: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (who receive title IV-E funds to care for children) so that:

1. Current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff receive training pursuant to the established annual/biannual hourly/continuing education requirement and timeframes for the provision of initial and ongoing training, and
2. The system demonstrates how well the initial and on-going training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

Relevant Procedure:

- 8.26.2.10 NMAC: Recruitment and Inquiries for PSD Families
- 8.26.2.11 NMAC: Rights of Foster Parents
- 8.26.2.12 NMAC: Roles and Responsibilities of Foster Parents
- PSD_Licensing7_Training_Requirements_P&P_2024

Procedure Overview:

All applicants and adult household members who intend to be caregivers are required to participate in pre-service training. If an adult household member does not intend to be a caregiver, the licensing agent obtains approval from their supervisor for the adult household member to be excluded from the pre-service training requirement. The approval is documented in the case management system FACTS.

The pre-service training curriculum in New Mexico is called **Readi NM**, which consists of 13 modules and two self-paced e-learning modules available in both English and Spanish. Each county office provides pre-service training at least once a quarter. Depending on the applicant's needs, the trainer may provide in person, group, one-on-one or online training sessions. The trainer discusses any questions or concerns with the applicants during the pre-service training and staffs any concerns with the licensing agent and their supervisor. The licensing agent documents concerns, evaluations, discussions with the applicant, and staffing's in the case management system FACTS.

Resource parents are required to participate in ongoing training to maintain their licensure as a resource parent. There is no minimum required number of classes or hours of training outlined in policy or procedure, but the licensing agent, in collaboration with the resource parent, create an Individualized Retention and Training Plan (IRTP). At least one training is included in the IRTP for ongoing training in order to meet the ongoing training requirement for licensure. Resource parents must provide proof of attendance of ongoing training to the licensing agent, who documents it in the case management system in addition to filing a copy in the physical case record.

All resource parents are required to have a current Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification during their licensure. The licensing agent assists and supports the applicant and

resource parents in identifying training resources in the community and may arrange for training to take place at the county office.

Additional training requirements are needed to provide foster care to children with special needs. A child is considered to need specialized care when the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment determines they are a level 2. A level 2 determination means the child requires a higher level of care, structure, or supervision than would be required for a child of similar age or development status in foster care. To provide foster care to a level 2 child, at least one adult in the home must obtain 10 hours of specialized training within 45 days of a level 2 determination.

Round 3 Performance:
New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information provided in the statewide assessment and supported by information received from stakeholders during interviews indicated that the initial training provided to agency-licensed and contractor-licensed foster and adoptive parents is the same and satisfactorily prepares them to carry out their duties. Foster parents are required to receive 12 hours of annual training, 6 of which are prescribed by the agency and 6 of which are self-selected by the foster parent with no criteria to guide selection. The lack of such guidance for half of the training results in an inability to provide adequate ongoing training to resource parents or to evaluate the effectiveness of training received. Contractor-licensed foster parents often have additional training requirements set by the licensing agency.

Analysis:
Provider Training: The READi NM curriculum, available in both Spanish and in English, is focused on providing kinship or community members, beginning the process to become Resource Parents, a strong foundational knowledge of their role in supporting a child or youth during a time of separation from their biological family. The READi NM curriculum clearly describes the expectations and roles of a resource parent and has a focus on self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-reflective practices. These skills and awareness support establishing a solid, safe adult foundation for children/youth in care. The activities and assessments provide an opportunity for resource parents to practice multiple skills including building relationships, active listening, curiosity, developing a support network, resilience, documentation, confidentiality, being trauma-responsive, structure and routine, and setting boundaries.

READi NM also provides resource parents practice in supporting a child/youth through grief and loss, trauma triggers, and transitions. The curriculum sets the expectations of consistency, advocacy, role-modeling, and collaboration with CYFD and the biological family. READi NM is offered around the state in all CYFD offices, and every Placement Worker is a trained facilitator to meet the ongoing needs of new clients (i.e. one-on-one or in a group setting).

READi NM Pre-service Training: All community and relative/kinship clients have been trained in the pre-service training, READi NM, in their pursuit to attain a foster care license. To deliver the training consistently throughout the year and support Resource Foster Parents in the

utilization of the skills and knowledge after the training, 201 Protective Service workers have been trained as trainers in English and 12 in Spanish.

Two self-paced e-learning modules, Cultural Humility and ICWA/IFPA, will be launched to complete the full curriculum development. The delay in having these two e-learning modules completed at the launch of READi NM was due to the capacity of the training unit and the need to hire another trainer.

The Resource Parent Training Unit surveyed clients who have taken the READi NM training to learn how well they felt the training provided the skills and knowledge needed to begin their role as a Resource Foster Parent. 96.89% English (62/64) and 100% Spanish (9/9) READi NM training clients who responded felt they grew in their skills and knowledge to begin their role.

Ongoing Training and Retention Support:

1. 2023 Resource Family Conference: The CYFD Resource Family Conference took place as an online event April 1 through 30, 2023. The Conference featured four live, webinar sessions (the Virtual Webinar Series) each Thursday during April, and included live keynote presentations, question and answer periods, and community panel discussions. The event app Whova was used as an engagement and team builder tool. In addition to providing the platform for event registration, live streams and recordings of the sessions, and session evaluation tools, Whova provided attendees with opportunities to network, create discussion groups, ask questions of the presenter and about the presentation topics, and more, all within the app.

The Conference invitation was offered through email, in-person, and mailed flier to all licensed Relative Foster Parent. 318 clients registered to attend, and the live sessions were attended by an average of 73 registered individual attendees. It is important to note though that since this was a fully virtual event, more than one resource family member per household may have attended the live sessions. 65% of the registered attendees downloaded the Whova app for a device (the remaining registrants accessed Whova from a laptop/computer rather than a phone or tablet device). Session attendees also had the opportunity to complete online feedback forms following each session, as well as request Certificates of Completion for each session that they attended.

Overall, the CYFD Resource Family Conference was well-received with 95% of attendee's agreement or strongly agreeing that the live sessions gave them tangible skills and knowledge. In addition, 90% indicated that attending the trainings, there will be a positive impact on their role as a resource parent, and 89% were satisfied with the sessions. Approximately 88% of attendees responded favorably to using the Whova app. Further, the comments received were overwhelmingly positive and expressed gratitude for the learning opportunity provided by CYFD.

A few feedback quotes collected from the surveys:

- "Testimony on the perspective of a child feeling rejected was something resource providers need to be mindful of related to the children behavior."
- "I really enjoyed hearing the experiences from an adoptee and the insight that provided."

- "We thought the information presented was useful, and the practice portion at the end of becoming self-regulated and taking time for self was good."

The 2023 CYFD Resource Family Conference included four live webinar sessions. The sessions were:

Thursday, April 6, 2023

How to Help Children Thrive, presented by Simon Benn.

Overview: This talk explored unconditional love, trauma, identity, hope, change and healing to give resource parents strategies and models for: helping kids and teens be comfortable in their **own skin; Creating the change they want in your family.**

Cultivating Seeds of Resilience: Tools for Self-Resourcing, presented by Ayesha Sundram

Overview: In this session, resource parents learned strategies for self-resourcing through guided experiential practice. The facilitator discussed the impact of self-resourcing on resilience and capacity in parenting and shared hands-on strategies for resourcing in the moment. Participants were guided through creating a mini toolkit for self-resourcing.

• Thursday, April 13, 2023

What I Wish I Knew Then: Understanding the Brain Behavior Connection, presented by Adrien Lawyer

Overview: Participants can identify an appropriate definition of transgender; differentiate between an individual's gender and their sexual orientation; and know three services provided by the Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico.

CYFD Introduces Individualized Planning Process (IPP) Approach, presented by Joy Weathers

Overview: Participants become familiar with the Individualized Planning Process and learn the importance of child and family teaming.

• Thursday, April 20, 2023

Going the Extra Mile as a Resource Parent, presented Marcy Baker-Hinds

Overview: If you are feeling like you do it all, it is probably because you do! As a resource parent, going the extra mile tends to be a norm. You are charged with a great yet rewarding responsibility! Let's come together to discuss how we can not only take steps to make sure our children's needs are being met but also take the time to invest in ourselves too.

Quality Parenting Initiative: Resilience through Relationships, moderated by Terry Harrak

Overview: In this session, we hear from a resource parent and a young person who has experienced foster care, sharing their journey together and how positive relationships fostered resilience and positive outcomes. We begin by discussing the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI),

a framework that aims to ensure the well-being of children in foster care by prioritizing excellent parenting for every child. We then dive into the power of relationships in parenting and how it can make a significant impact on a child's development and well-being.

• Thursday, April 27, 2023

Get Up to Speed on IFPA/ICWA, presented by Janessa Garay

Overview: Native American Historical Trauma, including understanding policy changes that are necessary to restore and preserve Native American families and culture.

IFPA/ICWA Round Table, presented by Cynthia Aragon and Shelly Begay

Overview: This session includes reviewing legislative changes for IFPA/ICWA, Managed Care Organizations and traditional benefits coverage.

Individual Recruitment and Retention Plans: During 2023 all Resource Foster Parent's participated in a one-on-one meeting to draft an Individual Recruitment and Retention Plan (IRTP) with agency staff to discuss and plan out additional learning and skills needed to meet the demands of the role. Due to the unique needs of each client, the IRTPs include requested training needs and state mandates. Current state mandated courses are Cultural Humility and ICWA/IFPA which were offered in-person for regions 5, 4, and 1 with regions 3 and 2 begin given the option to attend training offered in the three regions. Some major challenges of Resource Foster Parents face in attending in-person training are travel and taking time off from work. To support clients and reduce their stress levels, the agency pivoted to create both mandated courses and e-learnings. The training courses will be offered in 2024 through the agency's learning management system.

