Federal Child and Family Services Reviews

Aggregate Report

Round 2

Fiscal Years 2007–2010

December 16, 2011

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

Child and Family Services Reviews

Aggregate Report

Findings for Round 2 Fiscal Years 2007–2010

December 16, 2011

This report was prepared by JBS International, Inc. (Contract Number HHSP23320092911YC) for the Children's Bureau (ACYF, ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS 1

ROUND 2: CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS 1

ROUND 2 FINDINGS 2

INTRODUCTION 4

HISTORY OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS 4

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THIS REPORT 5

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS: ROUND TWO 7

DATA PROFILE 9

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT 9

ONSITE REVIEW 9

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN 10

IMPROVEMENT FROM ROUND ONE TO ROUND TWO 10

OUTCOMES 11

DETERMINING SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY 12

PERFORMANCE 13

SAFETY 15

PERMANENCY 18

WELL-BEING 28

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERFORMANCE ON OUTCOMES AND ITEM RATINGS 34

SYSTEMIC FACTORS 36

DETERMINING SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY 36

PERFORMANCE 36

STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM 38

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM 39

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM 40

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING 41

SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT 42

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY 43

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION 44

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERFORMANCE ON SYSTEMIC FACTORS AND OUTCOMES AND ITEM RATINGS 45

CASE-LEVEL DEMOGRAPHICS 51

POPULATION DESCRIPTION 51

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN CASE CHARACTERISTICS AND RATINGS 65

CONCLUSION 68

APPENDIX A: DATA INDICATORS FOR THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES REVIEWS 69

APPENDIX B: DETAILED LIST OF THEMES FROM QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MAIN REASON STATEMENTS FOR ITEMS 8, 9, AND 10 73

APPENDIX C: RELATIVE RISK RATIOS FOR RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPARISONS 84

APPENDIX D: COMPARISON OF CFSR SAMPLE AND AFCARS DATA 87

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: CFSR OUTCOMES, SYSTEMIC FACTORS, AND ITEMS 7

FIGURE 2: STATES PARTICIPATING IN THE CFSRS IN FYS 2007–2010 IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF REVIEW 8

FIGURE 3: DETERMINING SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY WITH OUTCOMES 12

FIGURE 4: MEAN STATE PERFORMANCE ON OUTCOMES FOR PERCENTAGE OF APPLICABLE CASES RATED SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED 13

FIGURE 5: OVERVIEW OF STATE PERFORMANCE ON ITEMS AND RANGE FOR THE PERCENTAGE OF APPLICABLE CASES ACROSS STATES RATED AS HAVING SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED A CFSR OUTCOME 14

FIGURE 6: COMMON CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO CFSR SAFETY OUTCOME 1 AND NUMBER (AND PERCENTAGE) OF STATES FOR WHICH CONCERNS WERE RELEVANT 16

FIGURE 7: COMMON CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO CFSR SAFETY OUTCOME 2 AND NUMBER (AND PERCENTAGE) OF STATES FOR WHICH CONCERNS WERE RELEVANT 18

FIGURE 8: COMMON CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO CFSR PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1 AND NUMBER (AND PERCENTAGE) OF STATES FOR WHICH CONCERNS WERE RELEVANT 24

FIGURE 9: COMMON CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO CFSR PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2 AND NUMBER (AND PERCENTAGE) OF STATES FOR WHICH CONCERNS WERE RELEVANT 27

FIGURE 10: COMMON CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO CFSR WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1 AND NUMBER (AND PERCENTAGE) OF STATES FOR WHICH CONCERNS WERE RELEVANT 31

FIGURE 11: COMMON CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED WITH RESPECT TO CFSR WELL-BEING OUTCOMES 2 AND 3 AND NUMBER (AND PERCENTAGE) OF STATES FOR WHICH CONCERNS WERE RELEVANT 33

FIGURE 12: PHI COEFFICIENTS FOR PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1 AND WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1 BY OTHER OUTCOMES AND ITEMS 34

FIGURE 13: RATING THE SYSTEMIC FACTORS 36

FIGURE 14: NUMBER OF STATES ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY ON SYSTEMIC FACTORS 37

FIGURE 15: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STATES ACHIEVING SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY FOR THE SEVEN SYSTEMIC FACTORS AND THE ASSOCIATED 22 ITEMS 37

FIGURE 16: NUMBER OF STATES RECEIVING A STRENGTH RATING FOR CASE REVIEW SYSTEM ITEMS 39

FIGURE 17: NUMBER OF STATES RECEIVING A STRENGTH RATING FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM ITEMS 40

FIGURE 18: NUMBER OF STATES RECEIVING A STRENGTH RATING FOR STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING ITEMS 41

FIGURE 19: NUMBER OF STATES RECEIVING A STRENGTH RATING FOR SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ITEMS 42

FIGURE 20: NUMBER OF STATES RECEIVING A STRENGTH RATING FOR AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY ITEMS 43

FIGURE 21: NUMBER OF STATES RECEIVING A STRENGTH RATING FOR FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION ITEMS 44

FIGURE 22: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SYSTEMIC FACTORS AND OUTCOMES/ITEMS 46

FIGURE 23: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SYSTEMIC FACTORS AND OUTCOMES AND ITEMS 50

FIGURE 24: KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CFSR SAMPLE CASES 51

FIGURE 25: PERCENTAGE OF CASES RATED A STRENGTH OR SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED BY CASE TYPE 53

FIGURE 26: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PRIMARY REASONS FOR CASE OPENING 54

FIGURE 27: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CASES AND FACTORS INCLUDED IN EACH OF THE FOUR REASON GROUPS 54

FIGURE 28: AGE DISTRIBUTION AT THE TIME OF ENTRY INTO FOSTER CARE AND REASONS FOR CASE OPENING BY GROUP 55

FIGURE 29: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN BY RACE/ETHNICITY 57

FIGURE 30: PERCENT OF CASES RATED SUBSTANTIALLY ACHIEVED BY TARGET CHILD RACE/ETHNICITY FOR OUTCOMES 58

FIGURE 31: PERCENT OF CASES RATED A STRENGTH BY TARGET CHILD RACE/ETHNICITY FOR ITEMS 58

FIGURE 32: NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE BY AGE OF MOST RECENT ENTRY INTO FOSTER CARE AND AT START OF PUR 60

FIGURE 33: MEAN AGE IN YEARS OF CHILDREN AT START OF THE PUR BY OUTCOMES 60

FIGURE 34: MEAN AGE IN YEARS OF CHILDREN AT START OF THE PUR BY ITEM RATING 61

FIGURE 35: GOAL PERCENTAGES FOR CHILDREN WITH SINGLE PERMANENCY GOALS 63

FIGURE 36: GOAL PERCENTAGES FOR CHILDREN WITH CONCURRENT PERMANENCY GOALS 64

FIGURE 37: NUMBER/PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WITH SINGLE PERMANENCY GOALS BY AGE AT START OF THE PUR 65

FIGURE 38: PERCENTAGE OF CASES RATED A STRENGTH ON SUPPORTING QUESTIONS BY PARENTAL ROLE 65

FIGURE 39: PERCENT OF CASES RATED A STRENGTH ON SUPPORTING QUESTIONS ORGANIZED BY TARGET CHILD RACE/ETHNICITY AND FAMILY ROLE 66

FIGURE APP. A-1: MEDIANS AND NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE CFSR DATA INDICATORS 69

FIGURE APP. C-1: RELATIVE RISK RATIOS FOR RATINGS ON OUTCOMES AND ITEMS BY RACE: COMPARING CHILDREN ACROSS OTHER RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS TO WHITE CHILDREN AS A REFERENCE GROUP* 84

FIGURE APP. C-2: RATINGS ON SUPPORTING QUESTIONS BY RACE AND FAMILY ROLE: COMPARING RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS TO WHITES AS A REFERENCE GROUP 85

FIGURE APP. D-1. GENDER OF CHILDREN IN AFCARS COMPARED TO CHILDREN IN CFSR SAMPLE 87

FIGURE APP. D-2. RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN IN AFCARS COMPARED TO CHILDREN IN THE CFSR SAMPLE 88

FIGURE APP. D-3 AGE OF CHILDREN IN AFCARS COMPARED TO CHILDREN IN THE CFSR SAMPLE 89

Executive Summary

The Federal Child and Family Services Reviews Aggregate Report presents key findings from the analyses of State performance during the second round of Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) conducted during Federal Fiscal Years (FYs) 2007–2010. This report provides a national picture of the strengths and areas needing improvement determined by the CFSRs and enhances an understanding of the practices associated with high performance.

Overview of the Child and Family Services Reviews

The Social Security Act (SSA) authorized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to review State child and family services programs to monitor conformity with the requirements in titles IV-B (Child and Family Services) and IV-E (Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) of the SSA.[1] The Children's Bureau, of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within HHS, implements the CFSRs.

The purpose of the CFSRs is to help States improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families who receive services through the child welfare system. The CFSRs are an important tool that enables the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with Federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families receiving child welfare services; and (3) assist States in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes.

The CFSR incorporates two key phases: the Statewide Assessment and the onsite review. It is followed by the Program Improvement Plan process in which States respond to findings of the CFSR. Together, we refer to these activities as the CFSR process. The CFSRs are used to assess State performance on seven outcomes and seven systemic factors, comprising the results of an assessment of 45 individual items.

Round 2: Child and Family Services Reviews

From FY 2007 through FY 2010, all 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia ("52 States") conducted CFSRs. Each State's CFSR consisted of a Statewide Assessment and an onsite review of approximately 65 cases including both foster care and in-home services cases. In addition, during the onsite review, the review team conducted interviews and focus groups with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys.

[1] The regulations specifically pertaining to the CFSRs are detailed in Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Public Welfare, Parts 1355 (CFSRs and Program Improvement Plans), 1356 (title IV-E requirements), and 1357 (title IV-B requirements), and lay out the elements, procedures, and timetables for the CFSRs. Amendments to the SSA were updated in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which referenced the Annual Reports on State Performance (see Sec. 203(a) of P.L. 105-89 http://cb.stage.icfi.com/programs/cb/pubs/cwo03-06/appendix/appendixa.htm and http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title45/45cfr1355_main_02.tpl Welfare, Parts 1355 (CFSRs and Program Improvement Plans), 1356 (title IV-E requirements), and 1357 (title IV-B requirements), and lay out the elements, procedures, and timetables for the CFSRs. Amendments to the SSA were updated in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which referenced the Annual Reports on State Performance (see Sec. 203(a) of P.L. 105-89 http://cb.stage.icfi.com/programs/cb/pubs/cwo03-06/appendix/appendixa.htm and http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title45/45cfr1355_main_02.tpl).

The first round of CFSRs occurred during FYs 2001–2004. After each State's first CFSR, States entered into a Program Improvement Plan phase. To promote continuous improvement, the second round of the CFSRs assessed State performance on virtually the same outcomes and systemic factors.

The second round of the CFSRs assessed each State's level of performance once more by applying high standards and consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort were intended to serve as the basis for ongoing Program Improvement Plans addressing areas in which a State still needed to improve, even though prior Program Improvement Plan goals may have been achieved. It is intended that program improvement does not end with the completion of the Program Improvement Plan.

Round 2 Findings

The Children's Bureau established very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that, because child welfare agencies work with our nation's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. These standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being.

Given these high standards and the commitment to continuous improvement, although no States achieved substantial conformity in six of the seven outcomes, ten States did achieve substantial conformity with **Well-Being Outcome 2:** Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs. In addition, the majority of States received an overall rating of Strength for the individual items pertaining to foster care re-entry (**item 5**) and proximity of foster care placement (**item 11**).

The majority of States achieved substantial conformity with the systemic factors measuring **Statewide Information System, Quality Assurance, Staff and Provider Training, Agency Responsiveness to the Community, and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**.

We conducted analyses to examine the potential relationships between State performance on the systemic factors and performance on outcomes and items comprising the outcomes. The CFSR case review findings are not representative of statewide or national performance. Findings include:

- Cases rated as a Strength for items are more likely to be rated as a Strength for other items and substantially achieving outcomes.
- Ratings of substantial conformity with two systemic factors, **Quality Assurance System** and **Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**, are significantly correlated with ratings of substantial achievement of four outcomes and ratings of Strength for multiple items.

- Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of **Service Array and Resource Development** are significantly correlated with ratings of substantial achievement of outcomes measuring whether children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate (**Safety Outcome 2)** and whether children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs (**Well-Being Outcome 2),** along with Strength ratings in two related items (**Item 4**: Risk Assessment and Safety Management, and **Item 21**: Educational Needs of the Child).

We also conducted analyses to examine the potential relationships between case characteristics and performance on outcomes and related items. Findings include:

- Foster care cases were more likely than in-home services cases to substantially achieve outcomes or be rated as a Strength for items (where there were statistically significant differences).
- Cases with substantially achieved outcomes or rated as a Strength for items were more likely to involve children who were younger on average than cases with outcomes that were not substantially achieved (where there were statistically significant differences).
- Cases involving African American children were less likely to substantially achieve outcomes or be rated as a Strength for several items than cases involving children of other races (where there were statistically significant differences).
- Differences in ratings on variables related to services offered to parents, rather than those to children, were more likely to drive the racial/ethnic differences in rating.
- Cases were more likely to be rated as a Strength for items relating to the provision of services for mothers than for fathers (e.g., visits with caseworkers, child and family involvement in case planning).

Child and Family Services Reviews

Aggregate Report

Findings for Round 2 Fiscal Years 2007–2010

Introduction

In this report we present key findings from the analyses of State performance during the second round of Child and Family Services Reviews, conducted during FYs 2007–2010. This report provides a national picture of the strengths and areas needing improvement determined by the CFSRs and enhances an understanding of the practices associated with achieving outcomes and systemic factors.

This report will explain the CFSR, provide findings for the outcomes and systemic factors, show relationships between findings for different measures, and describe the demographic characteristics of the cases reviewed.

The Social Security Act (SSA) authorized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to review State child and family services programs to monitor conformity with the requirements in titles IV-B (Child and Family Services) and IV-E (Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance) of the SSA.[2] The Children's Bureau, of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within HHS, implements the CFSRs with the goal of helping States to improve their child welfare services and best achieve the outcomes of safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. The CFSRs are used to assess State performance on seven outcomes and seven systemic factors, comprising the results of an assessment of 45 individual items.

History of the Child and Family Services Reviews

The CFSR was developed in response to concerns expressed by Congress and the States regarding the effectiveness of the former procedural review of title IV-B of the SSA. Formerly, Federal reviews of child welfare programs focused almost entirely on review of the accuracy and completeness of case files and other records to determine that required legal processes and protections were being carried out.

[2] The regulations specifically pertaining to the CFSRs are detailed in Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Public Welfare, Parts 1355 (CFSRs and Program Improvement Plans), 1356 (title IV-E requirements), and 1357 (title IV-B requirements), and lay out the elements, procedures, and timetables for the CFSRs. Amendments to the SSA were updated in the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, which referenced the Annual Reports on State Performance (see Sec. 203(a) of P.L. 105-89, http://cb.stage.icfi.com/programs/cb/pubs/cwo03-06/appendix/appendixa.htm and http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title45/45cfr1355_main_02.tpl).

The Children's Bureau developed and promulgated regulations focused on the outcomes of safety, permanency, and child and family well-being to determine whether State programs are in substantial conformity with applicable State plan requirements and Federal regulations. The CFSR grew out of extensive consultation with interested groups, individuals, experts in the field of child welfare and related areas, representatives of State agencies and national organizations, and family and child advocates.

The CFSR reflects the basic purposes of publicly supported child and family services: to assure safety for all children; to assure permanent, nurturing homes for these children; and to enhance the well-being of children and their families. The CFSR focuses on results and determining whether child welfare practices, procedures, and requirements are achieving desired outcomes for children and families. In addition, the CFSR assists States in improving their systems and enhancing their capacity to serve children and families.

The CFSRs were designed to promote collaboration between the Children's Bureau and State agencies and among child and family service providers within the State. The CFSRs are conducted in partnership to ensure that broader perspectives are integrated into program development, review, and improvement. Participants in the CFSRs across States report that the process is valuable, particularly in that it focuses on outcomes and the practice behind the procedures.

The purpose of the CFSRs is to help States improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families who receive services through the child welfare system. The CFSRs are an important tool that enables the Children's Bureau to:

- Ensure conformity with Federal child welfare requirements
- Determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services
- Assist States to enhance their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes

Methodology and Scope of This Report

This report presents both quantitative and qualitative analyses. First, we present quantitative findings from round 2 CFSRs conducted during FYs 2007–2010 in all 52 States. In addition, we present aggregate data from all cases from round 2. We report findings from an analysis of the responses to supporting questions, which serve as the basis for rating several items. Where available, we present qualitative information that fosters greater understanding of high and low performance, common themes, and challenges. To identify common challenges, we conducted a content analysis of the CFSR Final Reports for the 52 States reviewed during round 2. The content analysis focused on identifying challenges that were common across the States for the individual items. Finally, we conducted statistical analyses to identify relationships in performance among outcomes, systemic factors, and items.

The CFSR case review findings are not representative of Statewide or national performance. The sample reviewed during the CFSRs differs from the population of children in the child welfare system reported by States. Appendix D presents a comparison of demographic characteristics of the CFSR sample and AFCARS data.

These findings should be considered in the following context:

Findings presented here represent performance at a single point in time. Findings encompass CFSR data from a single review for each of the States reviewed in FYs 2007–2010. The period under review (PUR) for each State's CFSR includes a finite period of time concluding with the onsite review. Thus, these findings are based on a "snapshot" of performance in a sample of cases at a single point in time for each State.

Analyses of relationships between different data elements do not imply causality. The relationship found between specific items and outcomes or between specific systemic factors and outcomes does not imply a causal relationship. That is, analysis may indicate that a relationship exists between particular data elements (e.g., the **Agency Responsiveness to the Community** systemic factor and **Well-Being Outcome 3**), but the analysis cannot conclude whether one aspect of performance causes the other.