Community Partnerships: NM Fiesta Project: The NM Fiesta Project provides free training and support groups for resource, kinship, and adoptive families in New Mexico. Fiesta Project training was coordinated throughout the state. Trainings are offered in Spanish and English to focus on topics such as trauma, mental health, and special needs of children and families. Some titles of trainings offered to resource foster parents are: **Care and Connect: Success in the Summertime; Care and Connect: Managing Burnout; Care and Connect: Grief and Loss in Foster Care and Adoption; Circles of Support; Que es eso de Crianza Terapeutica?; Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI); Empowering Strategies; Care and Connect: Parenting Teens; Care and Connect: Importance of Caring for Yourself and Teens; and How Stress and Trauma Impact Learning and the Brain.**

NM FIESTA Project fosters community partnerships with agencies and organizations throughout the state. NM FIESTA Statewide Supervisor and Family Advocates maintain contact with CYFD county offices regarding NM FIESTA events. FIESTA Program Director and Statewide Supervisor met with CYFD's Statewide Adoption and Retention Specialist Supervisor in January 2024 to collaborate regarding resources for post adoption, resource families, and kinship/guardianship caregivers. NM FIESTA will continue to support adoption recruitment events as hosted by CYFD. FIESTA is currently coordinating with CYFD to provide support and collaboration for CYFD's annual resource parent conference.

Thirty (30) Resource Parents were surveyed and asked about the quality of training they received. Below are their responses.

Overall, from 0-5, how would rate the training you have received as a resource parent? (N=30)		
Zero: Resource Parent training was not offered or was not all relevant or helpful.	1	3.33%
One	1	3.33%
Two	1	3.33%
Three	3	10%
Four	5	16.66%
Five: Resource Parent training was relevant and helpful and is offered at convenient times.	19	63.33%

Respondents were asked what training or supports or services should be offered to resource parents, these are a few of their responses.

- Resource parents stated he felt they "were very well supported throughout the process." It would be nice to have a support group to meet monthly, every other month or quarterly to have that forum and space to meet with other resource parents as other resource parents are good resources as they have experienced this journey, and it would be good to reach out to them.
- It would be helpful to have a support group of other resource parents who can relate to parenting a child with special needs (autism) and trauma history. I have searched out things online but would like a community in person. Some friends have drifted away as they are not trauma informed.
- Dedicated areas in county offices that have computers for foster parents to take online trainings would be appreciated.

States response [to rating]:

New Mexico has a comprehensive training curriculum for current and prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and state licensed facilities, that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties. Stakeholders provided positive feedback about the quality and frequency of training. The Individual Retention and Training Plans (IRTP) have been well received and help provide guidance for additional trainings. New Mexico has assessed this item as being a **strength**.

Service Array and Resource Development

Item 29: Array of Services: How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the Child and Family Services Plan (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.

Relevant Policy and Procedure:

- PR 8.10.6 Home Based Prevention Services
- PR 8.10.3 Investigations (service matrix)
- PR 8.10.8 Permanency Planning (VPAs)
- 8.10.5 NMAC CARA Guidelines

Procedure Overview:

Once the investigation initiation is completed, the investigation worker completes the safety and risk assessment tool. The investigation worker uses this assessment guide in decision making. If the risk is high and the assessment is safe, the investigation worker refers the family to a community provider that is capable of addressing the needs of the entire family, as outlined in the service matrix in PR 19—Investigation Disposition. CYFD involvement cannot cease if the family is safe with plan on the most recent safety assessment, even if a contractor is involved. Case management needs to be maintained either by the PSD investigator, Family Services (FS) Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS), or FS In-Home services (IHS). These entities are responsible for monitoring the safety plan and completing an updated safety assessment until the safety plan decision becomes either "safe" or "unsafe." However, a safety plan cannot be in place longer than 21 days. If after 21 days the safety assessment is still unsafe, legal intervention must be pursued.

The purpose of Home-Based Prevention Services is to promote the safety of children, reduce the risk and reduce the recurrence of maltreatment of children by their parent and/or guardian without the intervention of the courts. These prevention services are:

1. An integrated, trauma informed, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing problems in family functioning; and
2. A service provided to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment.

Home-Based Prevention Services include In-Home Services, Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS), Family Support Services (FSS) and Community-based Intervention, Prevention and Reunification (CBIPR) services.

A transfer staffing occurs at any time that a case is being transferred from one unit to another. The purpose of the staffing is to facilitate a smooth transition and minimize disruption of services for the child and family. A transfer staffing is appropriate when a case moves from

investigation to permanency planning or in-home services. At least one supervisor from either unit attends the transfer staffing; however, best practice is to include both supervisors. The worker transferring the case documents the staffing in FACTS prior to the transfer.

When a newborn in New Mexico has been identified with substance exposure, as evidenced by toxicology results of the newborn or mother, or when a caregiver discloses substance use during the pregnancy, a plan of care (POC) shall be created in accordance with the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery (CARA) Act of 2016. The purpose of the POC is to establish guidelines for protective services division (PSD) staff, managed care organizations (MCOs), care coordinators, and other professionals who come into contact, or who are working with substance exposed infants, and their caregivers to provide comprehensive support and services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the family.

Round 3 Performance and Background:

New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Findings indicated that, though there is a foundation for a service array, it is not yet functioning statewide to provide services to meet the needs of children and families. Strengths were noted in some areas within the state with the existence of Core Service Agencies that are able to assess, monitor, and coordinate treatment for emotional trauma, and home visiting programs for children under 3 years of age with a substantiated child maltreatment report.

Analysis: Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs

When an allegation of child abuse or neglect is screened by Statewide Central Intake (SCI), the report is assigned to one the 33 county offices across the state depending on the location of the allegation. Once the county office receives the report from SCI, depending on the prioritization, an investigator is assigned and initiates the investigation. CYFD Protective Services Division (PSD) assesses the strengths of needs, to include services needs, of families throughout the investigation process.

Families who are screened out at the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department's (CYFD**)** Statewide Central Intake (SCI) may still have needs. These families may not know how to access services and may not see CYFD itself as a resource. To bridge this gap, CYFD partnered with community providers to create the Family Outreach (FO) community response program. Combined with community engagement, CYFD hopes that FO will meet family needs through access to and provision of services, leading in the long term to diversion from child protective services (CPS) and improved well-being for families and children. In 2024, Family Outreach was reorganized into the new Family Services Division. Family Outreach now serves 25 of the 33 counties statewide, connecting families with services and resources in their area to address their needs. Family Outreach sees a high volume of referrals for assistance with basic needs, such as food, utility and housing insecurity.

In-Home Services has been re-organized into the Family Services Division and operates statewide, however not every county has contracts with external service providers, so the number of available services varies statewide.

Family Services Division (FSD) is a new division born out of the recent organizational restructuring. Family Services offers prevention services, family outreach/differential response, In-Home Services and Intensive Family Support Services, and the CARA plan of safe care program. These services are designed to enhance the family's capacity to provide for their children's needs in a safe environment, create stability within the home and develop healthy and supportive ongoing community relationships. Family Services is an integrated, comprehensive approach to strengthening and preserving families who are at risk for, or who are currently experiencing struggles in family functioning. In-Home Services does not have a waitlist.

When youth must enter foster care, they deserve a holistic relational-based approach to engagement that provides an effective safety net and a developmentally appropriate/identity affirming support system as they transition into adulthood. Through Fostering Connections (FC), New Mexico provides a continuum of services for eligible youth and young adults between the ages of 14 and 26 years old, including:

- Transition planning services for youth in foster care ages 14 to 18;
- Extended Foster Care (EFC) services for young adults who aged out of foster care between the ages of 18 and 21;
- Services for youth and young adults who were adopted from the foster care system or achieved permanency through guardianship at sixteen years of age or older; and
- Aftercare Services for young adults ages 21 to 26 years old.

Fostering Connections (FC) is committed to the creation and implementation of a child welfare system that meets the needs of youth and young adults by ensuring staff and stakeholder understanding of adolescent development, the impact of trauma, authentic youth-adult partnerships, and by identifying exposure gaps and providing access to opportunities that address these gaps and support young people to thrive into adulthood. Fostering Connections staff believes young people and their families are not simply clients but are powerful catalysts for change in their own lives and are partners in changing the systems that impact their lives. Fostering Connections is available in every county of New Mexico.

Services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment

The Intensive Family Support Service (IFSS) model provides families (including adoptive, foster, and extended family relationships) who are in crisis, and intensive, wraparound support is needed in order to prevent child abuse/neglect and maintain the child(ren) safely with their family of origin. Referrals may be accepted from CYFD Protective Services or internal case transfers from the Family Support Service model. Families that have unsubstantiated cases of abuse or neglect must have CYFD Prevention & Initiatives Bureau approval prior to enrolling the family into this level of service.

Services and programs geared towards serving Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault were administered, monitored and/or supported through the CYFD Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Domestic Violence (DV) Unit, but under the CYFD structural reorganizations the DV unit is now under the umbrella of the Family Services Division. The DV Unit continues to provide the same level of oversight, support, and service coordination that it did under the BHS.

CYFD BHS provides funding, program support, oversight, and standards for immediate shelter and supportive services for survivors of domestic and dating violence and their dependents including specialized services for abused parents and their children. Accounting for approximately 55% of all public and private domestic violence funding in New Mexico, CYFD-funded service providers served 10,800 survivors and their dependents in FY21. Supplementary funding supports the Children's Capacity Building Project, which is an ongoing effort to enhance the quality and depth of responses to children in domestic violence programs throughout New Mexico. CYFD also provides oversight and funding for DV offender treatment programs, to reduce future incidents of domestic and dating violence and will be developing concentrated coordinated community response efforts in select communities in the coming years. One innovative project is the implementation of the Safe & Together Model in New Mexico, which focuses on culture change withing protective services to focus on the perpetrator pattern of abuse and partnering with protective parents.

A pilot project in Doña Ana County dramatically increased communication and collaboration between the domestic violence service provider and CYFD Protective Services and has the overarching goals of reducing removals and increasing safety of children in families experiencing domestic violence.

Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable

The **Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)** is the stand-alone agency that administers programs and services for children aged 0 to 5. CYFD Family Services Division continues to partner with ECECD in supplementing their services with home-based and evidence-based prevention services to families with children through the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs. There are several collaborative efforts underway to address children ages 0-5:

- **Family Support Services*:*** Target services will be prioritized for parents and secondary caregivers who have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect. May or may not be a referral from CYFD, self-referrals, community referrals.
- **Infant Mental Health Teams*:*** CYFD Behavioral Health Services is partnering with ECECD providers for the provision of infant mental health services.
- **Families FIRST*:*** A perinatal case management program which assists clients in gaining access to medical, social, and educational services that are necessary to foster positive pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infants and children.
- **Home Visiting Including the Neonatal Intensive Care Home Visiting Services*:*** A prevention program for families to receive support prenatally through their child's third/fifth birthday. The provider visits the family in their home (or setting of comfort) to

share resources, support the caregivers, partner with the family to complete screenings, and develop goals for the child and family to guide services.

CYFD is the behavioral health authority for all children in New Mexico. BHS is the lead on children's behavioral health policy in collaboration with other State Agencies to include the Human Services Department (HSD), Department of Health (DOH), Public Education Department (PED), Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), and the Behavioral Health Collaborative (BHC). BHS staff provide technical assistance and consultation with providers and other CYFD colleagues serving children and youth who are:

- At-risk of CYFD custody
- Involved with CYFD
- Post-CYFD involvement
- Never involved with CYFD

CYFD BHS oversees the development, implementation, and expansion of the **NM High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) model**. "Wraparound is an intensive holistic method of engaging with individuals with complex needs so that they can live in their homes and communities and realize their hopes and dreams."

In SFY'23, NM High Fidelity Wraparound continued in ten (10) sites; Guidance Center of Lea County (Lea County), Mental Health Resources (Roosevelt County), New Day (Bernalillo County), All Faiths (Bernalillo and Valencia Counties), Desert View (San Juan and McKinley Counties), La Casa (Chaves County), and UNM Behavioral Health (Sandoval County). Outcomes of HFW include reduced costs of care for community-based care versus out-of-home placements and less out of state placements; access to more community-based services, improved school attendance and performance; increased behavioral and emotional strengths; improved clinical and functional outcomes; reduced suicide attempts; and decreased contacts with law enforcement. High Fidelity Wraparound was approved for inclusion on the Medicaid Fee Schedule beginning July 1, 2023.

Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency

Permanency planning services include services needed to support the parent, guardian, or custodian to manage the safety and risk factors identified during removal of the child. PSD establishes a permanency plan for every child in PSD custody and their caregivers. Reunification is the initial plan each child but may change depending on the case. Other acceptable plans are adoption, permanent guardianship, placement with a fit and willing relative, and other planned permanent living arrangements.

Children's needs are assessed upon entry into foster care to determine an appropriate level of care. The child's level of care determines the maintenance payment amount the resource family receives, identifies the needs of the child, the skill level of the resource family and provides an initial assessment of the needs of the resource family. All children enter foster care as a level 1 placement. Children who have a higher level of need than the general population of children in out of home care and who also require a higher level of supervision and skill by the resource family are eligible for level 2 foster care. Level 3 foster care are for those children with significant medical or behavioral needs who require a significantly and consistently higher level

of care from a highly trained caregiver. These are children who would otherwise require hospitalization or institutional placement.

CYFD Prevention and Initiative Bureau consolidated the contracted services supported through CBCAP and PSSF funding into the Community Based Prevention, Intervention and Reunification (CBPIR) contracts. Throughout the state except for two counties. The PSSF Intensive Family Support Services (IFSS) funded component of the CBPIR contracts serve families who are in crisis and need intensive, wraparound support to prevent child maltreatment while maintaining the child or children safely with their family of origin. The Family Reunification and Time Limited Reunification Services components of the CBPIR contracts focus on supporting successful reunification of children with their families. Family Reunification Services (FRS) provides parents, relatives, fictive kin, or families pursuing guardianship with supports that assist them in reunifying their child or children from an out of home placement such as foster care. Time Limited Reunification (TLR) Services are intensive, home-based programs that support families in reunifying with their child or children who are in CYFD custody. TLR includes assisting parents with their court ordered case plans to assist families reunify in an expedited timeframe.

Data

Currently the agency does not have a systematic process for tracking services needed or requested by a family or worker when there is an absence of available services. This makes it difficult to identify the current need for services throughout the state of New Mexico. Additionally, New Mexico has several rural counties with sparse population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, New Mexico has 12 of 33 counties with a population density less than or equal to four (<=4) residents per square mile. This is a continued challenge for the agency to provide quality services to these communities within the fiscal restraints of the appropriated budget.

The following is statewide performance data from CFSR QA cases reviewed during April 2023 to July 2024 that relate to the service array in the state of New Mexico.

Safety Outcome 2	**Strength**	**Area Needing Improvement**
Item 2: Services to family to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	44.83%	55.17%
Well-Being Outcome 1		
Item 12A: Needs assessment and Services to Children	68.42%	31.58%
Item 12B: Needs assessment and Services to Parents	42%	58%
Item 12C: Needs assessment and Services to Foster Parents	63.53%	36.47%

CYFD has shown a higher capacity to appropriately assess the needs and provide services to children and foster parents than parents from April 2023 to July 2024.

A challenge for the agency has been appropriately assessing the needs and services to parents at the same rate as children and foster parents. In preparation for the Statewide assessment, interviews were conducted with lived experts with experience in the child welfare system. Attempts were made to survey 203 parents, guardians, or caregivers statewide who received services by the agency during the period under review (April 1, 2023 – April 1, 2024), a total of 30 parents, guardians, or caregivers participated in the interview. Of the 30 respondents, 19 were mothers, 10 were fathers, and 1 was a stepmother.

Overall participants reported mixed feedback as it related to services. Some participants shared how helpful it was to have all their services in one location, that there were not waitlists or issues accessing the services and that treatment was comprehensive. While other participants shared there were waitlists, and that services were not helpful. Currently, waitlists are tracked at the provider level and may fluctuate frequently, making it difficult for the agency to monitor waitlists in real-time.

Were services to address safety and risk concerns offered to your family? (N=30)		
Yes	19	63.33%
No	11	36.67%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Interviewees were asked their feedback about the services, the following are some of the responses provided.

- The parent was referred to recovery center for methadone which also offered parenting program, anger management, and parenting classes. The parent had input where she wanted to attend services as very convenient to receive services at one location. "Super convenient to get services at one location". The parent had conversations about worker about progress and satisfaction with services. Services were helpful.
- Treatment was very comprehensive. Program involvement was very extensive for 3 days per week plus 5 meetings, individual counseling, and parent working full time job. Parent had a lot of input with the service agency and was very helpful to the parent.
- The parent reports having graduated from several programs but then agency adds other programs for her to attend. Mom has been telling worker that she is doing everything that is asking her to do but worker has not acknowledged the services that mom has completed. As parent has completed all that has been asked of her, she does not understand why agency won't return children.
- The worker has not helped the parent regarding housing application. Parent independently applied for Section 8 housing, is on 3 different wait lists and recently started attending therapy at an Intensive Outpatient Program. Parent says this is for extra support. Parent also works full time as opened own cleaning business.

- The parent found the service providers as the workers were taking too long and the agencies had waitlists. The parent talks to worker about the services. The parent stated that the services are helpful.
- The father engaged in services on his own. Services were helpful to him. Now he is working on setting up childcare as child will be returned home on THV next week and dad is employed. Worker gave him a packet of day care resources and told him to tell them what day care center will provide for the child. Little assistance from the worker in setting up services and day care.

Foster parents were asked if they received needed services and support related to the target child place in their home, the figure below shows their responses.

Did CYFD provide you needed services and support related to the target child placed in your home? (This could include specific training, payments, clothing and other supplies, family support, transportation, etc.) (N=30)		
Yes	19	63.33%
No	8	26.67%
Not Applicable: No needs during the review period.	3	10%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

Interviewees were asked their feedback about the services; the following are some of the responses provided.

- Services in place have been medical, dental, educational, and mental health with no issues. Regarding other prompts, none of those services have occurred. Resource parents receive monthly stipend now but there was no payment received for about the first 6 months of placement prior to PUR. Resource parents have never received any other reimbursement for the child. Resource parents have not pushed the issues but there have been no offers for transportation, clothing, vacations, or anything out of ordinary. Resource parents may receive a month payment but maybe not another payment for a few months.
- Resource parent purchases clothing on his own and monthly payment comes regularly. Resource parent doesn't get food stamps as he makes too much money as reimbursement is considered earned income.
- Only issue is the payment rate. It is not enough to feed and clothe teens. I have been a resource parent for 15 years and the only reason I would quit is because of this. We applied for food stamps but were over the limit. We had to get a credit card to just get food for the kids.
- Resource parent has received payments, clothing resources, no need for transportation, and respite has been provided. Received all services needed.

Children placed in New Mexico's Children Youth and Family Department (CYFD) custody, Children in State Custody (CISC), are required to receive an Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) screening upon removal and ongoing/annually as needed.

EPSDT services ensure that children receive early detection and care, so that health problems can be diagnosed, and treatment be provided as early as possible. The EPSDT exam is required to be completed within 30 days of entering CYFD custody.

The data provided below states that on average, when a child enters state custody, 51.5% of EPSDT's are completed timely within the first 30 days; 22.6% are completed between 30<60 days, and 8.4% are completed 60 plus days from the date of first entry into foster care. On average 17.4% % of EPSDT's are not being completed. One of the barriers identified is not having enough providers to see the child quick enough to meet the timeframes.

Month	Visits within 30 days	Visits 30<60 days	Total Visits Completed	Total
July	23	16	48	53
August	51	29	94	99
September	59	23	88	94
October	43	7	54	59
November	38	29	69	77
December	19	10	40	44
January	26	19	53	62
February	42	16	60	72
March	40	6	48	66
April	21	4	26	76
Total	362	159	580	702

CYFD EPSDT Review Data 2023-2024

Qualitative data:

There were three community events held specifically for CFSR – Dona Ana, McKinley, and Bernalillo. Feedback from Dona Ana County identified that some behavioral health providers have long waitlists, such as MST and ABA. McKinley's participants shared barriers in services such as limited substance abuse services and lack of inpatient services, in addition, there are long housing lists. It was further reported that access to transportation has a cost and is not available statewide. There are a few private behavioral service providers in the community.

Substance abuse treatment, inpatient is expensive, and Medicaid does not cover 100% of the costs, parents are often having to incur costs, such as copays that they cannot afford. Outpatient is not as invasive.

State Response [to Rating]:

New Mexico's Children, Youth and Families Department newly created Family Services Division is less than a year old. They have assumed multiple programs and initiatives from other departments to be the comprehensive division when it comes to primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. They have taken foundational pieces, such as in-home services, community-based prevention, intervention and reunification (CBPIR) contractors, differential response programs, extended foster care services, and more, under their umbrella. They are in the process of examining how these programs interact with each other, how contracted providers are able to interact with the agency to accept referrals and report services received by families, how internal

CYFD staff from other divisions are able to interact with this new division, and importantly, how best to track utilization and outcomes as the new case management system is being built.

New Mexico is the 5th largest state by area and has several rural counties with a sparse population. According to the US Census County Population Estimates as of July 1, 2023, New Mexico has twelve counties where there are <=4 residents per square mile (calculated by total county area and total county population). Some families in these communities would benefit from additional services in their area but providing those services to address the unique needs of a family that may come to the agency's attention is a complex and difficult challenge for the agency to reasonably resolve. Transportation services or the ability to provide transportation to services in their case plan or court ordered services could be beneficial to help serve these populations.

Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicates a foundation of a service array, but it is not functioning statewide to provide services to meet the needs of children, families and foster parents. New Mexico continues to have a high demand for mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and housing waitlists have been reported to be as long as two years. CYFD has made concerted efforts to reorganize services provided to families into the Family Services Division, create systems to track the provision and quality of services being provided, identify gaps in services, and track data related to services that allow the child to safely remain in the home or facilitate permanency for children in state custody. New Mexico has assessed the state's performance on this systemic factor continues to be **an area needing improvement.**

Item 30: How well is the service array and resource development system 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?

Relevant Policy/Procedures:

- PR 8.10.8 Permanency Planning Procedures
- Procedure #10--Out of Home Placements
- PSD Directive on IPP

Procedure Overview:

The purpose of permanency planning services is to systematically carry out, within a time-limited period, a set of goal-directed activities designed to help children live in families that offer the continuity of relationships with nurturing parents or guardians and the opportunity to establish lifetime relationships. Protective Services Division (PSD) provides permanency planning services to children or youth who come into the custody of PSD.

Icebreaker meetings are scheduled by the primary PSD caseworker immediately upon the entry of the child into foster care (after the affidavit is filed) or with every new placement. The Icebreaker meeting must be completed as soon as possible, but no later than seven business days after placement of a child in a new resource family home. An Icebreaker meeting provides an opportunity for resource families and the child's family to meet each other and talk about the needs of the child while they are in care. The child's family and resource parents exchange information about themselves and their family routines and traditions. The primary PSD caseworker's supervisor ensures at the next supervisory meeting that the Icebreaker has occurred or there is a plan to conduct an Icebreaker. The PSD supervisor documents in the supervisory note that they discussed Icebreakers in the supervisory staffing with the PSD caseworker.

Every child or youth in out-of-home care will be in a licensed foster homes placement unless a current finding of medical necessity requires otherwise, or an Individualized Planning Process (IPP) meeting determines that a non-clinical setting is in the child's best interest. IPP meetings occur when a child has been placed in congregate care setting either due to medical necessity or it has been determined that placement in a congregate care setting is in the best interest of the child or youth.

These meetings are documented using the Joint Clinical Review Audit Tool (JCRAT) to improve communication, planning, and support amongst members of the team. The IPP Meeting and the JCRAT identifies steps necessary to promote discharge and ensures the team reviews available community-based mental health services and supports that have already been provided or could be provided. The PPW is responsible for coordinating IPP Meetings. The PPW must invite the following individuals to the IPP/teaming Meetings: the child or youth; the child or youth's PPW or primary assigned worker; the PPW or primary assigned worker supervisor; a Community Behavioral Health Clinician (CBHC); the child or youth's Managed Care Organization Care Coordinator or other Care Coordinator representative (if MCO exempt/Fee for Service or private insurance); the child or youth's GAL or Youth Attorney. The PPW may also include the following individuals to the IPP/Teaming Meeting (if applicable): the child or youth's parent or

other family members; the Case Manager at the RTC Agency or Group Home; the child or youth's Tribe/Pueblo Representative (when child/youth is an Indian child/youth); a representative from the Office of Tribal Affairs, (when child/youth is an Indian child/youth) and the Mental Health Professional or therapist assigned to the youth. The completed Joint Clinical Review audit tool is uploaded into FACTS under the administrative icon using the appropriate drop down for the type of meeting.

Children are placed in the least restrictive setting consistent with the assessment of their individual needs. When possible, the child is placed in close proximity to his or her home or school of origin. When it may not be possible, or not in the best interest of the child, to be placed in close proximity to the child's home or school the PPW documents the reasons for not placing a child in close proximity to his or her home or school of origin are documented in FACTS. When a child is not placed in close proximity to his or her home of origin, the PPW maintains or arranges for, bi-weekly contact with the parent, guardian or custodian.

When a child enters the custody of PSD, the PPW or placement worker arranges for or conducts a level of care assessment in FACTS to determine the level of care the child will require. The worker completes the assessment within 30 days of the child entering foster care. The assessment includes, but is not limited to:

1. a physical examination by a medical doctor;
2. a review of any available educational records; and
3. a review of information provided by other professionals currently working with the child or family, such as counselors, therapists, physical therapists, and juvenile probation officers.

The worker re-assesses the child at least once every six months, but reassessment may happen at any time depending on the child's needs. The levels of care are as follows:

1. Level 1: All children entering care enter into Level 1 unless the child is determined appropriate for a higher level of eligibility.
2. Level 2: This level of care is for children requiring a higher level of care, structure, or supervision than would be required for a child of similar age or development in foster care. An example of a level 2 child would be a child that requires specialized foster care, treatment foster care or needing to be placed temporarily in a Residential Treatment Center.
3. Level 3: This level of care is for children with significantly high needs and is generally, an alternative to institutional care. An example of a level 3 child would be a child that has a significant disability that requires twenty-four-hour physical and medical care.

Round 3 Performance and Background:

In the Round 3 statewide assessment, New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. New Mexico identified the need to further individualize services to better serve certain populations, such as those with substance abuse issues, those who are Spanish-speaking, or those who are low functioning/developmentally delayed. Stakeholders said that the metropolitan area of Albuquerque is where services are most available to meet individual needs of families and children. Stakeholders felt that the ability to individualize services was severely limited by the lack of available services statewide, the lack of any centralized or readily

accessible service-finding resource, and the staff's lack of knowledge and time to research and obtain services.

Overview:

Services available in the communities of New Mexico vary widely from one county to the next, and don't always meet the needs of each family or child who seek services. In particular, rural or frontier areas of the state may have deficient services to address substance abuse, domestic violence, or mental health concerns. Some populations may be underserved due to waitlists, transportation issues, or language barriers. Finally, incarcerated parents often face significant difficulty obtaining appropriate services and supports while they remain in the corrections system.

The Office of Tribal Affairs was created in 2020 and since then it has grown from one person to a staff of 13 to support staff statewide. The objective is to ensure the Department is in compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (Federal Law 1978) that mandated changes to address disproportionality. NM as a state adopted a state law that is more robust than ICWA. The State Law is Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA) was passed into law in 2022. This legislation corrects harms to Indian Families by the state. The Office of Tribal Affairs provides case consultation for all cases involving Native American children. Every case is closely monitored to ensure the child is placed in the highest preferred setting, when a child is even in the second-tier placement, monthly meetings are held to identify the unique circumstances contributing to the barriers and challenges of moving the child into a first-tier placement. The whole team works to problem solve to remove those barriers, often times before they occur, to promote the preferred placement.

New Mexico has multiple cultures that are deeply rooted in promoting family and cultural traditions of "supporting our own" to grow as a people. Kinship care helps to preserve children's cultural identity and relationship with their community. New Mexico is committed to ensuring that children who are being cared for by kinship families have the supports they need. Many of the benefits for children who stay with their kin include better medical outcomes, the severity of childhood trauma is limited, and fewer children end up separated from their siblings. CYFD recognizes the long standing and well-documented need for kinship caregivers when children and youth cannot stay with their biological parents, to prevent removal, during foster care placements, and through guardianships or adoption.

CYFD currently implements contracts that provide a coordinated and comprehensive array of resources for relative and kinship caregivers of children to increase stability in the family setting, allow children to remain connected to their families and culture, and reduce long term effects of childhood trauma. These services are available for any individual who is a relative(s), godparent(s), member(s) of a child's tribe or clan, or an adult with significant bond (fictive kin) who are raising child(ren) or youth, because the biological parent(s) are not able or unwilling to do so. The individual does not have to have legal standing of the child(ren) to qualify for services.

Partnership with SHARE New Mexico provides members of our community with statewide listings of resources for grandparents and other relatives caring for children. All direct and supplemental services are available in English and Spanish. Language Access Services are available as well to ensure information is available in any language. Stakeholders provided feedback the multi-lingual pay differential of $.10 cents an hour is not competitive enough to recruit Spanish speaking staff. Some staff reported they are multi-lingual but have refused the multi-lingual differential pay citing the minimal compensation as inadequate for the increased responsibilities it entails.

The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) funds several programs to provide immediate shelter and a wide range of supportive services for victims/survivors of family violence, domestic violence, and dating violence and their dependents. Though not every provider offers every service, they form a network of services, and advocates within each program will work to get every survivor the services and supports they need to find safety and hope in the future. Through stakeholder interviews, additional resources for domestic violence offenders are needed throughout the state to reduce the occurrence of repeated offenses. Domestic violence services providers are struggling with chronically under-funded services that have resulted in depressed wages, minimal or no benefits, and high staff turnover, which was exacerbated by the pandemic and recent inflation. Many clinically licensed behavioral health personnel have moved to higher paying positions within health care systems.