Findings represent performance on a small sample of cases from each State. The sample of cases reviewed in each State was small and limited to three sites. Due to the small number of cases reviewed and variations within a State, findings should not be viewed as representative of statewide performance. Similarly, due to variations among State systems, findings resulting from an analysis of aggregate data cannot be used to describe the national characteristics of the child welfare system in this country.

Differences in performance among items, outcomes, and systemic factors cannot be compared. Both within and across States, there are differences in performance across the items, outcomes, and systemic factors assessed. Some items are rated based on the absence of negative outcomes whereas others are rated based on specific actions taken by State agencies. As a result, performance on the different items cannot be compared. In addition, these differences in performance do not indicate overall comparative weaknesses in the child welfare system nationally. Instead, the assessment of various items is used to illuminate practice and areas for improvement within each State.

Child and Family Services Reviews: Round Two

This section describes the CFSR process including the data profile, the development of the Statewide Assessment, the onsite review, and the preparation of a Program Improvement Plan.

The CFSR incorporates two key phases: the Statewide Assessment and the onsite review. It is followed by the Program Improvement Plan process in which States respond to findings of the CFSR. Together, we refer to these activities as the CFSR process.

Figure 1 below shows the CFSR outcomes, systemic factors, and the individual items that relate to each outcome and systemic factor.

Figure 1: CFSR Outcomes, Systemic Factors, and Items

Outcomes and Items
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect
Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment
Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate
Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care
Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations
Item 5: Foster Care Re-Entries
Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement
Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child
Item 8: Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement with Relatives
Item 9: Adoption
Item 10: Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA)
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children
Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement
Item 12: Placement With Siblings
Item 13: Visiting Parents and Siblings in Foster Care
Item 14: Preserving Connections
Item 15: Relative Placement
Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs
Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents
Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning
Item 19: Caseworker Visits With Child
Item 20: Caseworker Visits With Parents
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs
Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs
Item 22: Physical Health of the Child
Item 23: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child

Systemic Factors and Items
I: Statewide Information System
Item 24: Statewide Information System
II: Case Review System
Item 25: Written Case Plan
Item 26: Periodic Reviews
Item 27: Permanency Hearings
Item 28: Termination of Parental Rights
Item 29: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers
III: Quality Assurance System
Item 30: Standards Ensuring Quality Services
Item 31: Quality Assurance System
IV: Staff and Provider Training
Item 32: Initial Staff Training
Item 33: Ongoing Staff Training
Item 34: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training
V: Service Array and Resource Development
Item 35: Array of Services
Item 36: Service Accessibility
Item 37: Individualizing Services
VI: Agency Responsiveness to the Community
Item 38: State Engagement in Consultation with Stakeholders
Item 39: Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP
Item 40: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs
VII: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention
Item 41: Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions
Item 42: Standards Applied Equally
Item 43: Requirements for Criminal Background Clearances
Item 44: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes
Item 45: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

From FY 2007 through FY 2010, all 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia (52 States), in partnership with the Children's Bureau, conducted CFSRs. **Figure 2** below shows the chronological order of CFSR onsite reviews during round 2.

Figure 2: States Participating in the CFSRs in FYs 2007–2010 in Chronological Order of Review

FY 2007 (n=14)	FY 2008 (n=18)	FY 2009 (n=10)	FY 2010 (n=10)
Delaware	Florida	Colorado	Louisiana
North Carolina	Arkansas	New Jersey	Wisconsin
Vermont	California	Maine	Rhode Island
New Mexico	Texas	Hawaii	Mississippi
Georgia	Idaho	Maryland	Missouri
Kansas	North Dakota	Virginia	Utah
District of Columbia	New York	South Carolina	Puerto Rico
Indiana	South Dakota	Illinois	New Hampshire

Massachusetts	Wyoming	Nevada	Iowa
Arizona	Kentucky	Michigan	Washington
Alabama	Nebraska	-	-
Oklahoma	Pennsylvania	-	-
Oregon	Montana	-	-
Minnesota	Ohio	-	-
-	Tennessee	-	-
-	Alaska	-	-
-	West Virginia	-	-
-	Connecticut	-	-

Data Profile

Before each onsite review, the Children's Bureau provided an individualized data profile to the State to compare its performance on key indicators to national standards established by the Children's Bureau for those indicators (see **Appendix A**). The data profile provides comprehensive information to the State with regard to the population of children served by the State's child welfare system. These data profiles included the data indicators used, in part, to determine substantial conformity with two outcomes: **Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect;** and **Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations**. Data for these profiles were extracted from:

- The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), which is used to develop a safety profile of the child protective services population
- The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), which is used to develop a permanency profile of the State's foster care populations

Statewide Assessment

Before an onsite review, each State prepared a statewide self-assessment providing detailed program and policy information and analyzing performance on the systemic factors and outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being. States prepared the Statewide Assessment in consultation with key stakeholders and partner agencies.

Onsite Review

In partnership with each State, the Children's Bureau conducted a week-long onsite review for each State. Data were collected using the Onsite Review Instrument (OSRI), which was designed to collect and organize data pertaining to the CFSRs.

The onsite review culminated in an assessment of the seven outcomes and seven systemic factors, focused on performance during the PUR.

To assess the outcomes and systemic factors, the OSRI was used to collect information from the following sources:

- Case record reviews
- Case-level interviews with families, caseworkers, supervisors, caregivers, and service providers
- Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

Program Improvement Plan

States determined not to be in substantial conformity with one or more of the seven outcomes and seven systemic factors were required to develop a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address all areas of nonconformity. The Children's Bureau provides extensive technical assistance to States to develop, implement, and monitor progress of the PIPs. All of the States are developing, implementing, or have implemented a PIP during round 2.

It should be noted that States are not required to attain the 95-percent standard established for the CFSR outcomes or the national standards for the six data indicators by the end of their PIP implementation period. The Children's Bureau recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often take time to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, the Children's Bureau works with States to establish a specified amount of improvement and to determine specified activities for their PIP. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its PIP and its improvement goal and still not perform at the 95-percent level established for CFSR outcomes. That is, for each outcome and systemic factor that is not in substantial conformity, each State (working in conjunction with the Children's Bureau) specifies the following:

(1) How much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the specified areas; and

(2) The procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States.

Improvement From Round One to Round Two

This section presents a description of the history of the CFSRs and a discussion of the differences between rounds 1 and 2 of the CFSR process.

The first round of CFSRs occurred during FYs 2001–2004. Each State, after its first CFSR, entered into a PIP. To promote continuous improvement, the second round of the CFSRs assessed State performance on virtually the same outcomes and systemic factors.

The second round of the CFSRs assessed each State's level of performance once more by applying high standards and consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for PIPs addressing areas in which a State still needed to improve, even though prior PIP goals may have been achieved. Thus, program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the completion of the PIP.

For round 2, several changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. A State's performance in the second round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages of Strength and Area Needing Improvement ratings. The key changes to the CFSR case review process that impact the ability to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases applicable for specific outcomes and items
- A higher threshold for substantial conformity with outcomes: 95 percent of cases, increased from 90 percent, were rated substantially achieved
- Changes in criteria for specific items to enhance consistency and ensure an assessment of critical areas, such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents in planning for their children
- The addition and deletion of review questions, follow-up questions, and instructions

Outcomes

This section will explain the outcomes and items, followed by the section that will explain the systemic factors. In the current section, we present the assessment criteria for each item and State performance on the outcomes and related items. In addition, we will provide a qualitative analysis of cases rated as a Strength and Area Needing Improvement associated with the following three individual items: **Item 8**: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives; **Item 9**: Adoption; and **Item 10**: Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement.

To assess the seven outcomes, a sample of approximately 65 cases was drawn from three sites within the State including the largest metropolitan area. The cases reviewed include both foster care and in-home services cases. A total of 3,363 cases were reviewed during round 2. Of those, 2,079 were cases in which children were in foster care at some time during the PUR, and 1,284 were in-home services cases.

Each item included in an outcome reflects a key Federal title IV-E or IV-B program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). The seven outcomes assessed in the CFSR address aspects of children's safety, permanency, and well-being, and incorporate 23 items. The seven outcomes are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Determining Substantial Conformity

To determine substantial conformity in an outcome area in round 2 of the CFSRs, 95 percent of applicable cases reviewed for that outcome must have been rated as "Substantially Achieved." The level of outcome achievement ("Substantially Achieved"; Partially Achieved"; or "Not Achieved") is dependent upon the item ratings within each outcome.

For a State to receive an overall rating of Strength for an individual item, 90 percent of the applicable cases must have been rated a Strength. If this threshold is not reached, the State receives an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for that item. To rate an individual item, case reviewers conduct an assessment of the case and record their findings in the OSRI. Reviewer findings are documented in answers to supporting questions within each item that determine the rating as well as a "Main Reason statement" that provides justification for the rating. Conditions for applicability vary from item to item. For example, the individual items within the permanency outcomes are applicable only to foster care cases.

Figure 3 details how a State may achieve substantial conformity with the different outcomes. For a State to be considered in substantial conformity with **Safety Outcome 1** and **Permanency Outcome 1**, an evaluation is made of State performance with regard to six national data indicators contained in the State data profile. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met. (Please see **Appendix A** for a description of data indicators).

Figure 3: Determining Substantial Conformity With Outcomes

Outcome	Data Source	Criteria
All outcomes except Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1	Data collected from onsite reviews	• At least 95% of the applicable cases reviewed for those outcomes must be rated as Substantially Achieved.

Outcome	Data Source	Criteria
Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1	State Data Profiles and data collected from onsite reviews	• National standards are met for the data indicators associated with Safety Outcome 1/Permanency Outcome 1. • At least 95% of the applicable cases reviewed for those outcomes are rated as Substantially Achieved.

Performance

The Children's Bureau established very high standards of performance for the CFSRs. The standards are based on the belief that, because child welfare agencies work with our nation's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. These standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being.

Given these high standards and the commitment to continuous improvement, although no State achieved substantial conformity in six of the seven outcomes, 10 States did achieve substantial conformity with **Well-Being Outcome 2:** Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs. In addition, the majority of States received an overall rating of Strength for the individual items pertaining to foster care re-entry (**item 5**) and proximity of foster care placement (**item 11**).

Figure 4 below depicts the mean percentage of applicable cases across States substantially achieving each of the seven outcome areas.

Figure 4: Mean State Performance on Outcomes for Percentage of Applicable Cases Rated Substantially Achieved

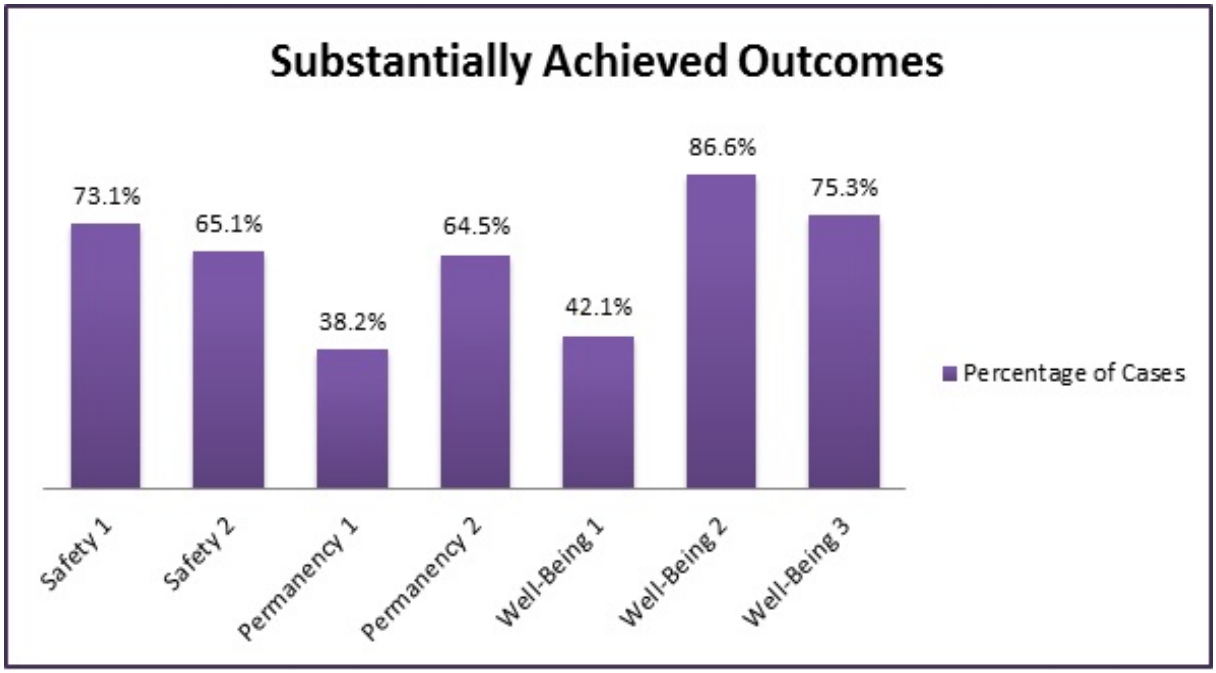


Figure 5 presents the findings on how the States reviewed during round 2 performed on the outcomes and items, including:

- The number and percentage of States receiving an overall rating of Strength on each of the 23 items
- The range for the percentage of cases across States rated as substantially achieving a CFSR outcome

Figure 5: Overview of State Performance on Items and Range for the Percentage of Applicable Cases Across States Rated as Having Substantially Achieved a CFSR Outcome

Outcomes and Items	Number and Percentage of States With 90% of Applicable Cases Rated Strength on Items	Range of Percentage of Applicable Cases that Substantially Achieved Outcomes
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	***NA***	**33.3–100.0**
Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment	13 (25.0%)	NA
Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment	25 (48.1%)	NA
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.	***NA***	**36.9–90.8**
Item 3: Services to Family	4 (7.7%)	NA
Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management	1 (1.9%)	NA
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	***NA***	**12.5–70.0**
Item 5: Foster Care Re-Entries	40 (76.9%)	NA
Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement	0	NA
Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child	1 (1.9%)	NA
Item 8: Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanency Placement With Relatives	3 (5.8%)	NA
Item 9: Adoption	0	NA
Item 10: Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA)	5 (10.0%)**	NA
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	***NA***	**30.8–90.0**
Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement	50 (96.2%)	NA
Item 12: Placement With Siblings	21 (40.4%)	NA
Item 13: Visiting Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	2 (3.8%)	NA
Item 14: Preserving Connections	6 (11.5%)	NA
Item 15: Relative Placement	2 (3.8%)	NA

Outcomes and Items	Number and Percentage of States With 90% of Applicable Cases Rated Strength on Items	Range of Percentage of Applicable Cases that Substantially Achieved Outcomes
Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents	1 (1.9%)	NA
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	***NA***	**15.6–65.6**
Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents	0	NA
Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	0	NA
Item 19: Caseworker Visits With Child	0	NA
Item 20: Caseworker Visits With Parents	0	NA
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	***NA***	**71.1–97.9**
Item 21: Educational Needs of Child	10 (19.2%)***	NA
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	***NA***	**50.9–89.7**
Item 22:Physical Health of Child	23 (44.2%)	*NA*
Item 23: Mental/Behavioral Health of Child	3 (5.8%)	*NA*

* One State had 95% of applicable cases rated Substantially Achieved, but did not meet standards for national data indicators for **Safety Outcome 1**, so did not achieve substantial conformity.
** Denominator excludes two States that had no cases applicable for item 10.
*** Item 21 must have 95% of applicable cases rated a Strength in order to be in substantial conformity.

Figure 5 illustrates that, across States, there was a wide range in the percentage of applicable cases rated as Substantially Achieved for each outcome, as shown in the last column. Although many States performed below the level required for substantial conformity, many States performed very close to that level.

Safety

Safety Outcome 1:

Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

No State achieved substantial conformity with **Safety Outcome 1**. Across the States, a mean of 73.1 percent of the cases were substantially achieved. There are two items associated with this outcome. For an applicable case to substantially achieve this outcome, both items must be rated as Strength.

Item 1:

Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

Cases were applicable for this item when there were any child maltreatment reports during the PUR. For applicable cases, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the PUR had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

Seventy-eight percent of all applicable cases (1,463) were rated a Strength for **item 1**.

Item 2:
Repeat maltreatment

Cases were applicable for this item if there was a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the PUR. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the PUR, and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report.

Eighty-seven percent of all applicable cases (949) were rated a Strength for **item 2**.

Common Challenges for Safety Outcome 1:

We conducted a content analysis of the CFSR Final Reports for the 52 States reviewed during round 2, focusing on identifying challenges that were common across the States for the individual items. For each outcome, within each State, a challenge was considered a "common challenge" if it was relevant to approximately one third (33 percent) of the cases that received a rating of Area Needing Improvement for that item. Similarly, a challenge was considered a "common challenge" nationally if it was relevant to approximately one third (33 percent) of the States that received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for that item.

Figure 6 presents the common challenges identified for the two items associated with **Safety Outcome 1**: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Figure 6: Common Challenges Identified with Respect to CFSR Safety Outcome 1 and Number (and Percentage) of States for Which Concerns were Relevant

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	• Medium-priority reports were not investigated in a timely manner.	24 States (62%) n=39 States
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment**	Several themes were identified but none met the threshold for being considered common across the States.	n=27 States

*A State may be represented under multiple challenges within each item. n=total number of States that received an overall rating of ANI.
**Item 2 contains information taken from stakeholder interview information. Stakeholder interview information represents comments from at least three interviews and does not necessarily reflect individual cases.

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

No State achieved substantial conformity with **Safety Outcome 2**. Across the States, a mean of 65.1 percent of the cases were substantially achieved. There are two items associated with this outcome. For an applicable case to substantially achieve this outcome, both items must be rated as Strength.

Item 3:
Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care

Foster care and in-home cases were applicable for this item unless the children entered foster care prior to the PUR and there were no other children in the home, or if there were no concerns regarding the safety of any of the children in the home during the PUR. For applicable cases, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety.

Seventy-five percent of all applicable cases (2,085) were rated a Strength for **item 3**.

Item 4:
Risk assessment and safety management

All cases were applicable for this item. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case.