Safety Outcome 2	**Strength**	**Area Needing Improvement**
Item 2: Services to family to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care.	44.83%	55.17%
Well-Being Outcome 1		
Item 12A: Needs assessment and Services to Children	68.42%	31.58%
Item 12B: Needs assessment and Services to Parents	42%	58%
Item 12C: Needs assessment and Services to Foster Parents	63.53%	36.47%

Youth were surveyed about their experiences while in state custody, the following were questions relating to the individualization of services.

Thinking about case planning with CYFD, were you able to provide input into your case plan? (N=30)		
Yes	20	66.67%
No	10	33.33%
Declined to Answer	0	0%

- Youth stated she provided input but felt stressed as there was not a lot of time to process the information when in certain meetings and discussions were occurring. Youth was able to talk about services and progress with the worker.
- Despite prompts and examples of possible items on case plan, youth was not familiar with concept of case plan and had no input as a result.
- Youth had input into case plan, but agency staff were poor at putting services in place. i.e., family therapy was court ordered 1.5 years, but CYFD did not set it up and youth found a therapist in early 2024. Youth talked to worker about strengths/needs, services, and about progress.

Overall, how would you rate your involvement in case planning? (N=30)		
0: CYFD did not engage me in case planning in any way and I do not have a copy of my case plan	7	23.33%
1	1	3.33%
2	6	20%
3	3	10%
4	6	20%
5: CYFD consistently engaged me in discussions about my case plan and listened to my input about case planning.	7	23.33%

The average of all 30 youth responses was 3.

Parents were surveyed about their experiences while their children were in state custody, the following were questions related to the individualization of services.

Overall, how would you rate your involvement in case planning? (N=30)		
0: CYFD did not engage me in case planning in any way and I do not have a copy of my case plan	19	63.33%
1	2	6.66%
2	3	10%
3	2	6.66%
4	0	0%
5: CYFD consistently engaged me in discussions about my case plan and listened to my input about case planning.	4	13.33%

The average of all 30 parent responses was 1.

Currently, the state does not have the ability to track services the agency wants to refer a family to when those services are not available. This lack of data makes it difficult to know where services are lacking in the state and where the additional support is needed on the macro level.

State Response [to Rating]:
New Mexico has a framework for individualizing services for families to address their unique needs after an assessment but through stakeholder feedback and lack of quality data to support that framework, it does not appear to be working as intended. The agency does have translation services available statewide for families who speak languages other than English which

addresses one of the reasons this item was previously rated as an area needing improvement. Due to the lack of supportive data, New Mexico rate this item as an **Area Needing Improvement.**

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Item 31: How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the Child and Family Services Plan (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?

Relevant Procedures:

- Protective Services General Procedures (8.8.2.8) PR 8 – Protective Services
- Protective Services General Procedures (8.8.2.25) PR 25 – State and Federal Requirements

Procedure Summary:

As the officially designated child welfare agency, PSD is responsible for developing and administering the state's child welfare services plan pursuant to Section 422 (a) of the federal Social Security Act and the state plan under Title IV-E of the federal Social Security Act, including the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act. PSD is also responsible for developing and administering the Title XX Social Service Block Grant program and the Child Abuse and Prevention and Treatment Act.

Access to Child Protective Services: The child protective service program is state administered, and county implemented. County offices are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Services are available after hours and on weekends either by appointment or on an emergency basis. Each County Office Manager (COM) is responsible for developing and maintaining an after-hours response system to ensure that services can be accessed in case of emergency and providing Statewide Central Intake (SCI) with an after-hours schedule.

Toll-Free Numbers: CYFD maintains the following toll-free numbers, 24 hours a day, seven days per week: 1. SCI at 1-855-333-SAFE or #SAFE from a cell phone, for receiving reports of alleged child abuse and neglect; and for foster parenting or adoption questions, concerns and inquiries. COMs ensure that the toll-free numbers are posted in their respective county office.

State and Federal Audits: CYFD shall participate in required state and federal audits, including but not limited to the federal Title IV-E foster care eligibility, the federal child and family services review (CFSR), and state audits. PSD staff shall participate in these audits as required, including preparing all necessary documentation and locating additional documentation as needed. Audit results and program improvement plans are to be posted on the CYFD external facing website.

Federal Reports: PSD shall complete federal reporting requirements, including both data and programmatic narrative reports. These reports include, but are not limited to, the child and family services plan (CFSP) and annual progress and services report (APSR), the annual Title XX

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) report, the national youth in transition database (NYTD), AFCARS, and NCANDS. Final approved reports are to be posted on the CYFD external facing website.

Round 3 Performance and Background:

New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. New Mexico described efforts to engage and include stakeholders in its CFSP development. According to information in the statewide assessment and confirmed in stakeholder interviews, there has been successful engagement to obtain feedback on outcomes and systemic factors with metropolitan service providers, individual county stakeholders on QA results, and the Children's Court Improvement Commission (CCIC). Information obtained during stakeholder interviews revealed that opportunities to provide feedback on services, needs, state plans, or performance is not functioning systemically for all stakeholders. New Mexico described participation in meetings with Tribes and Pueblos; however, acknowledged that ongoing work was required to ensure appropriate levels of consultation.

Analysis:

State Plans: CYFD posts it current Children and Family Services Plan and Annual Progress and Services Report on its external facing website at: NM CYFD | Publications and Reports.

For more information about the CFSP or APSR, please contact Milissa Soto, CYFD Federal Reporting Bureau Chief at Milissa.soto@cyfd.nm.gov or (505) 257-8759 or Noah Brooks, CYFD Federal Reporting Coordinator at Noah.Brooks@cyfd.nm.gov or (505) 934-6918. The Office of Tribal Affairs will work with the Federal Reporting Coordinator to ensure the Child and Family Services Plan is available to all New Mexico tribal partners during our in-person gatherings and via the CYFD external website.

Access to Information/Public Website: CYFD has updated its external facing website to be more proactive in providing information to stakeholders and the community at large. This includes the access to CYFD policy and procedures and finalized and approved federal reports. The website is: State of New Mexico | Children, Youth & Families Department

Together We Thrive*:* Together We Thrive is CYFD's Transformation Transparency Website and is the initiative set forth by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to transform the Children, Youth & Families Department. As children and families are a top priority for Governor Lujan Grisham, she issued an Executive Order to make systemic improvements to CYFD's organizational structure, policies and procedures. CYFD's Transformation Transparency Site will be updated regularly to reflect the work of the Executive Order. Together We Thrive | NM CYFD's Transformation Transparency

Collaboration and Consultation with New Mexico's Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos*:* CYFD Office of Tribal Affairs will make the Child and Family Services Plan and/or Annual Progress Service Report available to all our tribal and pueblo partners during annual and monthly in-person gatherings with all of New Mexico's 23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos. The Office of

Tribal Affairs will promote the location and access to the Children and Family Services Plan and/or Annual Progress Services Report the CYFD external website to New Mexico's 23 Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos.

Records Requests: CYFD accepts and reviews public records requests under the New Mexico Sunshine Act and Inspection of Public Records Act. Written requests are sent to CYFD Records Custodian. Records requests are found on the CYFD external website at New Mexico CYFD | How to Contact Us. Requestors are asked to provide the following information:

- Name
- Contact information (including mailing address and phone number)
- A description of the records you're requesting

Requests can also be sent by regular mail to:

Records Custodian
Children Youth and Families Department
P.O. Drawer 5160
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5160

Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA): As one of New Mexico's core Sunshine Laws, the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) enables access to public records of governmental entities in New Mexico. IPRA recognizes that "representative government is dependent upon an informed electorate" and that the public is entitled to "information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of public officers and employees." A key component to the mission is the promotion of good government in New Mexico. IPRA is a fundamental tool for this work. Inspection of Public Records Act - New Mexico Department of Justice

Constituent Affairs*:* CYFD responds to concerns from the community by utilizing a constituent management process within the Office of Constituent Affairs that ensures CYFD management responds to questions and concerns in a timely manner. The Office of Constituent Affairs (OCA) fields all incoming calls Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. On average OCA currently fields 15 calls per day on a slow day and 40 calls on a busy day. OCA oversees the grievance process for resource parents regarding their bill of rights and responds with advocacy and problem-solving to support and meet the needs of our resource parents.

The chart below show that from July 1, 2023, through June 10, 2024, OCA has received 820 grievances, with 260 of those coming from the Governor's Office:

- 26% of grievances were regarding permanency planning and case management-related issues.
- 23% of grievances were regarding child abuse/neglect reports.
- 9.6% of grievances were regarding the investigation's process.
- 11% of grievances were related to placement issues.
- 5.4% of grievances were about personnel issues with specific employees.
- 5.1% of grievances were regarding the disposition of investigations.
- 5.4% of grievances were regarding civil family court/custody issues.

- 4.8% of grievances were regarding licensure issues.
- 4.3% of grievances were about payment issues.
- 5.1% of grievances were regarding visitation.

Notable grievance increases over the past year include:

1. Parents, resource parents, and relatives of children in custody call to report discrimination and violations of their rights by the assigned field staff;
2. Abuse/Neglect reports called in, the outcomes of those reports and the impact on custodial matters continue to be at the top of the concerns reported to OCA. Many of the constituents calling will report that they needed CYFD to do more and find more so they can show the Judge why they should have full custody. PSD expends a significant amount of time, energy, and resources into repeated referrals between parents, often unfounded. CYFD is not allowed to refuse reports and there is nothing we can do to hold false reporters accountable. CYFD is sometimes viewed as a tool for parents to use against each other to gain the "upper hand" in custody cases.
3. Statewide, there was an increase in complaints from our constituents reporting the employees assigned to their case had a conflict of interest. The message is being sent to managers, associate field deputies, and deputy directors to remind their teams of the importance of this issue. To protect the validity of an investigation, we are to avoid even the perception of a conflict of interest.
4. School officials continue to call in concerns that do not meet the criteria for abuse/neglect and/or disagree with CYFD regarding the outcome of the screening decisions.
5. Investigations complaints have increased. Many parents who were the subject of an investigation did not receive notice of the disposition of the investigation, to close out the case and therefore did not have an opportunity to appeal the decision. Another area of concern was if a parent did receive the dispositional letter, they could not get a response from the case staff within the allotted 10 days to be able to appeal a substantiated case. Our field managers, associate deputies and deputy directors have all been reminded of this crucial component of investigations. The disposition of an investigation must be sent out to parents within 14 days of closing a case and must be complete with the correct contact information for the manager responsible for responding to the request for an administrative review.
6. There has been an increase in relatives calling to request information on obtaining kinship guardianship of a child.
7. The remainder of grievances are typically outliers and don't necessarily indicate any widespread practice issues.

How the Department is Utilizing the Feedback: Activities/problem-solving techniques used to resolve issues include but are not limited to:

- OCA has been requesting meetings with field teams statewide, to get the pillars to communicate about major issues going on in cases. The lack of communication across pillars is detrimental to the case plan and decisions being made for the families in our

care. Creating a communication plan such as group texts and group emails to include the parents, workers, supervisors, and managers to keep everyone on the same page and accountable is one key component found to be of some benefit. OCA has recommended weekly, biweekly, or monthly scheduled check-ins for teams where communication has been identified as a primary issue. OCA has also recommended and requested monthly team meetings particularly when there are transitions and movements being made in cases.

- OCA makes every attempt and effort to advocate for our constituents and bring their voices to the team assigned. The hope is that advocating clearly and effectively will prevent staff from forgetting the proper steps to decision making laid out in our policy and procedure and will ensure the most appropriate decisions are being made for our children and families.
- A shift and focus on implementing the Individualized Planning Process (IPP), a collaborative decision-making framework that is trauma-informed and culturally responsive.
- Offering more trainings with local school districts to discuss topics like community resources, poverty vs. abuse/neglect, and mandated reporting to create a culture of community services and supports intended to strengthen families and promote the safety and well-being of children in their own homes.

State Rating: The state continues to prioritize innovative ways to engage staff, the public, CYFD stakeholders, and agency customers in responsive feedback and problem-solving. Item 31 within the Agency Responsiveness to the Community Systemic Factor is rated as being a **strength.**

Item 32: How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?

Relevant Procedures:

- Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.26) PR 17 – Medical and Behavioral Health
- Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.26) PR 26 – Title IV-E and Medicaid Eligibility
- Permanency Planning Procedures (8.10.8.28) PR 28 – Financial Responsibility

Procedure Summary:

Nearly all children and youth who enter CYFD custody will qualify for Medicaid under the category of eligibility (COE) 066, however, there are additional Medicaid COEs for CISC. The primary assigned worker must ensure the child or youth has an open and approved placement in FACTS for the Title IV-E specialist to approve Medicaid in the IV-E/XIX Tab in FACTS. The Title IV-E/Medicaid Specialist works with the Human Services Department (HSD), and Medical Assistance Division (MAD) to qualify the child under the correct category of eligibility to begin coverage or to ensure continued Medicaid coverage.

Foster Care Medicaid/Code of Eligibility 066 (COE 066): All Title IV-E eligible children will qualify for Medicaid under COE 066. Most non-IV-E eligible children or youth will qualify for Medicaid under COE 066, however there may be exceptions. The child or youth's primary worker may have to apply for Medicaid at the local ISD office under a different category of eligibility when the following exceptions apply:

- The child or youth has a personal income, including unearned income and other countable benefits, over $231 during the AFDC removal month;
- The child or youth receives SSI; or
- The child or youth is not a U.S. Citizen.

NON-CITIZENS: Children and youth who are non-citizens may not qualify for Medicaid under the COE 066. The Title IV-E Specialist will work with HSD MAD Eligibility Bureau to determine if the child or youth can qualify for Medicaid under another category of eligibility. If the child or youth cannot qualify for Medicaid, then CYFD PSD is responsible for paying all medical and therapeutic expenses through Title XX or the State General Fund. The PPW completes a Memorandum for Decision to request coverage expenses through Extraordinary Medical Expense service type in FACTS. The Title IV-E Specialist can approve COE 066 for non-citizen children and victims of human trafficking. If a child or youth secures SIJS (special immigrant-juvenile status), the Specialist can approve COE 066.

CHILD SUPPORT*:* The CCA includes in the Dispositional court order a referral to the Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED). This order is sent to CSED for initial processing of the child support case. The PSD worker may interact with CSED, including writing an Affidavit, testifying at court and providing updates on the biological parents. The worker is not authorized to negotiate the amount of child support to be assessed.

SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI*):* SSI benefits are payable to a child determined to be disabled and who has limited income and resources. While a child is in an out of home placement, only the child's income and resources are considered to determine eligibility. A child who is eligible for SSI benefits receives these benefits as long as the child continues to have the disability, is in an eligible placement, and the maintenance resources remain below two thousand dollars.

Children or youth who receive SSI are automatically eligible for Medicaid through the Social Security Administration under COE 004. If a child or youth comes into custody already receiving SSI, then the Title IVE Specialist will not approve COE 066 in FACTS. The child or youth will remain active under the COE 004 if they are actively receiving those benefits. If the PPW applies for SSI while the child or youth is in custody, then the PPW notifies the Title IV-E Specialist when the child or youth is approved for SSI benefits, so that the Title IV-E Specialist can stop the COE 066 and there are not two COEs active for that child or youth.

SOCIAL SECURITY SURVIVORS, DEPENDENT, OR DISABILITY BENEFITS (Title II-SSA Benefits*):* These benefits may be payable to children of a deceased parent, a disabled parent, or a parent over sixty-five years of age, if the parent has contributed to Social Security, or is currently receiving life benefits. If the child is eligible, the child will continue to receive the

benefits up to age eighteen or until age nineteen if a full-time student, even if the parents' rights are terminated or relinquished.

Unlike SSI, the child will not automatically be eligible for Medicaid. These benefits, also known as SSA benefits, are counted as unearned income when determining eligibility for Medicaid. If a child receives over $231 per month in RSDI benefits, then the Title IV-E Specialists will direct the PPW to apply for Medicaid at their local Income Support Division (ISD) office. In most cases, the child will qualify under another category of eligibility. The Title IV-E Specialist will notify the worker when a child receives RSDI benefits over $231 per month.

TRIBAL TRUST FUND*:* If a child receives tribal benefits, the Title IV-E Specialist will work with the tribe to determine payment type. Certain payments, such as settlement payments, must be kept in a trust fund account maintained by the tribe, nation or pueblo and cannot be used for the care and support of the child. [09-29-2015; 03-15-2016]

OTHER BENEFITS*:* A child may be eligible for other benefits. Their parent may have contributed to such administrations as the Veteran's Administration (VA) or Railroad Retirement Fund or the child may receive tribal monies or child support. If a child is eligible, the child should continue to receive the benefits until age eighteen or until the child graduates from high school.

Round 3 Performance and Background:

New Mexico received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and supported by information obtained during stakeholder interviews indicated that the agency has management structures in place and functioning to develop, maintain, and improve service coordination across the state. The agency and stakeholders provided examples of several efforts to coordinate services, such as a multi-agency response in cases of disaster and for addressing sex-trafficking; title IV-E and intergovernmental agreements to provide services and foster care to Tribal children; and efforts to provide early childhood services and housing assistance to families served by the agency.

Analysis:

Consultation with Medical Assistance Division (MAD) of Health Care Authority (HCA): The Health Care Authority is the New Mexico's designated Medicaid agency. CYFD collaborates with HCA in the following ways:

- **Bi-weekly Meetings**: The Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit meets with MAD Quality Bureau and other MAD staff to discuss tracking needs and services for Children in State Custody (CISC) as part of the Kevin S Settlement Agreement. These meetings also provide for discussion and preparation of the roll out of the new Medicaid Turquoise Care program beginning July 1, 2024. As part of this transition, all CISC will be assigned to one Managed Care Organization instead of being spread across three different Managed Care organizations.

- **Quarterly Meetings:** The Title IV-E/Medicaid unit and Fostering Connection have quarterly meetings with the MAD Eligibility staff to discuss issues around eligibility and maintenance of Medicaid for Children in State Custody (CISC) and youth that age of foster care at age 26, or youth that come to New Mexico who have aged out of foster care from another state.
- **Weekly Meetings with HCA Tribal Liaison**: The Office of Tribal Affairs, Protective Services Federal Reporting Bureau and the Office of General counsel meet with HSD's Tribal liaison (weekly) and the Medicaid Assurance Department (biweekly) to discuss, collaborate and problem solve regarding the development and expansion of access to culturally relevant services, treatments, interventions and supports, including traditional and customary healing, through Medicaid, for children in state custody.

Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD): *The* Early Childhood Education and Care Department is the stand-alone agency that administers programs and services for children aged 0 to 5. CYFD Family Services Division continues to partner with ECECD in supplementing their services with home-based and evidence-based prevention services to families with children ages 0 to 5 through the Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs. There are several collaborative efforts underway to address children ages 0-5:

- **Family Support Services:** Target services will be prioritized for parents and secondary caregivers who have a child between the ages of 0 to 5 and may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- **Infant Mental Health Teams:** CYFD Behavioral Health Services is partnering with ECECD providers for the provision of infant mental health services.
- **Families FIRST:** A perinatal case management program which assists clients in gaining access to medical, social, and educational services that are necessary to foster positive pregnancy outcomes and promote healthy infants and children.
- **Home Visiting Including the Neonatal Intensive Care Home Visiting Services**: A prevention program for families to receive support prenatally through their child's third/fifth birthday. The provider visits the family in their home (or setting of comfort) to share resources, support the caregivers, partner with the family to complete screenings, and develop goals for the child and family to guide services.
- **Early Intervention:** Intervention that serves families of infants and toddlers with, or at-risk of, developmental delays. Children under the age of 3 who are the subject of a substantiated report of child maltreatment are referred to the state's early intervention program, Family Infant Toddler (FIT), for an assessment.
- **Child and Family Nutrition Programs:** Nutrition programs that contribute to the healthy growth, development, and wellness of young children and adults through nutrition support services in New Mexico. The Summer Food Service Program serves children ages 1-18; the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serves all ages.
- **Childcare Assistance:** New Mexico subsidizes the cost of childcare for eligible families/children ages 6 weeks to 13 years (up to 18 if special supervision is required).