Sixty-seven percent of all cases (3,363) were rated a Strength for **item 4**. We conducted a review of this item to analyze the responses to the supporting questions in the OSRI on which the ratings were based. This analysis revealed the following information:

- Initial risk assessments were conducted in 89 percent of the cases. Ongoing assessment of risk occurred regularly in 77 percent of applicable cases.
- Initial safety assessments were conducted in 85 percent of the cases. Ongoing assessment of safety occurred regularly in 73 percent of applicable cases.
- Safety assessment before case closure or reunification occurred in 74 percent of applicable cases.
- According to responses recorded in the OSRI, there were safety concerns in 22 percent of applicable cases. We conducted a qualitative review of the Main Reason statements, which reflected the reasoning the case reviewer used when rating a particular item a Strength or Area Needing Improvement. This qualitative examination of Main Reason statements identified safety concerns that were determined to have been insufficiently managed by the agency, including the following most frequently reported concerns:
    - There were maltreatment allegations on the family that were reported to the agency, but inappropriately screened out.
    - There were maltreatment allegations on the family that were never formally reported or formally investigated.
    - There were extensive delays in accepting an allegation for investigation or assessment.

- There were maltreatment allegations that were not substantiated despite evidence that would support substantiation.
- The case was closed prematurely.

Common Challenges for Safety Outcome 2:

Figure 7 presents the common challenges identified during a content analysis of Final Reports for Round 2 for the two items associated with **Safety Outcome 2**: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Figure 7: Common Challenges Identified with Respect to CFSR Safety Outcome 2 and Number (and Percentage) of States for Which Concerns Were Relevant

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or reentry into foster care	• Services were not provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home.	17 States (35%) n=48 States
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	• The agency did not conduct adequate ongoing risk and/or safety assessment in the child's home.	29 States (57%) n=51 States

*A State may be represented under multiple challenges within each item. n=total number of States that received an overall rating of ANI.

Permanency

Permanency Outcome 1:

Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

No State achieved substantial conformity with **Permanency Outcome 1**. Across the States, a mean of 38.2 percent of the cases were substantially achieved. There are six items associated with this outcome. For an applicable case to substantially achieve this outcome, item 7 and the relevant item(s) (8, 9, or 10) must be rated as Strength and no more than one of items 5 and 6 (if applicable) may be rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Item 5:

Foster care re-entries

Cases were applicable for this item if the child entered foster care during the PUR. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the PUR occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode.

Ninety-three percent of all applicable cases (650) were rated a Strength for **item 5**.

Item 6:

Stability of foster care placement

All foster care cases were applicable for item 6.[3] In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the PUR and, if so,

[3] One foster care case was not applicable for this item because the child was in foster care for less than 24 hours.

whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child's most recent placement setting.

Seventy-two percent of all applicable cases (2,078) were rated a Strength for **item 6**.

Item 7:
Permanency goal for child

All foster care cases were applicable for item 7.[4] In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was appropriate. Reviewers also were to determine whether the agency had sought termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

Sixty-three percent of all applicable cases (2,073) were rated a Strength for **item 7**.

Item 8:
Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives

All cases with a goal of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives were applicable for item 8. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals.

Sixty-three percent of all applicable cases (1,048) were rated a Strength for **item 8**. For 33 percent of the 2,079 foster care cases reviewed, reunification with parents, reunification with relatives, or guardianship was the only permanency goal identified. For 18 percent of the foster care cases, reunification with parents, reunification with relatives, or guardianship was one of the concurrent permanency goals identified.

We conducted a qualitative review of the Main Reason statements for this item, which reflected the reasoning the case reviewer used when rating a particular item a Strength or Area Needing Improvement. This qualitative review determined the following themes[5] that appeared in multiple cases:

Item 8 Strengths

For many cases rated a Strength, the Main Reason statements indicate that the agency provided services, and the permanency goal was achieved in less than 12 months. Particularly for cases where the goal (most often reunification) was achieved quickly, there was no further explanation for the Strength rating. Common themes for cases rated a Strength include:

[4] Six foster care cases were not applicable for this item because the child was in foster care for less than 60 days and no goal was established.
[5] For a full list of strengths and challenges, please see Appendix B.

Agencies provided support by:

- Identifying and engaging all members of the family, including relatives and noncustodial or incarcerated parents, especially fathers
- Individualizing and adjusting case plans to changing circumstances
- Designing and revising appropriate visitation plans
- Communicating with families, providers, and courts
- Addressing case issues to expedite permanency proactively
- Using concurrent planning
- Using family team meetings to engage families
- Placing children in close proximity to their families
- Providing reunification or permanency transition planning, trial home visits, and post-reunification services
- Supporting foster caregivers in a mentoring role with parents and in facilitating and supervising visitation

Common services provided to address specific needs included:

- Family preservation services
- Substance abuse treatment
- Individual and family therapy and mental health services
- Housing, income, and employment assistance
- Parenting education

Item 8 Challenges

A common theme among cases rated an Area Needing Improvement in **item 8** was the agencies' lack of concerted efforts to address the needs of the family members or to achieve permanency for the child. In these cases, agencies did not sufficiently address the reason for the family's involvement in the child welfare system or the child's need for permanency.

Agency-related challenges included:

- Insufficient initial family needs assessment
- Insufficient case planning to address service needs
- A lack of engagement of parents, particularly noncustodial or incarcerated parents
- Inadequate attention to reviewing and revising the case plan
- Inadequate communication with families, courts, and service providers
- A lack of support for concurrent planning

- A lack of cross-system collaboration, particularly with courts and providers
- Inappropriately continuing efforts to reunify the family beyond one year

Delays in permanency were due in part to:

- Guardianship home studies
- Relative identification and engagement
- Noncustodial parent identification and engagement
- Court hearings
- Paperwork that was not completed timely

Services that were identified but were not provided consistently included:

- Residential treatment
- Transportation, housing, and employment assistance
- Mental health services
- Substance abuse treatment

Item 9:
Adoption

All cases with a goal of adoption were applicable for item 9. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner.

Thirty-six percent of all applicable cases (849) were rated a Strength for **item 9**. For 31 percent of the foster care cases reviewed, adoption was the only permanency goal identified. For 10 percent of foster care cases, adoption was one of the concurrent permanency goals.

We conducted a qualitative review of the Main Reason statements for this item, which reflected the reasoning the case reviewer used when rating a particular item a Strength or Area Needing Improvement.[6] This qualitative review determined the following themes that appeared in multiple cases:

Item 9 Strengths

For almost 90 percent of applicable cases rated a Strength, the Main Reason statements indicate that the agency provided services, and the adoption was achieved in less than 24 months or that 24 months had not yet elapsed but the State was on target to complete the adoption in a timely manner. In many of these cases, there was no further explanation for the Strength rating. Agencies provided support by:

- Completing legal processes quickly

- Filing TPRs within ASFA timelines

[6] For a full list of strengths and challenges, please see Appendix B.

- Obtaining voluntary relinquishments when appropriate
- Conducting concurrent planning effectively
- Processing cross-State placements under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) in a timely manner
- Providing assistance to resource families with referrals
- Completing forms and expediting licensing and adoption finalization
- Preserving existing services for children post-adoption
- Contacting relatives early to identify alternative permanent placements
- Recruiting resource families through Web sites such as AdoptUSKids

Item 9 Challenges

The most common concern raised in cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement involved not processing TPRs in a timely manner. This finding was due in large part to agencies not filing TPRs timely and to courts granting multiple continuances.

Agency-related challenges included:

- Lack of engagement with families in concurrent planning or communication about the adoption goal to biological parents, children, or resource families
- Non-compliance with ASFA timelines for TPR
- Lack of regular caseworker visitation with children
- Insufficient recruitment of and follow-up with resource families
- Lack of continuity with families due to caseworker turnover and/or high caseloads
- Lack of planning to preserve services post-adoption

Delays in adoption were due in part to:

- Not setting a goal of adoption in a timely manner
- Not conducting home studies, or licensing adoptive homes, in a timely manner
- Continuing prolonged and unsuccessful reunification efforts
- Not filing and finalizing TPRs in a timely manner
- Not compiling and finalizing paperwork for adoption in a timely manner
- Not utilizing ICPC processes to finalize placements in other States

Services that were identified but were not provided included both pre- and post-adoptive counseling.

Item 10:
Other planned permanent living arrangement

All cases with a goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) were applicable for item 10. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA.

Sixty-four percent of all applicable cases (447) were rated a Strength for **item 10**. For 17 percent of the foster care cases reviewed, OPPLA was the only goal identified. For five percent of foster care cases, OPPLA was one of the concurrent permanency goals.

We conducted a qualitative review of the Main Reason statements for this item, which reflected the reasoning the case reviewer used when rating a particular item a Strength or Area Needing Improvement. This qualitative review determined the following themes[7] that appeared in multiple cases:

Item 10 Strengths

For many cases rated a Strength, the Main Reason statements indicate that the agency provided appropriate assessment and services, particularly independent living (IL) assessments and services, and that the youth's placement was stable and permanent. In many cases, there was no further explanation for the Strength rating. Agencies provided support and services to youth by:

- Developing appropriate permanency goals
- Developing and supporting appropriate permanent placements highlighting the strong relationship that developed between the child and the foster parents
- Providing IL assessments and services targeted to meet the child's specific needs and challenges
- Engaging with siblings, parents, courts, Tribal courts, and other service providers
- Documenting goal and placement decisions appropriately

Agencies, caseworkers, children, and families were able to overcome or address obstacles such as:

- Financial concerns of foster parents associated with establishing permanency for children or youth in their care
- Children exhibiting challenging behavior (e.g., running away, acting out)
- Children refusing services, especially IL services

[7] For a full list of strengths and challenges, please see Appendix B.

- Children's mental or physical capabilities that may lead to the need for a more restrictive or temporary placement

Item 10 Challenges

A significant barrier to supporting children with a goal of OPPLA was a lack of permanent placements for young people. Cases rated an Area Needing Improvement were less likely to have formal permanency agreements or informal verbal commitments to permanency than cases rated as Strength. Agency-related challenges included:

- Inability to address a child's behavioral needs in a particular placement
- Overuse of temporary placements
- Insufficient provision of IL assessments and services
- Insufficient case planning
- Lack of development of permanent placement options
- Lack of follow-up in licensing and finalizing permanent placements
- Lack of communication with foster and adoptive parents and service delivery partners
- Insufficient planning for the time the youth must transition to independence

Common Challenges for Permanency Outcome 1:

Figure 8 presents the common challenges identified during a content analysis of Final Reports for round 2 for the six items associated with **Permanency Outcome 1**: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Figure 8: Common Challenges Identified with Respect to CFSR Permanency Outcome 1 and Number (and Percentage) of States for Which Concerns were Relevant

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 5: Foster care re-entries**	• Several themes were identified but none met the threshold for being considered common across States.	n=12 States
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement***	• An insufficient number of foster placements was available.	37 States (71%) n=52 States
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement***	• There was a lack of appropriate training for foster parents to address the needs of children.	33 States (63%) n=52 States
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement***	• Children were in unstable placements.	24 States (46%) n=52 States
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement***	• There were limited resources available to support foster parents.	17 States (33%) n=52 States
Item 7: Permanency goal for child***	• Concurrent planning was not conducted consistently or effectively	27 States (53%) n=51 States
Item 7: Permanency goal for child***	• Inappropriate goals were set for children.	23 States (45%) n=51 States

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 7: Permanency goal for child* **	• TPRs were not filed on behalf of children in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.	23 States (45%) n=51 States
Item 7: Permanency goal for child* **	• The goals set for children were not set in a timely manner.	45 States (88%) n=51 States
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives **	• The services available in the community were insufficient to meet identified needs to support parents in reunification.	25 States (51%) n=49 States
Item 9: Adoption	• There were delays in filing and/or finalizing TPR due in part to court continuances and appeals.	25 States (48%) n=52 States
Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement* **	• Children were not placed in a permanent living arrangement.	24 States (53%) n=45 States
Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement* **	• Children did not receive independent living services, or the services available were insufficient.	22 States (49%) n=45 States

*A State may be represented under multiple challenges within each item; n=total number of States that received an overall rating of ANI.
**Items 5 and 8 contain information taken from stakeholder interview information. Stakeholder interview information represents comments from at least three interviews and does not necessarily reflect individual cases.
***Items 6, 7, and 10 contain information taken both from case review and stakeholder interview information. Stakeholder interview information represents comments from at least three interviews and does not necessarily reflect individual cases.

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

No State achieved substantial conformity with **Permanency Outcome 2**. Across the States, a mean of 64.5 percent of the cases were substantially achieved. There are six items associated with this outcome. For an applicable case to substantially achieve this outcome, no more than one of the applicable items for this outcome may be rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Item 11:
Proximity of foster care placement

Cases were applicable for this item unless: TPR was attained prior to the PUR; contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interests; and/or parents were deceased or their whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child's most current foster care setting was near the child's parents or close relatives.

Ninety-seven percent of all applicable cases (1,576) were rated a Strength for **item 11**.

Item 12:
Placement with siblings

Cases were applicable for this item if the child had a sibling in foster care at any time during the PUR. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were currently, or had

been, placed together; and when placements were separate, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children.

Eighty-seven percent of all applicable cases (1,159) were rated a Strength for **item 12**.

Item 13:
Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Regarding siblings, cases were applicable for this item if the child had siblings in foster care. Regarding parents, cases were applicable for this item unless TPR was established prior to the PUR and parents were no longer involved in the child's life, or were deceased, or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care, and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families.

Sixty-three percent of all applicable cases (1,681) were rated a Strength for **item 13**.

Item 14:
Preserving connections

Cases were applicable for this item unless the child was an infant and was in foster care for less than 30 days. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child's connections to neighborhood, community, faith, language, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care.

Eighty percent of all applicable cases (2,013) were rated a Strength for **item 14**.

Item 15:
Relative placement

Cases were applicable for this item unless relative placement was not an option during the PUR because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care.

Seventy percent of all applicable cases (1,714) were rated a Strength for **item 15**.

Item 16:
Relationship of child in care with parents

Cases were applicable for this item if parental rights had not been terminated before the PUR and parents were involved with the child. Cases were not applicable for this item if a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child's best interests throughout the PUR, or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the

agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation.

Fifty-five percent of all applicable cases (1,517) were rated a Strength for **item 16**. We conducted a review of this item to analyze the responses to the supporting questions in the

OSRI on which the ratings were based. This case-level analysis indicates that agencies were more effective in promoting the relationship of the child in care with the mother than with the father.

- Concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother in 68 percent of applicable cases.
- Comparable efforts with respect to fathers were reported for 52 percent of applicable cases.

Common Challenges for Permanency Outcome 2:

Figure 9 presents the common challenges identified during a content analysis of Final Reports for round 2 for the six items associated with **Permanency Outcome 2**: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Figure 9: Common Challenges Identified with Respect to CFSR Permanency Outcome 2 and Number (and Percentage) of States for Which Concerns were Relevant

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	• Several themes were identified but none met the threshold for being considered common across States.	n=2 States
Item 12: Placement with siblings	• Children in large sibling groups were not placed together.	31 States (100%) n=31 States
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with fathers.	41 States (82%) n=50 States
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with mothers.	31 States (62%) n=50 States
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with siblings.	18 States (36%) n=50 States
Item 14: Preserving connections	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the connection between children and their extended families and/or siblings.	42 States (91%) n=46 States
Item 14: Preserving connections	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the connection between children and their school and/or community.	15 States (33%) n=46 States

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 15: Relative placement	• The agency did not make diligent efforts to search for maternal relatives..	26 States (52%) n=50 States
Item 15: Relative placement	• The agency did not make diligent efforts to search for paternal relatives.	26 States (52%) n=50 States
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the child's relationship with his/her father.	42 States (82%) n=51 States
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the child's relationship with his/her mother.	34 States (67%) n=51 States

*A State may be represented under multiple challenges within each item. n=total number of States that received an overall rating of ANI.

Well-Being

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

No State achieved substantial conformity with **Well-Being Outcome 1**. Across the States, a mean of 42.1 percent of the cases were substantially achieved. There are four items associated with this outcome. For a case to substantially achieve this outcome, item 17 must be rated as Strength and no more than one of the remaining applicable items may be rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

Item 17:
Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents

All cases were applicable for item 17. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children's (but not parents') needs pertaining to education, physical health, and mental health. These areas are addressed in later items.

For this item to be rated a Strength as a whole, items 17a (pertaining to the child), 17b (pertaining to the parents), and 17c (pertaining to the foster parents) must all be rated a Strength or Not Applicable.

Forty-eight percent of all cases (3,363) were rated a Strength for **item 17**. We conducted a review of this item to analyze the responses to the supporting questions in the OSRI on which the ratings were based. This case-level analysis indicates that needs were assessed more consistently than they were addressed; children's needs were assessed and addressed more consistently than parents' or foster parents' needs; and mothers' needs were assessed and addressed more consistently than fathers' needs.

- Children's needs were appropriately assessed and addressed (**item 17a**) in 82.3 percent of cases reviewed. Additionally:

  - Agencies conducted initial and/or ongoing assessments of children's needs in 86 percent of cases reviewed.
  - Agencies provided appropriate services to address children's identified needs in 80 percent of cases reviewed.

- Parents' needs were appropriately assessed and addressed (**item 17b**) in 46.9 percent of cases reviewed. Additionally:

  - Agencies assessed mothers' needs in 76 percent of applicable cases.
  - Agencies assessed fathers' needs in 50 percent of applicable cases.
  - Agencies provided appropriate services to address mothers' identified needs in 68 percent of applicable cases.
  - Agencies provided appropriate services to address fathers' identified needs in 43 percent of applicable cases.

- Foster parents' needs were appropriately assessed and addressed (**item 17c**) in 80.2 percent of cases reviewed. Additionally:

  - Agencies assessed foster parents' needs in 85 percent of applicable cases.
  - Agencies provided appropriate services to address foster parents' needs in 79 percent of applicable cases.

Item 18:
Child and family involvement in case planning

Cases were applicable for this item if parental rights had not been terminated prior to the PUR, parents were involved with the child in some way, and/or the child was old enough to participate in case planning. Cases were not applicable for this item with regard to children who had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child's best interests. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan.