- **NM PreK:** The NM PreK program prepares three and four-year-old children for school readiness.

  Social Security Administration: CYFD has one Youth Disability Specialist that works with older youth under Fostering Connections, and one Social Security Liaison within the Title IV-E/Medicaid Unit that works with children aged 0 to 15. As part of the CYFD organizational restructuring, the Office of Children's Rights has become the Office of Advocacy. This office is currently building capacity to assist with applying for and assisting the Permanency Planning Pillar and Fostering Connections staff navigating sometime very complex process with the goal of obtaining disability and social security benefits for those children and youth who are in need. CYFD also has a contract with New Mexico Legal Aid, whose attorneys assist CYFD staff in applying for and navigating the Social Security Administration's processes and programs.

- **Youth Disability Specialist*:*** This position ensures that older youth with disabilities receive the services needed to successfully transition into adulthood in a developmentally appropriate and identity affirming way. Supports with Development and Disabled (DD) waiver and Supplemental Security (SSI) applications, partners with New Mexico Legal Aid to refer clients for assistance with obtaining SSI and DD waiver benefits, assists with guardianship paperwork, scheduling Neuropsychic appointments and locating safe and appropriate housing options for disabled youth. Serves as an advocate and support person to youth with disabilities in internal and external staffing's and meetings and with community-based partners for opportunities to participate in normative activities that build life skills needed for successful adulthood.
- **Social Security Liaison:** The Social Security Liaison (SSL) manages both RSDI and SSI benefits for children and youth in foster care until age 17. The SSL works with CYFD Administrative Services Division in becoming Representative Payee for children and youth receiving SSI and RSDI. As of 2023, CYFD is no longer using RSDI benefits toward the child or youth's foster care maintenance payment. Separate accounts have been established to hold this money for children and youth and is paid out directly to them or their parent or guardian when that child or youth exits foster care. The SSL work with all the Social Security Office around the state in ensuring on going appointments are attended, paperwork is completed, and that benefits are distributed and utilized correctly.

State Rating: CYFD has many resources dedicated to ensuring children in the child welfare system have access to appropriate benefits and has recently discontinued the practice of using RSDI to cover foster care maintenance. CYFD is also continuously seeking ways to improve its capability to leverage these supports to children. Therefore, Item 32 within the Agency Responsiveness to the Community Systemic Factor is rated as being a **strength.**

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention

Item 33: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or childcare institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds?

Relevant Procedure:

NMAC 8.26.4 Licensing Requirement for Foster and Adoptive Care

Procedure Overview:

New Mexico has three types of foster care provider licenses: a provisional license, foster care provider license and a treatment foster care license. A provisional licensed is issued by PSD to a relative or fictive kin upon satisfactory completion of the initial relative assessment at the time of an emergency placement of a child. It is only valid for 60 days with the possibility of one 30-day extension. The foster care provider license is a two-year licensed issued by PSD after all licensing requirements have been completed. A treatment foster care license is issued by a child placement agency to a foster care provider to care for a child requiring intensive services after the provider has met both the child placement agency licensing regulations and the treatment foster care standards in 7.20.11.29 NMAC. PSD does not license treatment foster care providers.

Initial licensure application requirements for all applicants: During the initial licensure, all persons wishing to become a licensed foster care provider for PSD or for a CPA are required to complete the following:

(1) a foster care application;
(2) a home study, which is PSD's written comprehensive family assessment;
(3) a criminal records check and child abuse and neglect check; and
(4) pre-service training.

An annual review is a yearly review of a foster care provider's license to ensure the foster care provider continues to meet licensing standards related to criminal record checks, incident reports, training and assurances. An annual review shall be conducted one year from the date the license was issued. The licensing agent shall conduct an annual review of each foster care provider to include the following:

(1) documentation of completion of the training requirements and the plan for ongoing training as described herein at 8.26.4.16 NMAC;
(2) an abuse and neglect check on all adults living in the home;
(3) a check of nmcourts.com and the national sex offender registry on all adults living in the home;
(4) a review of the agreement between the foster care provider and the licensing agency. The agreement shall be signed again to cover the remainder of the licensing period or the new licensing period;
(5) a review of placements made during the year, identification of strengths and training needs, and a review of current policies affecting foster care;

(6) a review of incident reports or investigations made during the year;
(7) a review with the foster care provider of their duty to disclose any arrests or abuse and neglect referrals; and
(8) a review and acknowledgement of receipt of the foster parent assurances with the foster care provider.

There is a comprehensive list of eligibility criteria and disqualifiers which can be read in their entirety in policy and procedure, linked above. BINTI serves as the primary database for foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention where documents can be uploaded, stored and referenced.

Round 3 Performance:

New Mexico received an overall rating of strength in round 3. Data and information in the statewide assessment and confirmed through stakeholder interviews indicated that the system is functioning to support the equal application of foster care licensing standards. Stakeholders described the use of common training and home study policies, procedures, and formats to ensure the equal application of standards. Waivers are very limited and applied only to non-safety-related criteria.

Methodology:

A systematic review of 30% of foster home files per county is conducted annually and the findings are reported in the CYFD Resource Family Licensing Audit Report. This sample was selected randomly to ensure a representative overview of compliance across the state. Descriptive statistics such as means, medians, and percentages were calculated to summarize the data. Comparative analysis was also a critical component as compliance rates and issues were compared across different counties to identify areas with higher non-compliance and potential underlying factors.

The analysis of these data sources provided a comprehensive understanding of foster home licensing compliance across the state. The yearly audit of 30% of foster home files per county played a critical role in ensuring adherence to standards and identifying areas for improvement. This ongoing monitoring and analysis help in maintaining the quality and safety of foster care services.

The CYFD Resource Family Licensing Audit Report from July 2022 to June 2023 was reviewed to identify trends and patterns in foster home licensing compliance. In total, 253 case files were reviewed statewide. The analysis focused on several key measures:

- Compliance rates were assessed to determine the percentage of foster homes meeting all licensing standards.
- Instances of Non-compliance were recorded, detailing the number and types of violations identified during audits.
- The frequency and success rates of foster home annual reviews and license renewals every two years were examined.

Analysis:

The analysis of the data and annual audits indicates that the foster home licensing system is not functioning effectively statewide. Documentation for dated screen shots of sex offender, court search and child abuse and neglect searches for all adult household members prior to the placement of a child in the home were not documented in BINTI in about three-quarters of the cases reviewed. Most foster care files provided evidence of compliance with other standards improving with the addition of Binti software which stores and collects data related to foster home licensing.

While the foster home licensing system demonstrates overall strengths, the evidence points to the need for improvements in two critical areas: the timely completion of home studies with supporting documentation and the receipt of criminal records checks. Addressing these issues by allocating more resources, streamlining processes, and enhancing inter-agency coordination can help expedite the licensing process and ensure the timely placement of children in safe and compliant foster homes.

In respect to stakeholders' experience the evidence indicates that state standards for licensing foster homes were applied equally across the state. Compliance rates were consistent, with counties adhering to the established licensing criteria. Regular audits, which reviewed 30% of foster home files annually, revealed uniform application of standards and procedures. This consistency across counties demonstrates that the licensing process maintained a high level of fairness and equity statewide, ensuring that all foster homes were subject to the same standards regardless of their location.

CYFD CFSR QA has noted in many of their reviews over the last two years that home studies are not being consistently and accurately completed. Following up on identified concerns has lacked documentation in the case file and BINTI making it unclear if the identified concerns were addressed. QA noted policy and procedures are not consistently being followed across the state in different counties especially as it relates to relative placement and the agency mitigating identified safety and risk factors.

Limitations:

One limitation observed in the analysis was the issue of incomplete records. Some foster home files lacked comprehensive documentation due to inconsistent record-keeping practices across counties. Additionally, the practice of auditing 30% of files annually provides a valuable snapshot but may miss issues present in the remaining 70% of files.

The accuracy of the data was also a concern. Manual data entry and auditing processes are prone to errors, potentially affecting the accuracy of compliance records. Furthermore, delays in updating records can lead to discrepancies between the actual status of a foster home and what is documented.

Reliability was another area where limitations were noted. Differences in audit thoroughness and criteria across counties may lead to inconsistent findings. Additionally, some compliance data may rely on self-reported information from foster homes, which can be biased or inaccurate.

These limitations underscore the need for standardized procedures, regular training for auditors, and improved data management systems to enhance the overall quality and reliability of the evidence used in foster home licensing assessments.

State's Response [to rating]:

New Mexico does have policy and procedures outlining the requirements foster and adoptive parent licensing standards, however, audits suggest these policy and procedures are not being consistently or appropriately followed. New Mexico rates this item as an **Area Needing Improvement.**

Item 34: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?

Relevant Procedure:

- 8.26.4.12 NMAC: Criminal Records Checks for Foster Care Provider Licensure
- 8.8.2.22 NMAC: Employee and Student Background Checks

Procedure Overview:

The PSD worker in the Criminal Records Check (CRC) position is responsible for complying with the above procedures. CRC specialists have a system located on our website and communicates with all PSD workers completing CRC's for foster parents. A PSD worker will complete an application for a CRC, as well as look up the local sex offender registry online, they are also responsible for completing a New Mexico court check to complete a preliminary search on the protentional resource parent. The PSD worker then registers the individual for fingerprints from a third party. We do have a contract and pay for these fingerprints for our potential resource parents. The PSD worker submits an email with application to CRC. We complete a National Sex Offender Registry check and complete the clearance letter to include fingerprint results.

Typically, the fingerprints with Department of public Safety are processed within 24 hours of doing fingerprints. If records are found, the results such as charges, dates, jurisdictions are included in the report. Any automatic disqualifiers are then considered, and recommendations are made to continue or discontinue the application. If there are any questionable results CRC specialists If there are any questionable results CRC specialists sends these and disposition to Office of General Counsel to assist in assessing the criminal history and determining if someone can be recommended but conversation about mitigation needs to occur, not recommended but not disqualified, or automatically disqualified.

For TFC agencies who licenses foster parents, as well as private adoption agencies (to include stepparent adoptions), the CRC specialist completes the above as well as abuse and neglect checks which include FACTS checks, and a check if other abuse and neglect check has been

done before this is recorded in the Access data base and the EPICS data base. Adam Walsh Checks are completed by CRC specialist on any person applying to be a resource parent currently living in another state who lived in New Mexico within the past 5 years.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) have abuse and neglect checks completed by CRC specialists as well.

Round 3 Performance:

New Mexico received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Data and information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders demonstrated that the state system for conducting criminal background checks is functioning statewide. The agency's criminal background unit ensures timely compliance with federal criminal background clearances for foster and adoptive homes. Stakeholders confirmed that the process for background checks for facility staff ensures that 100% of background checks are reviewed. The state addresses safety during case planning by having a process by which the state Criminal Information Center notifies the agency within 24 hours of a placement resource with a new arrest/charge for a crime.

Analysis:

An ongoing challenge is not having enough staff to process all the requests in a timely manner. The Office of General Counsel is also sometimes short of sufficient staff, which delays the speed with which CYFD can assess the criminal history. Only having one staff dedicated to this unit causes delays. Only having one staff member with the ability to pull results from Department of Public Safety database also creates delays.

OTA utilizes the same contract to pay for fingerprints for tribes who have their own licensing programs, including Jemez, Taos, Santa Clara, Isleta, Laguna, Acoma, Zuni and Navajo—and are licensed through their tribe.

State's Response [to rating]:

New Mexico does have policy and procedures outlining the requirements foster and adoptive parent licensing standards, and dedicated staff to complete background checks on all home providers. However, current staffing levels do create delays in these processes. Therefore, Item 34 is an **Area Needing Improvement.**

Item 35: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?

Relevant Policy:

Not applicable to this item. However, many of these implementation targets are captured in the Kevin S. Settlement Agreement.

Policy Overview:

Protective Services Division (PSD) develops and implements a statewide plan to recruit foster care providers in order to develop a pool of potential foster and adoptive homes. The plan is developed based on data regarding the number of children in care, where they are located, ethnicity, gender and other pertinent demographic factors. PSD utilizes public information campaigns utilizing written media, radio, television, and other recognized marketing strategies to best target efforts to maximize the return on the expenditure of PSD resources. The plan is submitted each year to the Federal Administration for Children and Families as part of the state's Child and Family Services Plan.

Round 3 Performance:

New Mexico 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 through interviews with stakeholders showed that although there are some efforts to recruit homes for the children in need of placement, the state could not demonstrate that there was a clear process for statewide diligent recruitment that was occurring consistently. Stakeholders reported that recruitment is ongoing at the county level and that the state produces some data that reflect the needs statewide. The state has diligent recruitment grant sites but does not appear to rely on information from those sites to inform practices statewide.

Analysis:

CYFD recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining diverse, culturally reflective homes. Plans to improve performance on these efforts are embedded in the Kevin S Settlement, although it has not been reported routinely at this time. New Mexico CYFD's recruitment priority at this time is focused on families who are willing and able to take placement of older, higher-needs youth who comprise the vast majority of office stays, shelter placements, and acute congregate placements.

Recruitment efforts at this time in 2023 began with the County Based Recruitment and Retention Team (CBRRT). The placement supervisors compiled data based on current children in custody within each county and the current foster parents within each county. This data included Race, ethnicity, ages foster parents accepted, beds available, how the family became aware of fostering, and characteristics of the homes. Data also included information about children characteristics currently in custody in the county. Goals were developed by the CBRRT within the county that consists of Permanency, placement and investigative staff. They identify events and/or create events to recruit new families to become foster parents. These goals also include retention items like resource parent quarterly meetings.

In late 2023, the Department reorganized to include combining the statewide navigators into one unit and joining to facilitate and ensure recruitment events occur within each county. There was also a pilot project within 5 counties to begin supporting the recruitment efforts; Santa Fe, San

Juan, Eddy/Chavez, Dona Ana and Bernalillo counties. There was additional support and other community meetings in San Juan and Dona Ana counties to discuss how to gain info on supporting recruitment in these areas with community stakeholders.

Discussing areas like school events, local community health and wellness fairs, and community events to target recruitment within the community.

Areas of improvement The Department has not had a budget for recruitment to purchase promotional swag, paying for booth fees, advertising, and presentational set-ups. There is no PR team or professional team to help call community members to get into events, or create events to spark community interest in becoming foster parents. The navigation team has no experience in these areas, pilot teams have recommended they want more support and resources to be put into recruitment projects and efforts.

One bright spot in the agency's efforts to recruit more culturally diverse resource foster families pertains to the Indian Family Protection Act (IFPA) and the diligent recruitment that has occurred for tribal youth in custody in order to improve outcomes related to preferred placements. Concerted efforts to train staff in the state's Indian child welfare law; improved collaboration with the state's Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes; and consistent, family-centered staffings have improved placement opportunities for Native children which affirm and support their individual culture.

States Response [to rating]:

Because the need for non-relative homes willing to take placement of higher-needs youth has reached a level of urgency in the last few years, New Mexico has focused most of its recruitment efforts there, in addition to a variety of more generalized recruitment activities. With the exception of improved collaboration with tribal partners in recruiting and retaining placements for Native children and youth, consideration of racial and ethnic diversity in the state's recruitment efforts requires further development and planning. This is an **area needing improvement.**

Item 36: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?

Relevant Policy:

- 8.10.21 NMAC Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC)
- 8.26.2 NMAC Placement Services

Policy Overview:

Children in PSD custody may be placed out-of-state in licensed relative or non-relative foster family homes, or with parents, in accordance with the requirements of the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 and ICPC. Foster family homes are licensed by the receiving state and PSD has no authority to license foster family homes in other states.

Placement of a child in PSD custody in a placement outside of New Mexico may occur when such a placement is in the best interest of the child and is made in order to:

1. Reunify the child with their parent;
2. Place the child in a prospective adoptive placement in another state;
3. Facilitate the placement of the child with relatives; or
4. Allow a child in custody who is currently in placement with either their parent or foster parent to move out of state.

When a potential placement in another state is identified for a child in PSD custody, the PSD worker contacts the potential placement resources to determine their interest and commitment. If the family confirms they are interested, an ICPC 100A form for each child must be completed. Once completed, it is sent to the receiving state for them to complete their respective section. If placement is denied by the other state, the child can not be placed. If the placement is accepted by the other state, ICPC Form 100B is completed by New Mexico and sent to the receiving state.

When a referral is received by New Mexico from another state a PSD placement supervisor is assigned through FACTS and is forwarded the referral information, including the ICPC 100A Form and other documentation. Within 60 calendar days of receipt of the referral from the sending state, the placement worker completes the home safety checklist, family member interviews, and the criminal records checks, and make preliminary recommendations regarding the prospective placement. ICPC staff review the home study and final recommendations and either approve or deny the placement and notify the sending state within 180 days of the referral.

Round 3 Performance:
New Mexico received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews. Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicated that processes to support intrastate and international placement of children are functioning. The stakeholders said the agreement with Mexico expedites reunification; work with the Navajo Tribe secures out-of-state Tribal placements; and Medicaid care coordinators identify out-of-state residential placements. However, there are delays in responding to out-of-state requests for home studies. In the statewide assessment, New Mexico reported that in a recent period, a minority of Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) requests were met within the 60-day time frame.

Analysis:
New Mexico no longer has an ICPC agreement with Mexico and must follow all rules, laws and regulations the same as any other country when conducting an ICPC request with Mexico. From CY2021 to the end of CY2023, New Mexico had a total of 549 ICPC requests with 277 meeting the 60-day timeframe for a timely ICPC rate of 50.5%. Criminal Records Checks (CRC) have been identified as a barrier to timely placement. Workers report they have completed all paperwork but are waiting on the CRC to be completed (staffing issues to complete licensures). However, the timeliness has improved when relative licensure changed to 30 days and this has improved those approvals for relatives within the states. CYFD does not have any fingerprinting

machines at any of their county offices so families must go to a third-party provider to get fingerprinted.
Navajo Nation has an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with New Mexico. The current agreement states no ICPC request is needed to place a native child in Arizona or Utah on the Navajo Nation. Stakeholders did note there have been issues with Medicaid being dropped due to lack of communication and understanding of the rules, causing a gap in loss of Medicaid coverage. It is not common for a native child to require an ICPC placement out of state, but it does occasionally happen.

New relative procedure and 30 day time frame has helped approval of relative home to be approved sooner.

CFSR QA Unit noted that during case reviews, not all ICPC paperwork is being consistently filed in the electronic case file in FACTS. During QA audits, staff have reported the documentation is being filed in the Shared L: Drive when asked about missing documentation in FACTS. Staff are reminded FACTS is the designated electronic database for the agency and not all staff have access to the L: drive they may be filing the documents to.

States Response [to rating]:
New Mexico has improved on their ability to process ICPC requests in a timely manner since the previous round 3 CFSR but still struggles with meeting the 60-day documentation requirements. New Mexico recognizes more staff are needed to support ICPC, as most states have a team and NM has one position. New Mexico has assessed this item to be an **area needing improvement.**

Appendix A: State Data Profile

The state data profile can be found at

NM CYFD | Publications and Reports

and/or

Requested from the state or Children's Bureau.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Feedback Reports

The Stakeholder feedback reports can be found at

NM CYFD | Publications and Reports

and/or

Requested from the state.