Fifty percent of all applicable cases (3,184) were rated a Strength for **item 18**. We conducted a review of this item to analyze the responses to the supporting questions in the OSRI on which the ratings were based. This case-level analysis indicates that State agencies more consistently involved children and mothers in case planning than fathers.

- Children were involved in case planning in 70 percent of applicable cases.
- Mothers were involved in case planning in 71 percent of applicable cases.
- Fathers were involved in case planning in 47 percent of applicable cases.

Item 19:
Caseworker visits with child

All cases were applicable for **item 19**.[8] In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child's safety and well-being, and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.

Seventy-one percent of all cases (3,362) were rated a Strength for **item 19**.

Item 20:
Caseworker visits with parents

Foster care cases were applicable for this item if parental rights had not been terminated prior to the PUR and parents were involved in the lives of their children. All in-home services cases were applicable for this item. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker's face-to-face contact with the children's mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and ensure the children's safety and well-being.

Forty-one percent of all applicable cases (2,827) were rated a Strength for **item 20**. We conducted a review of this item to analyze the responses to the supporting questions in the OSRI on which the ratings were based. This case-level analysis indicates that the agency visited with more consistent frequency with mothers than with fathers and that the quality of that visitation was higher with regard to mothers than fathers.

- The frequency of visits between the caseworker and the mother was sufficient in 67 percent of applicable cases.
- The frequency of visits between the caseworker and the father was sufficient in 41 percent of applicable cases.
- The quality of visits between the caseworker and the mother was sufficient in 69 percent of applicable cases.
- The quality of visits between the caseworker and the father was sufficient in 52 percent of applicable cases.

Common Challenges for Well-Being Outcome 1:

Figure 10 presents the common challenges identified during a content analysis of Final Reports for round 2 for the four items associated with **Well-Being Outcome 1**: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

[8] One in-home services case was not applicable for this item because the family had requested financial assistance and regular visitation was considered inappropriate.

Figure 10: Common Challenges Identified with Respect to CFSR Well-Being Outcome 1 and Number (and Percentage) of States for Which Concerns were Relevant

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents**	• The agency did not provide adequate assessments and/or services to fathers.	52 States (100%) n=52 States
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents**	• The agency did not provide adequate assessments and/or services to mothers	51 States (98%) n=52 States
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents**	• The services available in the community were insufficient to meet identified needs	33 States (63%) n=52 States
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents**	• The agency did not provide adequate assessments and/ or services to children	25 States (48%) n=52 States
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.	52 States (100%) n=52 States
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.	44 States (84%) n=52 States
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	• The agency did not make concerted efforts to involve children in case planning.	42 States (81%) n=52 States
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	• The caseworker visits with children did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.	52 States (100%) n=52 States
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	• The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of children.	49 States (94%) n=52 States
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parent(s)	• The caseworker visits with fathers were not of sufficient frequency and/or quality.	49 States (94%) n=52 States
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parent(s	• The caseworker visits with mothers were not of sufficient frequency and/or quality.	40 States (77%) n=52 States

*A State may be represented under multiple challenges within each item; n=total number of States that received an overall rating of ANI.
** Item 17 contains information taken both from case review and stakeholder interview information. Stakeholder interview information represents comments from at least three interviews and does not necessarily reflect individual cases.

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

Ten States achieved substantial conformity with **Well-Being Outcome 2**. Across the States, a mean of 86.6 percent of the cases were substantially achieved. There is one item associated

with this outcome. For an applicable case to substantially achieve this outcome, item 21 must be rated as a Strength.

Item 21:
Educational needs of the child

Cases were applicable for this item if either of the following applied: Children in foster care were of school age, or children in the in-home services cases had service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs.

Eighty-seven percent of all applicable cases (2,279) were rated a Strength for **item 21**.

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

No State achieved substantial conformity with **Well-Being Outcome 3**. Across the States, a mean of 75.3 percent of the cases were substantially achieved. There are two items associated with this outcome. For an applicable case to substantially achieve this outcome, both items must be rated as Strength.

Item 22:
Physical health of the child

Cases were applicable for this item if they were foster care cases or in-home services cases in which there were physical health concerns. All foster care cases were applicable for this item. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided.

Eighty-six percent of all applicable cases (2,530) were rated a Strength for **item 22**.

Item 23:
Mental/behavioral health of the child

Cases were applicable for this item if the child was old enough for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been assessed appropriately and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided.

Seventy-seven percent of all applicable cases (2,361) were rated a Strength for **item 23**.

Common Challenges for Well-Being Outcomes 2 and 3:

Figure 11 presents the common challenges identified during a content analysis of Final Reports for round 2 for the three items associated with **Well-Being Outcome 2**: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs; and **Well-Being Outcome 3**: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Figure 11: Common Challenges Identified with Respect to CFSR Well-Being Outcomes 2 and 3 and Number (and Percentage) of States for Which Concerns were Relevant

Items	Common Challenges	# (%) of States*
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	• The educational needs of children were not assessed.	30 States (71%) n=42 States
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	• There were challenges in maintaining or coordinating educational services for children in foster care due in part to a lack of communication among schools and with the agency, delays in transferring Individual Educational Plans and credits, and delays in enrollment.	24 States (57%) n=42 States
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	• The educational needs of children were not addressed.	23 States (55%) n=42 States
Item 22: Physical health of the child	• The dental health services available were insufficient to meet identified needs due to insurance limitations and an insufficient number of providers.	28 States (97%) n=29 States
Item 22: Physical health of the child	• The dental health needs of children were not assessed and/or addressed.	17 States (59%) n=29 States
Item 22: Physical health of the child	• The physical health needs of children were not assessed and/or addressed.	16 States (55%) n=29 States
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	• The mental/behavioral health services available were insufficient to meet identified needs.	32 States (65%) n=49 States
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	• The mental/behavioral health needs of children were assessed but were not addressed.	18 States (37%) n=49 States
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	• There were delays in service assessments and/or delivery due to waiting lists.	18 States (37%) n=49 States

*A State may be represented under multiple challenges within each item; n=total number of States that received an overall rating of ANI.
** Items 21, 22, and 23 contain information taken both from case review and stakeholder interview information. Stakeholder interview information represents comments from at least three interviews and does not necessarily reflect individual cases.

Relationships Between Performance on Outcomes and Item Ratings

This section presents the results of a statistical analysis to determine the relationships between performance on outcomes and related items. The correlations between many of the outcomes and items were generally statistically significant and positive; i.e., a case rated as having substantially achieved one outcome was more likely to have substantially achieved other outcomes, as illustrated by **Figure 12.**

Figure 12: Phi Coefficients for Permanency Outcome 1 and Well-Being Outcome 1 by Other Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Items	Permanency 1	Well-Being 1
Safety 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	**0.030**	**.081(**)**
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	.100(**)	.069(**)
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	-0.072	0.029
Safety 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	**.057(**)**	**.434(**)**
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	.157(**)	.340(**)
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	.070(**)	.424(**)
Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	***1***	**.127(**)**
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	*.240(**)*	.115(**)
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	*.220(**)*	.176(**)
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	*.605(**)*	.149(**)
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	*.737(**)*	.205(**)
Item 9: Adoption	*.847(**)*	.125(**)
Item 10: OPPLA	*.423(**)*	.206(**)
Permanency 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	**.145(**)**	**.456(**)**
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	.068(**)	.109(**)
Item 12: Placement with siblings	0.046	.116(**)
Item 13: Visiting parents and siblings in foster care	.134(**)	.425(**)
Item 14: Preserving connections	.165(**)	.184(**)
Item 15: Relative placement	.180(**)	.240(**)
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	.148(**)	.521(**)
Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	**.127(**)**	***1***
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	.122(**)	*.896(**)*
Item 17a: Needs and services of child	.116(**)	*.396(**)*
Item 17b: Needs and services of parents	.195(**)	*.789(**)*
Item 17c: Needs and services of foster parents	.099(**)	*.503(**)*
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	.111(**)	*.723(**)*
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	.125(**)	*.446(**)*

Outcomes and Items	Permanency 1	Well-Being 1
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents	.222(**)	*.773(**)*
Well-Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	**0.022**	**.256(**)**
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	0.022	.256(**)
Well-Being 22: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	**.054(*)**	**.330(**)**
Item 22: Physical health of the child	0.020	.211(**)
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	0.047	.348(**)

Numbers in italics indicate that the variable outcome rating is directly related to the item or outcome rating and thus reflects the overlapping variable; e.g., the Well-Being 1 rating is significantly correlated with the rating for item 18.
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Performance on **Permanency Outcome 1:** children have permanency and stability in their living situations**,** was significantly associated with 19 out of 26 relevant outcomes and items, with all significant associations ranging from weak to moderate strength (less than 0.3). The strongest associations were with:

- **Preserving Connections[9] (Item 14)**
- **Relative Placement[10] (Item 15)**
- **Needs Assessment and Services to Parents[11] (Item 17b)**
- **Caseworker Visits With Parent(s)[12] (Item 20)**

Performance on **Well-Being Outcome 1:** families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs**,** was significantly associated with all outcomes and items except for **Item 2** (Repeat Maltreatment). The strongest associations were with:

- **Safety Outcome 2** (Children are safely maintained in their homes where possible and appropriate)[13]
- **Risk Assessment and Safety Management[14]** (**Item 4**)
- **Permanency Outcome 2** (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children)[15]
- **Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care[16]** (**Item 13**)
- **Relationship of Child in Care With Parents[17]** (**Item 16**)

[9] phi = .165
[10] phi = .180
[11] phi = .195
[12] phi = .222
[13] phi = .434
[14] phi = .424
[15] phi = .456
[16] phi = .425
[17] phi = .521

Systemic Factors

This section explains the systemic factors and items; assessment criteria for, and State performance on, the systemic factors and items.

States must meet criteria related to the quality and delivery of services to children and families. On the basis of information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews in the onsite review, the CFSR determines an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement for each of the individual items within the following seven systemic factors:

1. **Statewide information system**
2. **Case review system**
3. **Quality assurance system**
4. **Staff and provider training**
5. **Service array and resource development**
6. **Agency responsiveness to the community**
7. **Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention**

Determining Substantial Conformity

To determine substantial conformity with the systemic factors, an assessment is made for each of the items within each systemic factor. Using the information contained in the Statewide Assessment and collected onsite during stakeholder interviews, a determination is made as to whether the State will receive an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement for each item. The item ratings are used to determine the performance of a State on the seven systemic factors, each of which incorporates one or more of the individual items.

Each individual item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal title IV-E or IV-B program requirement in Federal child welfare laws and regulations. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). **Figure 13** shows the specific requirements for each rating below.

Figure 13: Rating the Systemic Factors

Not in Substantial Conformity	Not in Substantial Conformity	In Substantial Conformity	In Substantial Conformity
1	2	3	4
None of the CFSP or program requirements is in place.	Some or all of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, but more than one of the requirements fail to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place, and no more than one of the requirements fails to function as described in each requirement.	All of the CFSP or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement.

Performance

The majority of States achieved substantial conformity with the systemic factors measuring Statewide Information System; Quality Assurance System; Staff and Provider Training; Agency

Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. **Figure 14** shows the number of States achieving substantial conformity across the systemic factors.

Figure 14: Number of States Achieving Substantial Conformity With Systemic Factors

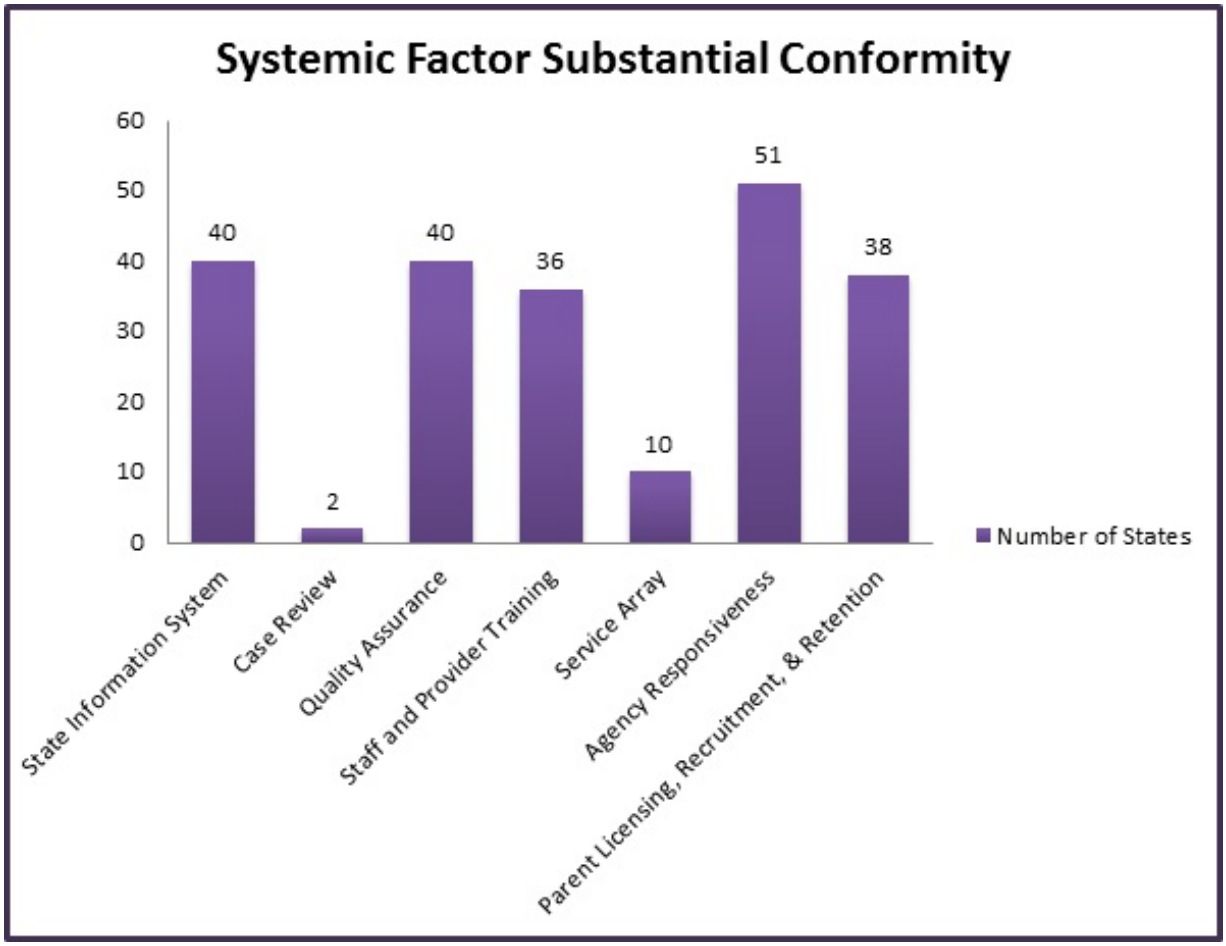


Figure 15 below summarizes the findings on State performance on the systemic factors and items.

Figure 15: Number and Percentage of States Achieving Substantial Conformity for the Seven Systemic Factors and the Associated 22 Items

Systemic Factors	States Achieving Substantial Conformity With Systemic Factors	States Rated Strength on Items
I: Statewide Information System	**40 (76.9%)**	**NA**
Item 24: Statewide Information System	NA	40 (76.9%)
II: Case Review System	**2 (3.8%)**	**NA**
Item 25: Written Case Plan	NA	0
Item 26: Periodic Reviews	NA	44 (84.6%)
Item 27: Permanency Hearings	NA	32 (61.5%)

Item 28: Termination of Parental Rights	NA	12 (23.1%)
Item 29: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	NA	14 (26.9%)
III: Quality Assurance System	**40 (76.9%)**	NA
Item 30: Standards Ensuring Quality Services	NA	49 (94.2%)
Item 31: Quality Assurance System	NA	40 (76.9%)
IV: Staff and Provider Training	**36 (69.2%)**	NA
Item 32: Initial Staff Training	NA	38 (73.1%)
Item 33: Ongoing Staff Training	NA	28 (53.8%)
Item 34: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	NA	41 (78.8%)
V: Service Array and Resource Development	**10 (19.2%)**	NA
Item 35: Array of Services	NA	32 (61.5%)
Item 36: Service Accessibility	NA	1 (1.9%)
Item 37: Individualizing Services	NA	18 (34.6%)
VI: Agency Responsiveness to the Community	**51 (98.1%)**	NA
Item 38: State Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	NA	49 (94.2%)
Item 39: Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	NA	47 (90.4%)
Item 40: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	NA	50 (96.2%)
VII: Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	**38 (73.1%)**	NA
Item 41: Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	NA	47 (90.4%)
Item 42: Standards Applied Equally	NA	44 (84.6%)
Item 43: Requirements for Criminal Background Clearances	NA	50 (96.2%)
Item 44: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes	NA	19 (36.5%)
Item 45: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	NA	47 (90.4%)

In general, the findings in **Figures 14 and 15** indicate that, although most States did not achieve substantial conformity with the systemic factors of **Case Review System** (2 States achieved substantial conformity) and **Service Array and Resource Development** (10 States achieved substantial conformity), the majority of States achieved substantial conformity with five of the seven systemic factors: **Statewide Information System; Quality Assurance System; Staff and Provider Training; Agency Responsiveness to the Community;** and **Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**.

Statewide Information System

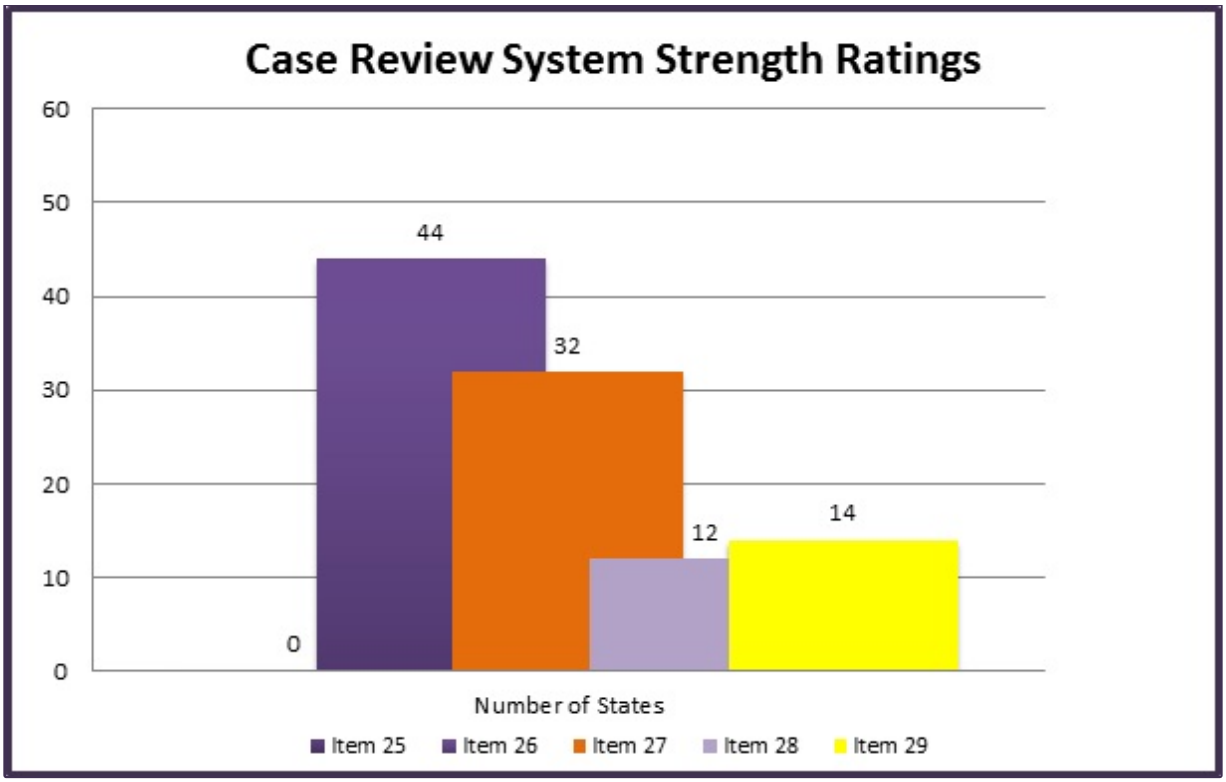
Forty (77 percent) States received a rating of Strength for the one item (**item 24**) associated with the systemic factor of **Statewide Information System**. Because there is only one item associated with this systemic factor, the rating for item 24 determines substantial conformity with this systemic factor.

The single item used to assess substantial conformity with this systemic factor evaluates whether the State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals for every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

Case Review System

Figure 16 shows the number of States that received a rating of Strength for each of the five items within the systemic factor of **Case Review System**. If at least four of the individual items were rated a Strength, a State achieved substantial conformity with this systemic factor.

Figure 16: Number of States Receiving a Strength Rating for Case Review System Items



As **Figure 16** shows, the majority of States were rated a Strength on the following individual items:

- For **Item 26: Periodic Reviews**, 44 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.
- For **Item 27: Permanency Hearings**, 32 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

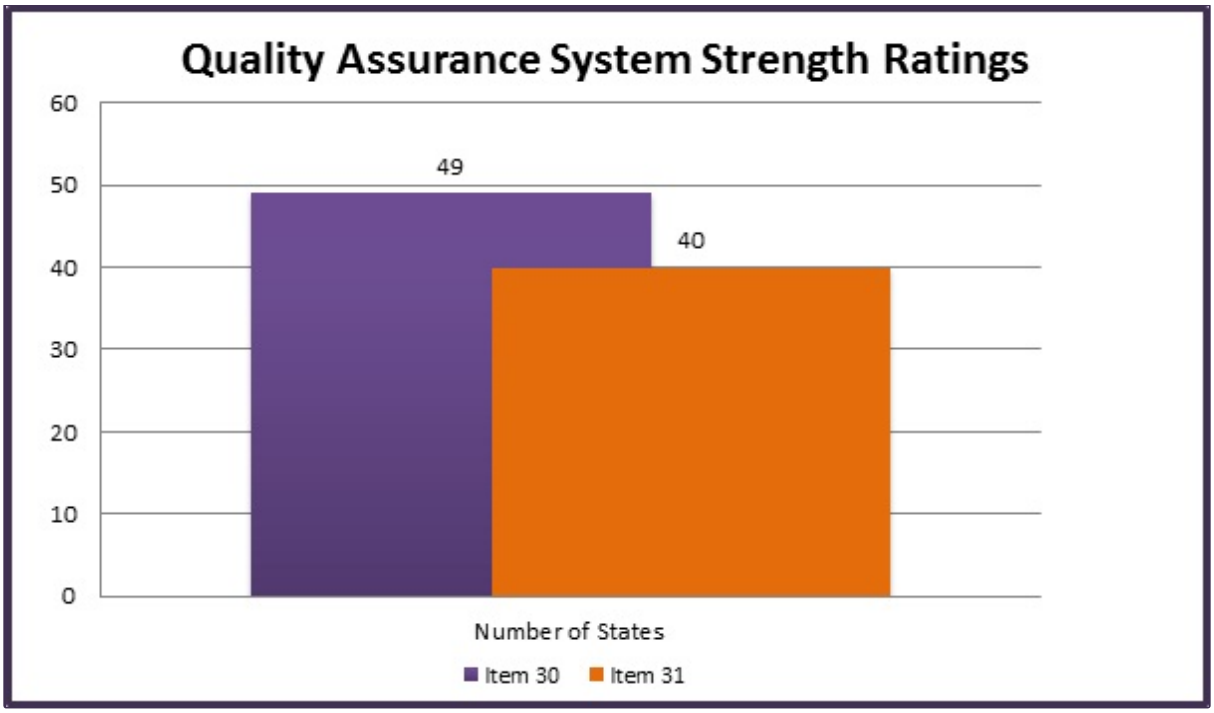
In contrast, the majority of States were rated as an Area Needing Improvement for the following individual items:

- For **Item 25: Written Case Plan**, no State received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.
- For **Item 28: TPR**, 12 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
- For **Item 29: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers**, 14 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

Quality Assurance System

Figure 17 shows State performance on the two individual items associated with the systemic factor of **Quality Assurance System**. For a State to achieve substantial conformity with this systemic factor, **item 31** must be rated a Strength.

Figure 17: Number of States Receiving a Strength Rating for Quality Assurance System Items



As **Figure 17** shows, the majority of States were rated a Strength in the assessment of both items within this systemic factor:

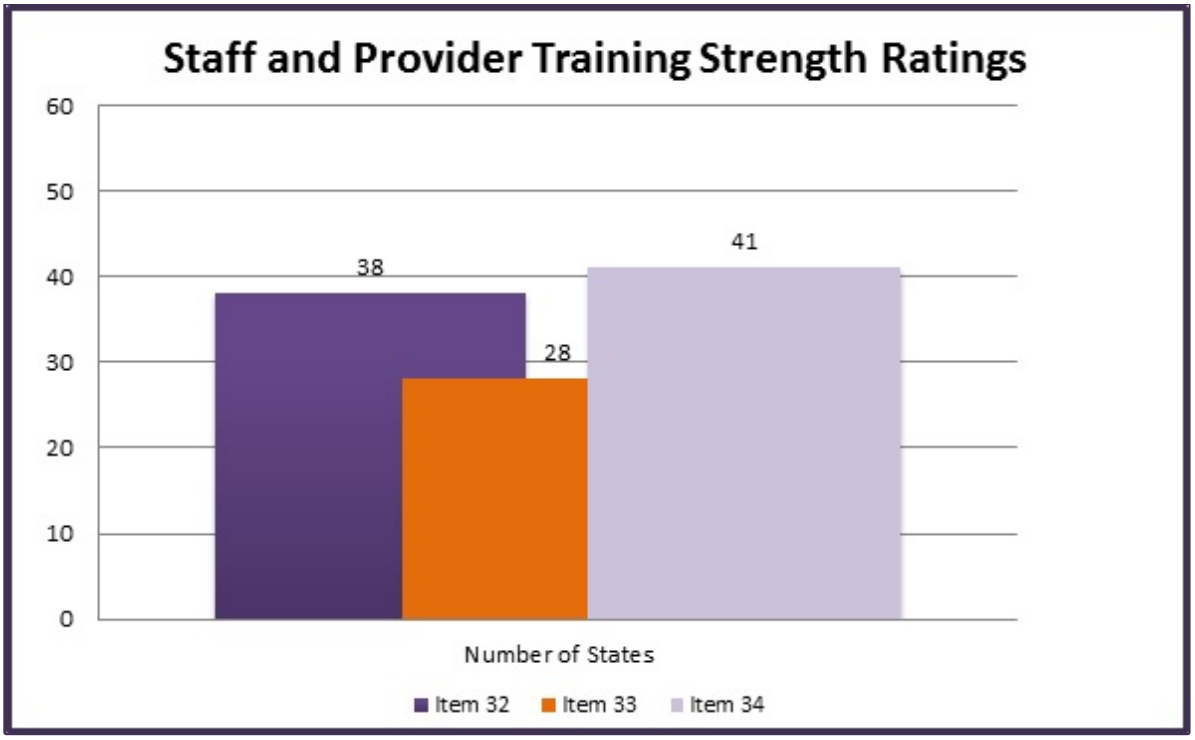
- For **Item 30: Standards Ensuring Quality Services**, 49 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children.

- For **Item 31: Quality Assurance System**, 40 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.

Staff and Provider Training

Figure 18 shows State performance on the three individual items associated with the systemic factor of **Staff and Provider Training**. If at least two of the individual items were rated a Strength, a State achieved substantial conformity with this systemic factor.

Figure 18: Number of States Receiving a Strength Rating for Staff and Provider Training Items



As **Figure 18** shows, a majority of States were rated a Strength in the assessment of all three items associated with this systemic factor:

- For **Item 32: Initial Staff Training**, 38 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the

goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E of the SSA, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.

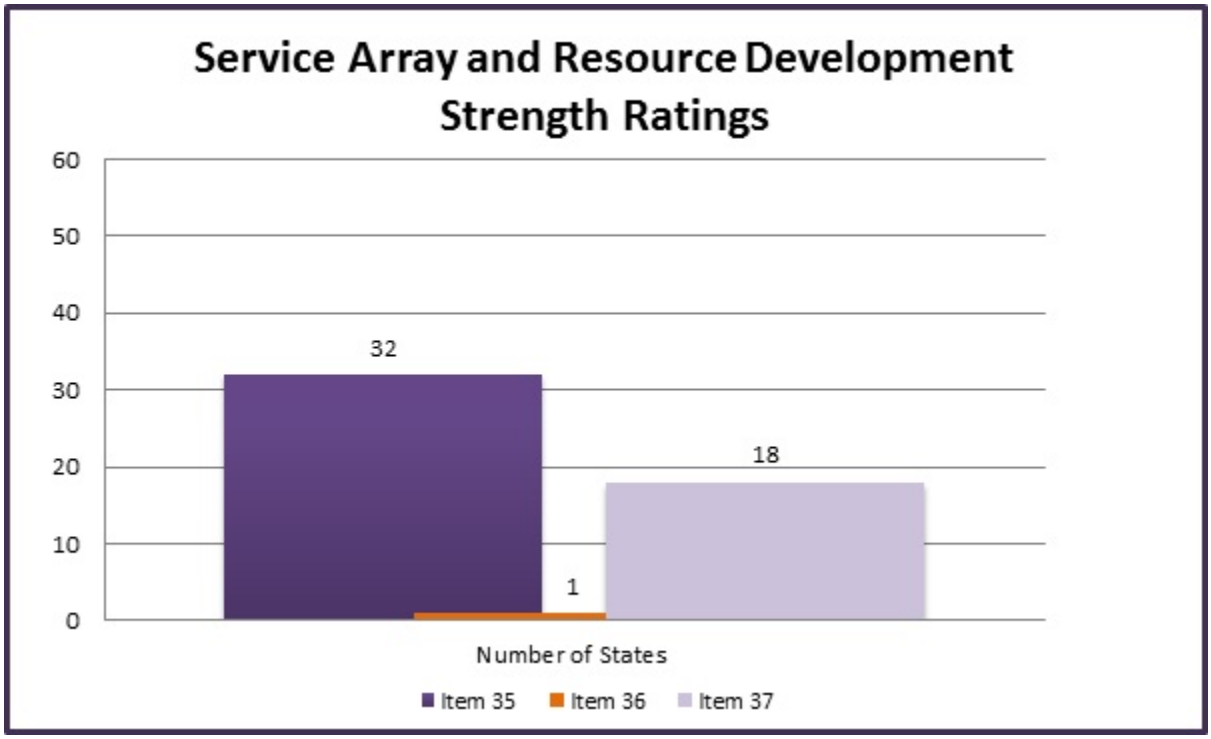
- For **Item 33: Ongoing Staff Training**, 28 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- For **Item 34: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training**, 41 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff from State-licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

Service Array and Resource Development

Figure 19 shows the number of States that received a rating of Strength for each of the three items within the systemic factor of **Service Array and Resource Development**. If at least two of the individual items were rated a Strength, a State achieved substantial conformity with this systemic factor.

Figure 19: Number of States Receiving a Strength Rating for Service Array and Resource Development Items



As **Figure 19** shows, the majority of States (32) received a Strength rating for **item 35** pertaining to **Service Array and Resource Development**. This item assesses whether the State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

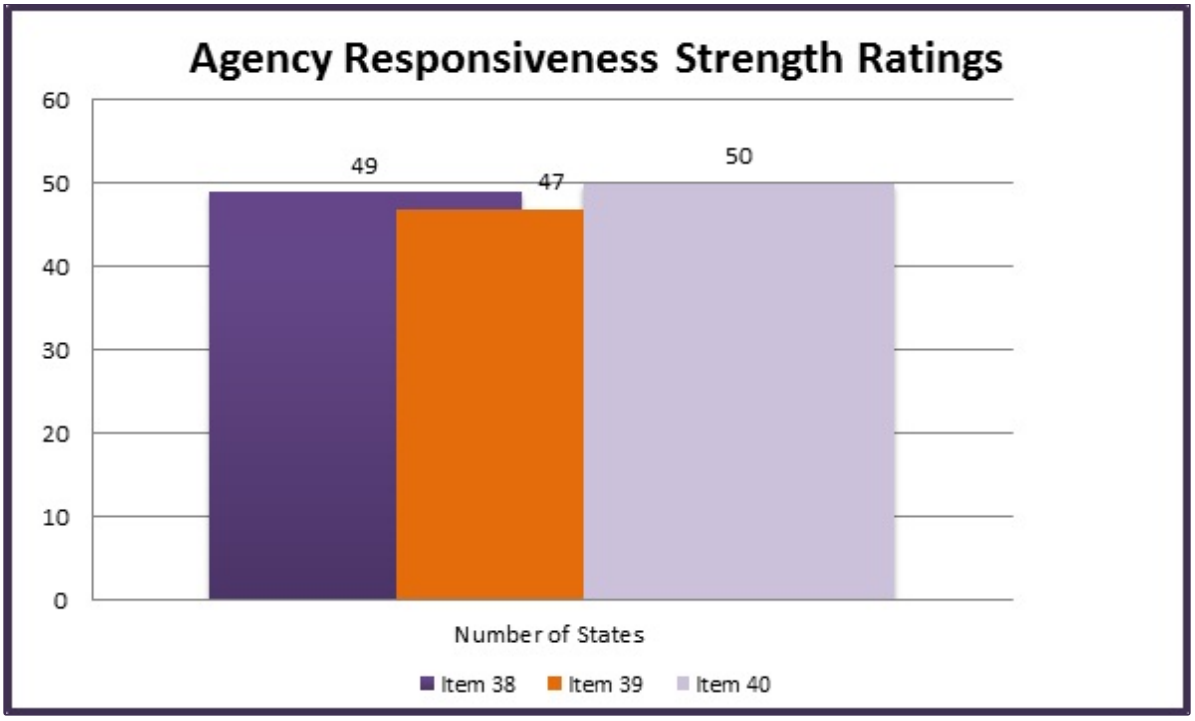
However, the majority States received ratings of Area Needing Improvement for the remaining two items associated with this systemic factor:

- For **Item 36: Service Accessibility**, one State received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP.
- For **Item 37: Individualizing Services**, 18 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Figure 20 shows State performance on the three individual items associated with the systemic factor of **Agency Responsiveness to the Community**. If at least two of the individual items were rated a Strength, a State achieved substantial conformity with this systemic factor.

Figure 20: Number of States Receiving a Strength Rating for Agency Responsiveness to the Community Items



As **Figure 20** shows, the majority of States were rated a Strength on the items associated with this systemic factor:

- For **Item 38: Stakeholder Consultation for the CFSP**, 49 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP, 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 and objectives of the CFSP.

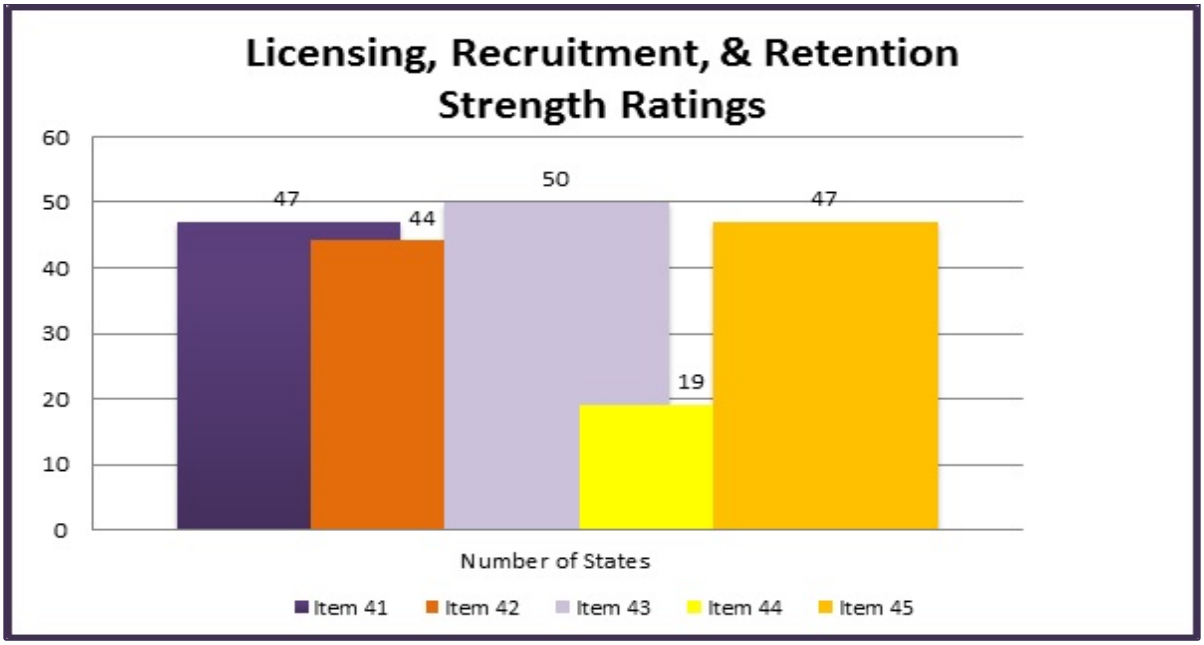
- For **Item 39: Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP**, 47 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the agency develops, in consultation with the aforementioned representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports pursuant to the CFSP.

- For **Item 40: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs**, 50 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Figure 21 shows State performance on the five individual items associated with the systemic factor of **Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**. If at least four of the individual items were rated a Strength, a State achieved substantial conformity with this systemic factor.

Figure 21: Number of States Receiving a Strength Rating for Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Items



As **Figure 21** shows, the majority of States were rated a Strength on the following items within this systemic factor:

- For **Item 41: Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions**, 47 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.
- For **Item 42: Standards Applied Equally**, 44 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.
- For **Item 43: Requirements for Criminal Background Clearances**, 50 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether 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.
- For **Item 45: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements**, 47 States received a Strength rating. This item assesses whether the State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

However, 19 States received a Strength rating for the item assessing whether the State provides for the **Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes to Meet the Needs of Children in Foster Care** (**Item 44**). This item assesses whether the State has in place a 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.

Relationships Between Performance on Systemic Factors and Outcomes and Item Ratings

This section presents results of a statistical analysis to determine the relationships between performance among outcomes, systemic factors, and related items.

We conducted additional analyses to examine the potential relationships between State performance on the systemic factors and performance on outcomes and items. These analyses used Pearson's r to determine if there are meaningful relationships (i.e., statistically significant correlations) between States' percentage of cases rated a Strength on outcome items or outcomes that were substantially achieved and States in substantial conformity with the systemic factors.

The findings, summarized in **Figure 22**, reveal several statistically significant relationships (indicated in bold) between some systemic factors and specific outcomes and/or items.

Figure 22: Correlations Between Systemic Factors and Outcomes/Items

Items & Outcomes	State Information System	Case Review System	Quality Assurance System	Staff & Provider Training	Service Array & Resource Develop-ment	Agency Response to Community	Foster/ Adoptive Parent Licen-sing
Safety 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	0.082	-0.056	0.252	0.029	0.246	0.215	**.310(*)**
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	0.059	-0.062	0.246	0.022	0.235	0.169	**.304(*)**
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	0.009	0.013	-0.029	-0.145	-0.009	0.156	0.089
Safety 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	0.176	0.040	**.332(*)**	0.109	**.343(*)**	**.285(*)**	0.272
Item 3: Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	**.320(*)**	0.124	**.467(**)**	0.108	0.135	0.210	**.355(**)**
Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	0.178	0.021	**.354(*)**	0.108	**.351(*)**	0.266	**.283(*)**
Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	0.230	-0.010	0.244	0.117	0.079	0.167	**.357(**)**
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	0.175	-0.017	-0.216	-0.187	-0.056	-0.165	0.109
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	-0.075	-0.197	0.112	-0.053	0.141	-0.046	-0.047

Items & Outcomes	State Information System	Case Review System	Quality Assurance System	Staff & Provider Training	Service Array & Resource Develop-ment	Agency Response to Community	Foster/ Adoptive Parent Licen-sing
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	0.049	-0.086	0.122	0.059	-0.023	0.162	0.215
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	0.163	0.043	0.142	0.017	0.109	0.092	0.231
Item 9: Adoption	**.337(*)**	0.243	0.233	0.134	0.052	0.098	**.395(**)**
Item 10: OPPLA	-0.114	-0.093	0.091	-0.020	0.008	0.118	0.030
Permanency 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	**.283(*)**	0.165	0.113	-0.036	0.11	0.081	**.304(*)**
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	0.031	0.105	-0.037	0.091	0.112	0.197	0.078
Item 12: Placement with siblings	0.022	0.193	-0.016	0.114	-0.036	-0.121	0.07
Item 13: Visiting parents and siblings in foster care	**.395(**)**	0.025	0.202	-0.046	0.144	0.022	**.378(**)**
Item 14: Preserving connections	0.179	0.256	0.078	-0.059	0.084	0.041	**.306(*)**
Item 15: Relative placement	0.216	**.313(*)**	-0.141	0.175	0.181	-0.021	**.346(*)**
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	**.305(*)**	0.022	0.146	-0.039	0.097	0.182	0.216
Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	0.175	0.036	**.301(*)**	0.167	0.137	0.167	0.245

Items & Outcomes	State Information System	Case Review System	Quality Assurance System	Staff & Provider Training	Service Array & Resource Develop-ment	Agency Response to Community	Foster/ Adoptive Parent Licen-sing
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	0.227	0.036	**.307(*)**	0.201	0.147	0.144	**.277(*)**
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	0.194	-0.043	**.304(*)**	-0.003	0.164	0.204	**.325(*)**
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	0.228	-0.067	**.501(**)**	**.306(*)**	0.212	0.255	**.323(*)**
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents	0.195	-0.027	**.285(*)**	0.051	0.103	0.233	**.283(*)**
Well-Being 2*:** Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	0.229	-0.038	**.374(**)**	0.093	**.375(**)**	0.129	**.456(**)**
Item 21*:** Educational needs of the child	0.231	-0.037	**.381(**)**	0.089	**.373(**)**	0.135	**.454(**)**
Well-Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	0.031	0.042	**.284(*)**	0.086	0.194	**.349(*)**	0.239
Item 22: Physical health of the child	-0.043	-0.055	0.084	-0.021	0.163	0.129	0.178
Item 23: Mental/behavio ral health of the child	0.105	0.070	**.367(**)**	0.127	0.145	**.484(**)**	0.262

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
***There are slight differences between the correlations for Well-Being 2 and Item 21 because State-level ratings are taken from the Final Reports where outcomes are recorded to one decimal place and items are recorded to the whole number.

As shown in **Figure 22**, all significant correlations indicate that States that received higher ratings on these systemic factors were also more likely to have a higher percentage of cases rated a Strength on specific items and more substantially achieved outcomes. These analyses indicate that:

- States in substantial conformity with two systemic factors, **Quality Assurance System** and **Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention**, are more likely to have received ratings of substantial achievement regarding four outcomes and strength ratings for multiple items.
    - Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention are correlated with ratings of substantially achieved with Safety Outcome 1, Permanency Outcomes 1 and 2, and Well-Being Outcome 2 and strength ratings in many of their related items. Ratings of substantial conformity with this systemic factor are correlated with strength ratings for items 1, 3 and 4 (Safety Outcomes), items 17 through 20 (Well-Being Outcome 1), and item 21 (Well-Being Outcome 2).
    - Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System are correlated with ratings of substantially achieved with Safety Outcome 1 and Well-Being Outcomes 1, 2, and 3, along with strength ratings for most of their related items.
- Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of **Service Array and Resource Development** are significantly correlated with ratings of substantially achieved with **Safety Outcome 2** and **Well-Being Outcome 2,** along with strength ratings for some related items (**Item 4: Risk Assessment and Safety Management** and **Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child**).
- Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of **Agency Responsiveness to the Community** are significantly correlated with ratings of substantially achieved with **Safety Outcome 2** and **Well-Being Outcome 3**, along with Strength ratings for one related item (**Item 23: Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child**).
- Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of **Statewide Information System** are significantly correlated with ratings of substantially achieved with **Permanency Outcome 2**, and Strength ratings for two related items (**Item 13: Visiting Parents and Siblings in Foster Care** and **Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents**). Also, there is a significant correlation with Strength ratings for **Item 3: Services to Family to Protect Child in Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care,** and **Item 9: Adoption**.
- Two systemic factors show little to no correlation with items and outcomes:
    - Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System are significantly correlated with Strength ratings for **Item 15: Relative Placement**.

- Ratings of substantial conformity with the systemic factor of **Staff and Provider Training** are significantly correlated with strength ratings for **Item 19: Caseworker Visits With Child**.

Figure 23 summarizes the significant correlations between systemic factors and outcomes and items that were detailed above.

Figure 23: Summary of Significant Correlations Between Systemic Factors and Outcomes and Items

Summary of Correlations	Safety	Permanency	Well-Being
Statewide Information System	• Item 3 • Item 9	• Permanency Outcome 2 • Item 13 • Item 16	NA
Case Review System	NA	• Item 15	NA
Quality Assurance System	• Safety Outcome 2 • Item 3 • Item 4	NA	• Well-Being Outcome 1 • Item 17 • Item 18 • Item 19 • Item 20 • Well-Being Outcome 2 • Item 21 • Well-Being Outcome 3 • Item 23
Staff and Provider Training	NA	NA	• Item 19
Service Array and Resource Development	• Safety Outcome 2 • Item 4	NA	• Well-Being Outcome 2 • Item 21 • Well-Being Outcome 3 • Item 23
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	• Safety Outcome 2	NA	• Well-Being Outcome 3 • Item 23

Summary of Correlations	Safety	Permanency	Well-Being
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	• Safety Outcome 1 • Item 1 • Item 3 • Item 4	• Permanency Outcome 1 • Item 9 • Permanency Outcome 2 • Item 13 • Item 14 • Item 15	• Well-Being Outcome 2 • Item 17 • Item 18 • Item 19 • Item 20 • Well-Being Outcome 2 • Item 21

Case-Level Demographics

This section presents an analysis of case-level data collected during the round 2 CFSRs encompassing 3,363 cases reviewed. In this section, we present an analysis of case characteristics, including reason for case opening, race/ethnicity, age, gender, and permanency goal. In addition, we present significant correlations found between these case characteristics and performance on outcomes and related items.

Population Description

Figure 24 summarizes the key characteristics of the CFSR sample cases.

Figure 24: Key Characteristics of the CFSR Sample Cases

Characteristic	Percentages
Type of Case During PUR	• Foster care – 61.8% • In-home services – 38.2%
Primary Reason for Case Opening	• Top three reasons: • Neglect (not including medical) – 36.1% • Substance abuse (parents) – 16.3% • Physical abuse - 12.6%
Race and Ethnicity*	• White (non-Hispanic) – 42.8% • Black/African American (non-Hispanic) – 28.6% • Hispanic – 15.8% • Children of more than one race – 7.9% • American Indian/Alaska Native – 3.7% • Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander – 0.5% • Asian – 0.4%

Characteristic	Percentages
Age at Entry Into Foster Care*	• ≥ 16 years old – 8.8% • 13–15 years old – 18.8% • 6–12 years old – 29.7% • < 6 years old – 42.7%
Age at Start of PUR*	• ≥ 16 years old – 18.2% • 13–15 years old – 21.9% • 6–12 years old – 24.7% • < 6 years old – 35.3%
**Gender*, ** **	• Male – 51.0% • Female – 49.0%
Permanency Goals*	• 81.0% have only one goal. Of those*** : – Adoption – 38.2% – Reunification with parent – 32.6% – OPPLA – 21.0% – Guardianship – 4.9% – Reunification with relatives – 3.2% • 19.0% have concurrent goals

*Information is available only for target child in foster care cases because in-home services cases frequently involve more than one child.
**Data on gender was not formally collected until July 2007.
***Single-goal percentages do not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Type of case

Of the 3,363 cases reviewed during round 2 onsite reviews, 2,079 (61.8 percent) were cases in which children were in foster care at some time during the PUR, and 1,284 (38.2 percent) were in-home services cases.

Foster care cases were more likely than in-home services cases to have substantially achieved outcomes or Strength ratings on items (where there were statistically significant differences).

Figure 25 displays the percentage of foster care and in-home services cases that were substantially achieved for the five outcomes relevant to both case types and the percentage of cases rated a Strength on 13 relevant items. Findings for permanency outcomes are not shown because they are applicable to foster care cases only.

Figure 25: Percentage of Cases Rated a Strength or Substantially Achieved by Case Type

Outcome	Item	Foster Care	In-Home Services
Safety 1	Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	74.0%	72.6%
-	**Item 1**: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment	80.1%	76.7%
-	**Item 2:** Repeat maltreatment	85.9%	88.7%
Safety 2	Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	**69.9%**	**57.2%**
-	**Item 3:** Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	76.6%	73.6%
-	**Item 4**: Risk assessment and safety management	**72.0%**	**58.6%**
Well-Being 1	Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	**48.9%**	**31.2%**
-	**Item 17**: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	**53.4%**	**38.2%**
-	**Item 17a**: Needs and services of child	**88.0%**	**73.1%**
-	**Item 17b**: Needs and services of parents	**51.7%**	**41.0%**
-	**Item 18**: Child and family involvement in case planning	**57.7%**	**38.3%**
-	**Item 19**: Caseworker visits with child	**79.1%**	**58.5%**
-	**Item 20**: Caseworker visits with parents	**44.1%**	**37.9%**
Well-Being 2	Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	**91.0%**	**71.7%**
-	**Item 21**: Educational needs of child	**91.0%**	**71.7%**
Well-Being 3	Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	**81.0%**	**63.9%**
-	**Item 22**: Physical health of child	**89.0%**	**74.6%**
-	**Item 23**: Mental/behavioral health of child	**84.6%**	**63.2%**

*Numbers in bold are significant for chi-square ($p < .05$).

Figure 25 shows that, for **Safety Outcome 1**: **Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect**, differences in ratings between foster care and in-home services cases were not statistically significant.

Reason for case opening

For each case, reviewers were asked to (1) note all reasons relevant to the family's involvement with the child welfare agency and (2) identify one reason as the primary reason for opening the case. **Figure 26** shows the percentage of primary reasons for case opening across all cases reviewed.

Figure 26: Number and Percentage of Primary Reasons for Case Opening

Primary Reason	Number (Percent)
Neglect (not including medical)	1,214 (36.1%)
Substance abuse (parents)	547 (16.3%)
Physical abuse	424 (12.6%)
Child's behavior	216 (6.4%)
Sexual abuse	159 (4.7%)
Domestic violence	150 (4.5%)
Child in juvenile justice system	122 (3.6%)
Other	116 (3.5%)
Mental/physical health of parent	106 (3.2%)
Abandonment	96 (2.9%)
Medical neglect	92 (2.7%)
Mental/physical health of child	68 (2.0%)
Emotional maltreatment	36 (1.1%)
Substance abuse (child)	16 (0.5%)
Total	**3,362* (100%)**

*For one case, no primary reason was selected and therefore the case could not be included in this table.

As **Figure 26** shows, the most frequently cited primary reasons for case opening include neglect, substance abuse by parents, and physical abuse. These three reasons were identified as primary in 65 percent of all cases.

To illustrate trends, we combined all reasons for case opening into groups. **Figure 27** shows the number, percent of cases, and reasons included in each group.

Figure 27: Number and Percentage of Cases and Factors Included in Each of the Four Reason Groups

Reasons for Case Opening	Number (Percent)
• Substance abuse by parents • Abandonment • Domestic violence in the child's home • Neglect (not including medical)	2,007 (61.8%)

Reasons for Case Opening	Number (Percent)
• Physical abuse • Emotional maltreatment • Sexual abuse	619 (19.1%)
• Child in juvenile justice system • Child's behavior • Substance abuse by child	354 (10.9%)
• Mental/physical health of child • Mental/physical health of parent • Medical neglect	266 (8.2%)
Total	**3,246* (100%)**

*The total reported excludes cases with a primary reason of "other" or where a primary reason was not reported.

As **Figure 27** shows, more than half of the cases reviewed cite reasons for case opening that include substance abuse by parents, abandonment, domestic violence, and neglect. Almost 20 percent of cases cite reasons for case opening that include physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, and sexual abuse. Just over 10 percent of cases cite reasons for case opening that include child in the juvenile justice system, child's behavior, and substance abuse by the child. Less than 10 percent of cases cite reasons for case opening that include mental/physical health of the child or parent and medical neglect.

Figure 28 presents information pertaining to the age of the child at the time of entry into foster care and the groups of reasons for case opening.

Figure 28: Age Distribution at the Time of Entry Into Foster Care and Reasons for Case Opening by Group

Reasons For Case Opening	Younger than 6 Years	6 to 9 Years	10 to 12 Years	13 to 15 Years	16 Years and Older	Total
• Substance abuse by parents • Abandonment • Domestic violence in the child's home • Neglect (not including medical)	647 (74.9%)	228 (67.9%)	148 (56.7%)	182 (48.4%)	66 (37.3%)	1,271 (63.1%)

Reasons For Case Opening	Younger than 6 Years	6 to 9 Years	10 to 12 Years	13 to 15 Years	16 Years and Older	Total
• Physical abuse • Emotional maltreatment • Sexual abuse	129 (14.9%)	78 (23.2%)	57 (21.8%)	64 (17.0%)	22 (12.4%)	290 (17.4%)
• Child in juvenile justice system • Child's behavior • Substance abuse by child	6 (0.7%)	10 (3.0%)	33 (12.6%)	108 (28.7%)	74 (41.8%)	231 (11.5%)
• Mental/physical health of child • Mental/physical health of parent • Medical neglect	82 (9.5%)	20 (6.0%)	23 (8.8%)	22 (5.9%)	15 (8.5%)	162 (8.0%)
Total*	**864 (100.0%)**	**336 (100.0%)***	**261 (100.0%)***	**376 (100.0%)**	**177 (100.0%)**	**2,014* (100.0%)****

Chi-Square (12, n=2,014) = 423.626, p < .001, Cramer's V = .265
*Total excludes the following cases: in-home cases, for which age is not reported; foster care cases with a primary reason of "other"; the one case for which a primary reason was not reported.
**Does not total 100% due to rounding

As **Figure 28** illustrates, the primary reasons for case opening varied significantly as a function of the child's age at the time of entry into foster care.[18] Cases open for reasons including substance abuse by parents, abandonment, domestic violence, and neglect were associated with case opening for children age six years and younger. However, cases open for reasons including child in juvenile justice system, child's behavior, and substance abuse by the child were associated with youth 13 and older, especially those 16 and older.

We conducted analyses to assess the relationship between the reasons for case opening and the outcome ratings.

- For **Safety Outcome 2** and **Well-Being Outcome 1**, cases where reasons including child in juvenile justice system, child's behavior, and substance abuse by the child were the primary reason for entering foster care were significantly less likely to be rated as substantially achieving the outcome.

- For **Permanency Outcome 1** and **Well-Being Outcome 3**, cases where reasons including physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, and sexual abuse were the primary reason for entering foster care were significantly less likely to be rated as substantially achieving the outcome.

[18] Chi square [12, n=2,014] = 423.626; p < .001, Cramer's V = .265)

Race/ethnicity of child in foster care

Figure 29 provides information pertaining to the race/ethnicity of children in the foster care cases reviewed. This information is available for foster care cases only; there is no specified target child for in-home services cases because they are rated on the basis of all children in the family.

Figure 29: Number and Percentage of Children by Race/Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	Number (Percent)
White (non-Hispanic)	890 (42.8%)
Black/African American (non-Hispanic)	594 (28.6%)
Hispanic	329 (15.8%)
More than one race (non-Hispanic)	165 (7.9%)
American Indian/Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)	76 (3.7%)
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)	10 (0.5%)
Asian (non-Hispanic)	9 (0.4%)
Unable to determine (non-Hispanic)	6 (0.3%)
Total	**2,079**

As **Figure 29** shows, the two largest racial/ethnic groups in the CFSR sample are White (non-Hispanic) at 42.8 percent and Black/African American (non-Hispanic) at 28.6 percent.

We conducted analyses to assess the relationship between the target child's race/ethnicity and case ratings for the outcomes and items. Five different racial/ethnic groups were included in the analysis:

- American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)
- Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
- White (non-Hispanic)
- More than one race (non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic

We found significant associations in the following relationships:

- A significant association was found between the target child's race/ethnicity and case ratings for **Permanency Outcomes 1** and **2** and **Well-Being Outcomes 1** and **2**.

- For **Permanency Outcomes 1** and **2** and **Well-Being Outcome 1**, cases involving African American children were less likely to be rated as substantially achieved than cases involving target children of other races (**Figure 30**).

- Cases involving African American children were less likely to be rated a Strength in 9 of the 13 items where there was a statistically significant association between the target child's race/ethnicity and item rating.

Figures 30 and **31** show findings for significant relationships only.

Figure 30: Percent of Cases Rated Substantially Achieved by Target Child Race/Ethnicity for Outcomes

Race/Ethnicity*	Permanency 1	Permanency 2	Well-Being 1	Well-Being 2
American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)	39.5%	77.0%	58.1%	84.1%
Black or African American (non-Hispanic)	32.5%	55.3%	43.6%	90.1%
White (non-Hispanic)	41.5%	70.2%	53.5%	94.1%
More than one race (non-Hispanic)	40.0%	69.6%	55.6%	94.7%
Hispanic	38.0%	66.0%	52.2%	87.5%

*Asians, Hawaiians and Unable to Determine not included because there are not enough cases for significance.

Figure 31: Percent of Cases Rated a Strength by Target Child Race/Ethnicity for Items

Permanency 1	American Indian/Alaska Native	Black/African American	White	More Than One Race	Hispanic
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	67.6%	58.1%	64.4%	66.4%	69.4%
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	54.8%	55.7%	69.5%	74.6%	66.7%
Item 12: Placement with siblings	93.0%	84.2%	90.4%	86.6%	83.6%
Item 13: Visiting parents and siblings in foster care	79.4%	52.2%	69.9%	66.0%	65.4%
Item 14: Preserving connections	83.8%	75.4%	82.9%	78.6%	84.7%
Item 15: Relative placement	83.8%	68.6%	72.7%	74.3%	65.0%
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	66.7%	42.4%	63.5%	57.1%	57.2%
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents	66.2%	47.9%	58.9%	60.7%	55.1%
Item 17b: Needs and services of parents	61.1%	42.4%	60.2%	63.0%	51.4%
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	67.6%	50.2%	63.1%	66.1%	60.4%
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	70.3%	77.9%	80.2%	85.2%	83.7%

Permanency 1	American Indian/Alaska Native	Black/African American	White	More Than One Race	Hispanic
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents	50.9%	32.2%	51.0%	50.0%	49.1%
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	84.1%	90.1%	94.1%	94.7%	87.5%
Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child	78.2%	84.0%	87.3%	87.6%	78.7%

Relative risk (RR) analysis allows us to compare the ratings of cases involving four racial/ethnic minority groups to cases involving Whites as a reference group.[19] Cases involving African American children were consistently less likely than cases involving White children to have outcomes that were substantially achieved for outcomes or Strength ratings for items.

- Cases involving African American children were approximately two-thirds less likely than cases involving White children to be rated a Strength for the item assessing **caseworker visits with parents** (**item 20**).
- Cases involving African American children were approximately two-thirds less likely to be rated a Strength on the item assessing the **relationship of the child in care with parents** (**Item 16)** than cases involving White children.
- Where statistically significant, cases involving Hispanic children were consistently less likely to have been rated a Strength for items or rated as having substantially achieved the corresponding outcome than cases involving White children, although statistically significant scores for cases involving Hispanic children generally tended to be higher than for cases involving African American children.
- Where statistically significant, cases involving American Indian or Alaska Native children were less likely to have been rated a Strength for items or rated as having substantially achieved the corresponding outcome than cases involving White children. Additionally, this was the only group to be *more* likely to receive a statistically significant positive rating than cases involving White children. Cases involving American Indian or Alaska Native children were slightly more likely to be rated a Strength for the item assessing **relative placement** (**item 15**).
- Cases involving children of more than one race were less likely to be rated a Strength for the item assessing **visitation with parents and siblings in foster care** (**item 13**) than cases involving White children. This was the only item where there were statistically significant differences for these two groups.

[19] Please see Appendix C for Figure displaying relative risk ratios on outcomes and items by race.

Age of children in foster care (at most recent entry and at start of the PUR)

We examined the age of children in foster care at the entry into the most recent episode of foster care and at the start of the PUR. Information on the ages of children is available for foster care cases only. There is no specified target child for the in-home services cases because they are rated on the basis of all children in the family. **Figure 32** provides the number and percentage of children in five age groupings at most recent entry into foster care and at the start of the PUR.

Figure 32: Number and Percentage of Children in Foster Care by Age of Most Recent Entry Into Foster Care and at Start of PUR

Age	Age at Most Recent Entry Into Foster Care Number (Percent)	Age at Start of PUR Number (Percent)
Younger than 6	888 (42.7%)	733 (35.3%)
6 to 9	347 (16.7%)	301 (14.5%)
10 to 12	271 (13.0%)	212 (10.2%)
13 to 15	390 (18.8%)	455 (21.9%)
16 and older	183 (8.8%)	378 (18.2%)
Total	**2,079 (100.0%)**	**2,079 (100.0%)**

As **Figure 32** shows:

- Over 70 percent of the children in the sample entered foster care when they were younger than age 13, while the remainder entered as adolescents.
- At the start of the PUR, approximately 60 percent of children in the sample were under the age of 13, while 40 percent were 13 or older.

Figure 33 shows the mean age of children at the start of the PUR for outcomes substantially achieved and those that were not.

Figure 33: Mean Age in Years of Children at Start of the PUR by Outcomes

Outcome	Substantially Achieved (Age in Years)	Not Substantially Achieved (Age in Years)
Safety 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	7.7	7. 5
Safety 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	**9.0**	**10.3**
Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	**8.4**	**10.0**
Permanency 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	**9.1**	**10.1**

Outcome	Substantially Achieved (Age in Years)	Not Substantially Achieved (Age in Years)
Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	**8.6**	**10.2**
Well-Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	**10.8**	**12.8**
Well-Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	**9.0**	**11.4**

*Numbers in bold are significant for t-test (p <.05).

Figure 33 shows that substantially achieved outcomes were more likely to involve cases of children who were younger on average than those that were not substantially achieved (where there were statistically significant differences), except **Safety Outcome 1, children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect**.

Cases rated a Strength for items also were more likely to involve children who were younger on average than cases that were rated as Area Needing Improvement, except for the individual items assessing **OPPLA** (**item 10**) and **placement with siblings** (**item 12**). **Figure 34** shows the mean age of children at the start of the PUR in the cases rated a Strength and in the cases rated as Area Needing Improvement.

*Figure 34: Mean Age in Years of Children at Start of the PUR by Item Rating**

Outcome	Item	Strength (Age in Years)	Area Needing Improvement (Age in Years)
Safety 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	7.6	7.6
-	Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	6.7	7.0
Safety 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Item 3: Services to protect children in the home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	**7.7**	**9.5**
-	Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management	**9.0**	**10.5**
Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Item 5: Foster care re-entries	**7.8**	**10.0**
-	Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	**8.9**	**10.9**
-	Item 7: Permanency goal for child	**8.6**	**10.8**
-	Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	8.9	9.5
-	Item 9: Adoption	**4.4**	**7.5**
-	Item 10: OPPLA	**15.7**	**15.0**

Outcome	Item	Strength (Age in Years)	Area Needing Improvement (Age in Years)
Permanency 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	**9.2**	**12.1**
-	Item 12: Placement with siblings	**8.3**	**6.8**
-	Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	**8.9**	**10.4**
-	Item 14: Preserving connections	**9.3**	**10.2**
-	Item 15: Relative placement	**8.2**	**10.5**
-	Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	**8.8**	**9.9**
Well Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	**8.7**	**10.3**
-	Item17a: needs and services of child	**9.1**	**11.9**
-	Item17b: Needs and services of parents	**7.9**	**10.6**
-	Item17c: Needs and services of foster parents	**8.2**	**9.2**
-	Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	**9.5**	**10.5**
-	Item 19: Caseworker visits with child	**9.3**	**10.1**
-	Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents	**8.0**	**10.1**
Well Being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Item 21: Educational needs of child	**10.8**	**12.8**
Well Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Item 22: Physical health of child	**9.2**	**11.1**
-	Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of child	11.5	12.0

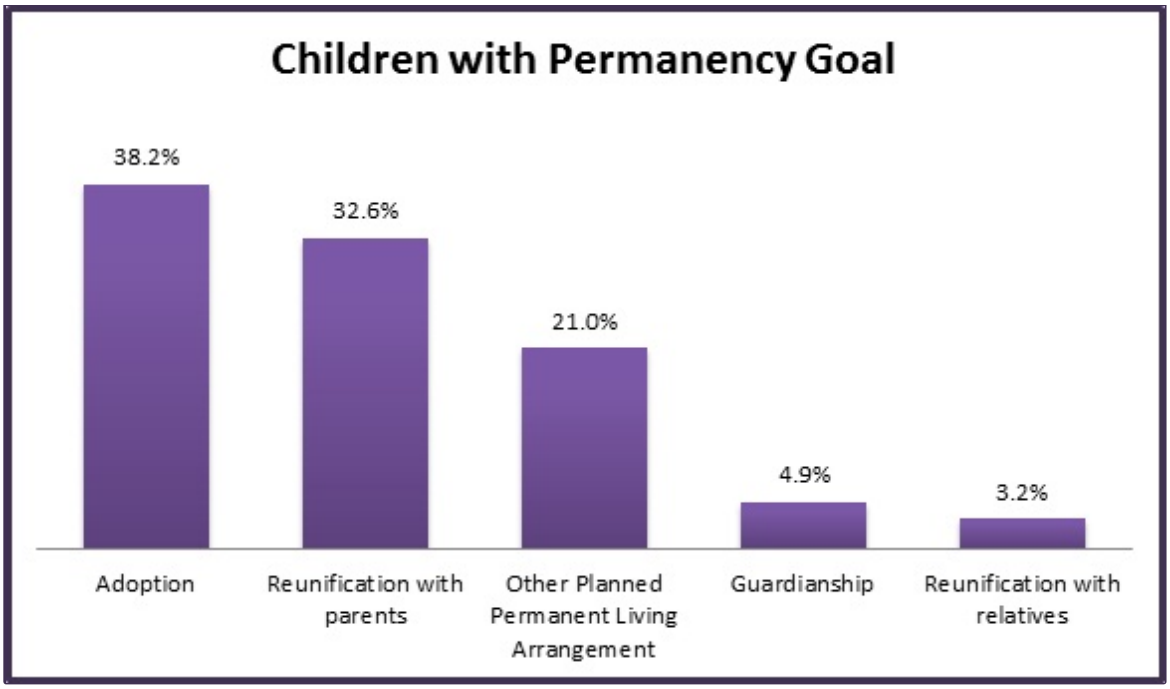
*Numbers in bold are significant for chi-square (p <.05).

Permanency goal of child in foster care

Information on permanency goals was applicable to foster care cases only. Of the 2,073[20] foster care cases with permanency goals in the sample, 1,680 children (81 percent) had only one current goal during the PUR. For these children with single permanency goals, **Figure 35** shows the percentage of children with each permanency goal at the time of the onsite review.

[20] Six foster care cases were NA for the permanency goal, as measured in item 7.

Figure 35: Goal Percentages for Children With Single Permanency Goals

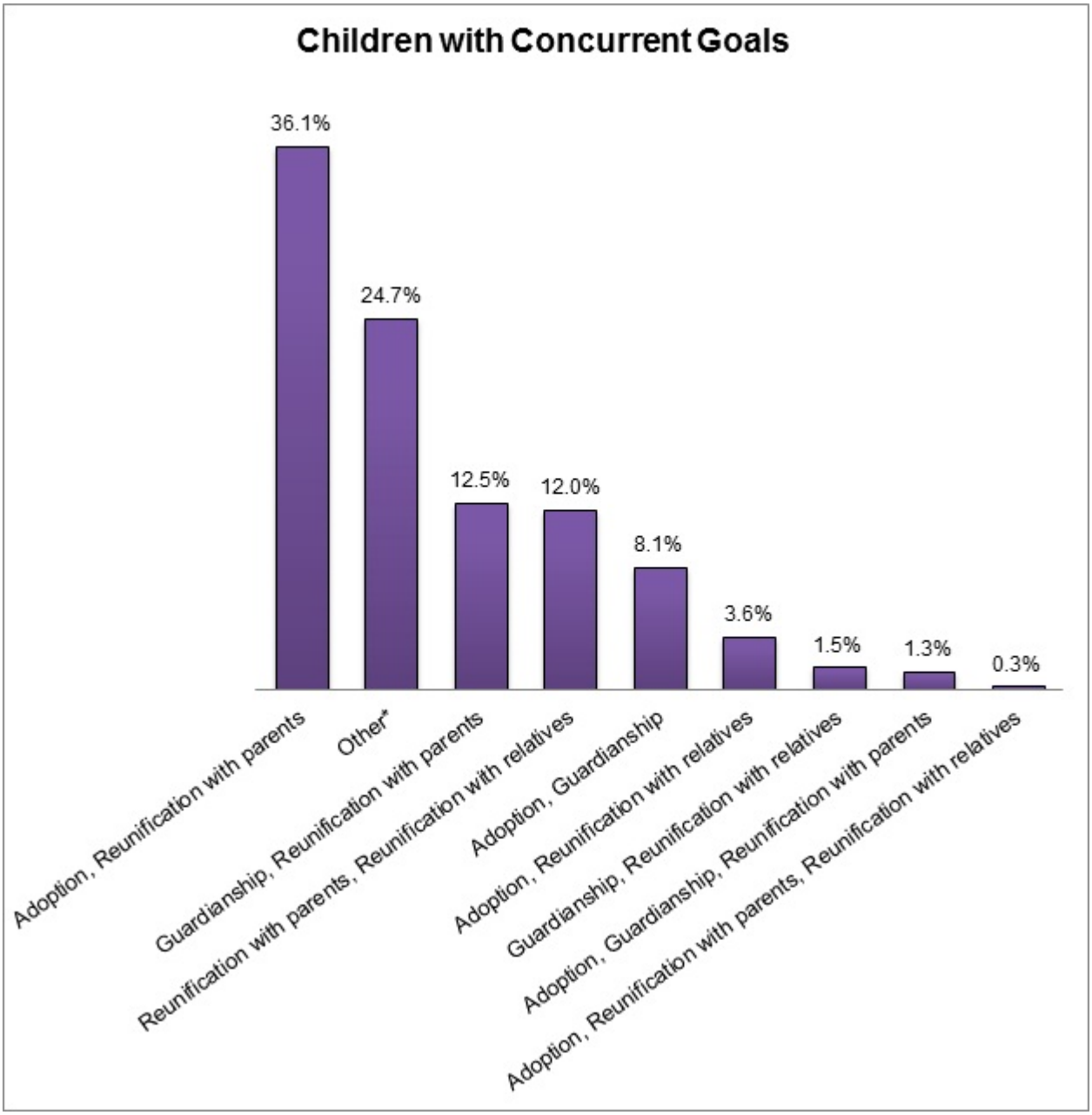


As **Figure 35** shows, of the 1,680 children with a single permanency goal during the PUR:

- 38.2 percent have a single goal of adoption.
- 32.6 percent have a single goal of reunification with parents.
- 21 percent have a single goal of OPPLA.
- 4.9 percent have a single goal of guardianship.
- 3.2 percent have a single goal of reunification with relatives.

Although the vast majority of children had only one current permanency goal identified for the PUR, 393 (19 percent) of the 2,073 children in foster care had concurrent goals. **Figure 36** shows the percentage of the different combinations of goals among children with concurrent goals.

Figure 36: Goal Percentages for Children With Concurrent Permanency Goals



*This category includes concurrent goals of guardianship, reunification with parents, reunification with relatives, or adoption with the additional goal of OPPLA.

Figure 36 demonstrates that, among children who had more than one permanency goal, the most common concurrent goals were those of adoption and reunification with parents (n=142 children; 36.1 percent).

Figure 37 presents permanency goals for children with a single permanency goal at the time of the onsite review relative to the child's age at the start of the PUR.

Figure 37: Number/Percentage of Children With Single Permanency Goals by Age at Start of the PUR

Permanency Goal	Younger than 6 Years	6 to 9 Years	10 to 12 Years	13 to 16 Years	16 Years and Older	Total
Adoption	336 (59.3%)	136 (54.0%)	89 (52.4%)	59 (16.3%)	22 (6.7%)	642 (38.2%)
Guardianship	23 (4.1%)	14 (5.6%)	7 (4.1%)	25 (6.9%)	14 (4.3%)	83 (4.9%)
OPPLA	3 (0.5%)	6 (2.4%)	12 (7.1%)	131 (36.2%)	201 (61.1%)	353 (21.0%)
Reunification (Parents)	196 (34.6%)	90 (35.7%)	55 (32.4%)	127 (35.1%)	80 (24.3%)	548 (32.6%)
Reunification (Relatives)	9 (1.6%)	6 (2.4%)	7 (4.1%)	20 (5.5%)	12 (3.6%)	54 (3.2%)
Total*	**567 (100.0%)**	**252 (100.0%)**	**170 (100.0%)**	**362 (100.0%)**	**329 (100.0%)**	**1,680 (100.0%)**

Chi-Square (16, n=1680) = 709.224, p < .001, Cramer's V = .325
*May not add up to total of 100% due to rounding

Figure 37 shows that permanency goals varied significantly as a function of the child's age at the start of the PUR. In addition, a case goal of adoption was likely to be associated with children 12 and under, while a case goal of OPPLA was likely to be associated with youth 13 and older.

Significant Associations Between Case Characteristics and Ratings

We found several statistically significant associations between certain case characteristics or demographics and the ratings that those cases received.

Findings for Mothers and Fathers

Cases were more likely to be rated a Strength for items relating to the provision of services for mothers than for fathers (e.g., visits with caseworkers, child and family involvement in case planning). These findings were based on variables that separately measured services to mothers and fathers in **items 13, 16, 17b, 18**, and **20.**

Across these measures, as indicated below in **Figure 38,** there were more Strength ratings for variables measuring services delivered to mothers than to fathers.

Figure 38: Percentage of Cases Rated a Strength on Supporting Questions by Parental Role

Item	Comparison	Mother	Father
Item 13	Frequency of Visits With Child	83.3%	62.4%
-	Quality of Visits With Child	85.7%	73.7%
Item 16	Relationship With Child	68.4%	52.2%
Item 17b	Assess Parental Needs	75.8%	50.3%
-	Provide Parent Services	67.9%	43.5%
Item 18	Efforts to Involve Parent in Case Planning	71.0%	46.8%
Item 20	Frequency of Visits With Caseworker	66.9%	41.1%
-	Quality of Visits With Caseworker	68.6%	52.1%

Race/Ethnicity of Mothers and Fathers

We conducted additional analyses on variables related to engagement with and service provision to mothers, fathers, and children to determine whether group differences emerged based on the target child's race (**Figure 39**). A broad overview was possible by comparing the racial/ethnic groups to each other with respect to the family role variables.[21]

*Figure 39: Percent of Cases Rated a Strength on Supporting Questions Organized by Target Child Race/Ethnicity and Family Role**

Item	Parent-Centered Variables	American Indian/Alaska Native	Black/African American	White	More Than One Race	Hispanic
Item 13	Mother: Frequency of Visitation with Child	**84.0%**	**77.7%**	**87.3%**	**80.8%**	**83.3%**
-	Mother: Quality of Visitation With Child	**85.1%**	**79.5%**	**89.6%**	**83.5%**	**87.1%**
Item 16	Mother: Relationship	**75.0%**	**58.8%**	**74.6%**	**69.6%**	**65.6%**
Item 17b	Mother: Assessment	**80.0%**	**70.9%**	**79.5%**	**76.3%**	**72.6%**
-	Mother: Services	**65.2%**	**62.6%**	**71.3%**	**72.1%**	**64.3%**
Item 18	Mother: Involvement	**75.0%**	**62.9%**	**74.4%**	**73.9%**	**68.2%**
Item 20	Mother: Frequency of Caseworker Visitation	**62.5%**	**56.3%**	**68.4%**	**68.4%**	**66.7%**
-	Mother: Quality of Caseworker Visitation	68.2%	59.9%	68.9%	68.5%	67.5%
Item 13	Father: Frequency of Visitation With Child	**76.3%**	**45.3%**	**69.5%**	**71.4%**	**62.1%**
-	Father: Quality of Visitation With Child	**81.8%**	**65.9%**	**77.4%**	**70.5%**	**73.6%**
Item 16	Father: Relationship	**64.9%**	**34.7%**	**60.1%**	**57.5%**	**52.7%**
Item 17b	Father: Assessment	**59.5%**	**37.7%**	**61.3%**	**67.0%**	**47.3%**
-	Father: Services	**52.5%**	**32.1%**	**55.0%**	**62.7%**	**41.1%**
Item 18	Father: Involvement	**66.7%**	**37.3%**	**60.4%**	**58.4%**	**47.9%**
Item 20	Father: Frequency of Caseworker Visitation	**51.3%**	**25.9%**	**51.0%**	**50.6%**	**41.3%**
-	Father: Quality of Caseworker Visitation	**59.4%**	**40.2%**	**59.3%**	**68.9%**	**56.0%**

[21] Please see Appendix C for figure displaying relative risk ratios on outcomes and items by race for mothers and fathers.

Item	Parent-Centered Variables	American Indian/Alaska Native	Black/African American	White	More Than One Race	Hispanic
Item 17a	Child Needs Assessment	89.5%	91.4%	94.4%	90.3%	90.6%
-	Child Services	88.1%	85.0%	88.9%	86.8%	84.4%
Item 18	Child Involvement	78.3%	76.3%	80.1%	89.9%	76.6%
Item 19	Caseworker Visitation Frequency	**75.0%**	**89.2%**	**87.6%**	**88.5%**	**87.2%**
-	Caseworker Visitation Quality	73.7%	80.1%	83.6%	86.7%	81.5%

*Numbers in bold are significant for chi-square ($p < .05$).

Figure 39 suggests that:

- Differences in ratings on variables related to services offered to parents, rather than those to children, were more likely to drive the racial/ethnic differences detailed below. There was not a statistically significant difference between the target child's race/ethnicity and the case rating for four out of the five child-centered variables. In contrast, with one exception, the mother- and father-centered variables showed statistically significant differences with regard to case ratings.
- Although there were statistically significant relationships between the target child's race/ethnicity and the case rating for many mother-centered variables, the differences were not as pronounced as for those of father-centered variables.
- Differences in case ratings related to the target child's race were especially pronounced for fathers of African American children. There was a similar but less pronounced pattern for fathers of Hispanic children.

Conclusion

The CFSR process is a partnership between the Children's Bureau and States; between States and partner agencies; between governments and stakeholders. This report demonstrates the rich information collected as a result of these partnerships. Sharing a commitment to the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being, we continue to focus attention on assisting States in examining and improving their systems and enhancing their capacity to serve children and families.

The Children's Bureau maintains high standards with regard to services to children and families. Although States may not meet these high standards with regard to every measure at this time, all States are engaged in program improvement to address areas of need and strengthen program elements.

The second round of the CFSRs assessed each State’s level of performance by applying a consistent and comprehensive case review methodology. Given the high standards and the commitment to continuous improvement, although no States achieved substantial conformity in six of the seven outcomes, 10 States did achieve substantial conformity with the outcome that assesses whether children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

The majority of States were determined to be in substantial conformity with six of seven systemic factors measured in the CFSR. With systemic factors in place to support system reform and continuing efforts in program improvement, States are poised to realize the benefits in improved outcomes.

Appendix A: Data Indicators for the Child and Family Services Reviews

The Children's Bureau provides a data profile to each State in advance of each CFSR. The State Data Profile provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending approximately 12 months before the onsite review. Depending on the individual State and timing of the CFSR, the Data Profile can show from 1 to 3 years of data. National standards with regard to safety and permanency have been established for the two data indicators and the scaled composite scores, shown in **Figure App. A-1** below. The State Data Profile includes the State's performance on the scaled composites and data indicators, which are used to determine substantial conformity with **Safety Outcome 1** and **Permanency Outcome 1**.

Each composite comprises one or more components, depending upon the results of the data analysis. Components are the general factors that contribute to the composite score. If a composite has two components, each one contributes 50 percent to the composite score. If a composite has three components, each one contributes 33.3 percent to the composite score.

Each component comprises one or more individual measures. The individual measures provide the actual data for the analysis. The contribution of each individual measure (also called the weight) to the component score is determined by the principal components analysis.

The State Data Profile includes the State's performance on the individual measures included in the composites. National standards have not been established for the individual measures included in each composite; however, information about median performance is provided to States and is shown in the figure below.

Figure App. A-1: Medians and National Standards for the CFSR Data Indicators[22]

DATA INDICATORS ASSOCIATED WITH CSFR SAFETY OUTCOME 1–CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	Median	National Standard*
Absence of maltreatment recurrence. Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percent were not victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation within a 6-month period.	**NA**	**94.6% or higher**
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. Of all children in foster care during the reporting period, what percent were not victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.	99.50%	**99.68% or higher**
Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification	**NA**	**122.6 or higher**
Component A: Timeliness of reunification	-	-
Measure C1.1: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the year shown who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what **percent** were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (This includes the "trial home visit adjustment.")	69.9%	No individual standard

[22] The data shown are for the national standard target year of FY 2004. Each State was evaluated against the standard on data relevant to its specific CFSR 12-month target period. The national standards remained the same throughout the second round of the CFSRs. From http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/data_indicators.htm.

DATA INDICATORS ASSOCIATED WITH CSFR SAFETY OUTCOME 1–CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	Median	National Standard*
Measure C1.2: Of all children who were discharged from foster care to reunification in the year shown, and who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what was the median length of stay in months from the date of the latest removal from home until the date of discharge to reunification? (This includes the "trial home visit adjustment.")	6.5 months	No individual standard
Measure C1.3: Of all children who entered foster care for the first time in the 6-month period just prior to the year shown, and who remained in foster care for 8 days or longer, what **percent** were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of latest removal from home? (This includes the "trial home visit adjustment.")	39.4%	No individual standard
Component B: Permanency of reunification**	-	-
Measure C1.4: Of all children who were discharged from foster care to reunification in the 12-month period prior to the year shown, what **percent** re-entered foster care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge?	15.0%	No individual standard

*The medians and the national standards for the safety and composite data indicators are based on an adjustment to the distribution using the sampling error for each data indicator. The medians and national standards for the composite data indicators are from a dataset that excluded counties in a State that did not have data for all measures within a particular composite. The range and medians for each individual measure reflect the distribution of all counties that had data for that particular measure, even if that county was not included in the overall composite calculation.

**Children are included in the count of reunifications if the reason for discharge reported to AFCARS was either "reunification" or "live with relative." They are not included in the count of "reunifications" if the reason for discharge reported to AFCARS was "guardianship," even if the guardian is a relative.

DATA INDICATORS ASSOCIATED WITH CSFR PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1– CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	Median	National Standard*
Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of Adoptions	**95.3**	**106.4 or higher**
Component A: Timeliness of adoptions of children discharged from foster care	**-**	**-**
Measure C2.1: Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year shown, what **percent** were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home?	26.8%	No individual standard
Measure C2.2: Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year shown, what was the median length of stay in foster care **in months** from the date of latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption?	32.4 months	No individual standard
Component B: Progress toward adoption for children in foster care for 17 months or longer	-	-
Measure C2.3: Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of the year shown, and who were in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, what **percent** were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by the last day of the year shown? The denominator for this measure excludes children who, by the end of the year shown, were discharged from foster care with a discharge reason of live with relative, reunification, or guardianship.	20.2%	No individual standard
Measure C2.4: Of all children who were in foster care on the first day of the year shown for 17 continuous months or longer, and who were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, what **percent** became legally free for adoption during the first 6 months of the year shown? (Legally free means that there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father.) The denominator for this measure excludes children who, by the last day of the first 6 months of the year shown, were not legally free, but had been discharged from foster care with a discharge reason of live with relative, reunification, or guardianship.	8.8%	No individual standard
Component C: Permanency of reunification**	-	-
Measure C2.5: Of all children who became legally free for adoption during the 12-month period prior to the year shown (i.e., there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father), what percent were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months of becoming legally free?	45.8%	No individual standard

*The medians and the national standards for the safety and composite data indicators are based on an adjustment to the distribution using the sampling error for each data indicator. The medians and national standards for the composite data indicators are from a dataset that excluded counties in a State that did not have data for all measures within a particular composite. The range and medians for each individual measure reflect the distribution of all counties that had data for that particular measure, even if that county was not included in the overall composite calculation.

**A State was excluded from the calculation of this composite either because (1) it did not submit FIPS codes in its AFCARS submissions (1 State), or (2) with regard to composite 1 and 2, it did not provide unique identifiers that would permit tracking children across fiscal years (4 States).

DATA INDICATORS ASSOCIATED WITH CSFR PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1– CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	Median	National Standard*
Permanency Composite 3: Achieving Permanency for Children in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time **	**NA**	**121.7 or higher**
Component A: Permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time	-	-
Measure C3.1: Of all children who were in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the year shown, what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday and by the end of the fiscal year? A child is considered discharged to a permanent home if the discharge reason is adoption, guardianship, reunification, or live with relative.	25.0%	No individual standard
Measure C3.2: Of all children who were discharged from foster care in the year shown who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge (i.e., there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father), what percent were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday? A child is considered discharged to a permanent home if the discharge reason is adoption, guardianship, reunification, or live with relative.	96.8%	No individual standard
Component B: Progress toward adoption for children in foster care for 17 months or longer	-	-
Measure C3.3: Of all children who either (1) were discharged from foster care in the year shown with a discharge reason of emancipation, or (2) reached their 18th birthday in the year shown while in foster care, what percent were in foster care for 3 years or longer?	47.8%	No individual standard
Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability	**NA**	**101.5 or higher**
Measure C4.1: Of all children who were served in foster care during the year shown, and who were in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings?	83.3%	No individual standard
Measure C4.2: Of all children who were served in foster care during the year shown, and who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings?	59.9%	No individual standard
Measure C4.3: Of all children who were served in foster care during the year shown, and who were in foster care for at least 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings?	33.9%	No individual standard

*The medians and the national standards for the safety and composite data indicators are based on an adjustment to the distribution using the sampling error. The medians and national standards for the composite data indicators are from a dataset that excluded counties in a State that did not have data for all measures within a particular composite. The range and medians for each individual measure reflect the distribution of all counties that had data for that particular measure, even if that county was not included in the overall composite calculation.

**A State was excluded from the calculation of this composite because it did not submit FIPS codes in its AFCARS submissions.

Appendix B: Detailed List of Themes from Qualitative Analysis of Main Reason Statements for Items 8, 9, and 10

As referenced in the qualitative analysis in the report, this appendix provides a complete list of the strengths and challenges as noted in the Main Reason statements for items 8, 9, and 10.

Item 8 Strengths

Agency efforts

- Early identification of noncustodial parents, especially fathers, and relatives
- Frequent and effective communication with the family
- Effective communication with providers and the courts
- Case plans developed with clear goals and parental involvement
- Case plans and goals reviewed and revised as needed
- Clear and complete case documentation
- Culturally competent caseworkers

Parent/family efforts

- Parents engaged in case planning
- Parents compliant with and committed to case plans

Foster caregiver efforts

- Foster parent committed to the child
- Foster parent assisting and mentoring the parent
- Foster parent facilitating visitation

Services

- Appropriate and timely services offered to address presenting issues
- Progress evaluated regularly and services adjusted to meet the need
- Services individualized and targeted to address the need and stabilize the family
- Multi-disciplinary team meetings used to coordinate services
- Wide array of services, including substance abuse treatment; individual and family therapy and mental health services; parenting, education, housing, income support, and employment assistance

Cross-system collaboration and communication

- Court delays addressed
- Effective communication with providers, the courts, and other jurisdictions
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) effective

Placement

- Placements located to facilitate visitation
- Placements stable and appropriate
- Residential placements used as needed
- Therapeutic placements used as needed
- Guardianship placements approved in a timely manner

Visitation

- Visitation plans comprehensive and revised as needed
- Visitation supported and facilitated by the agency
- Visitation increased as the reunification date approached

Concurrent planning

- Concerted efforts made on at least two permanency goals to expedite permanency
- Relatives identified early

Family engagement

- Noncustodial parents, incarcerated parents, and relatives identified early and engaged
- Family team meetings used to develop and monitor case plans
- All family members engaged in case planning and services
- Family circumstances reviewed and case plans adjusted accordingly
- Barriers to participation, including transportation, paperwork, and incarceration were addressed
- Extended family support for reunification

Transition to reunification

- Use of transition planning
- Use of trial home visits
- Provision of post-reunification services

Item 8 Challenges

Services

- Lack of consistency in caseworker skills
- Insufficient needs assessment
- Insufficient service provision
- Lack of an appropriate intensity of service provision
- Lack of communication between service provider and agency
- Unaddressed needs for services
- Lack of language-appropriate services
- Lack of agency support for services resulting in families bearing the burden of locating and obtaining services
- Lack of specific services, including residential treatment, transportation, guardianship approvals, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, housing, employment services, transition planning, and post-reunification services

Placement

- Delays in initial placement and use of shelter care
- Inappropriate or unstable placement
- Lack of support and communication to the foster family
- Lack of support and communication to guardians or relative caregivers

Goals

- Inappropriate or delayed goal setting
- Lack of review and reassessment of goals
- Lack of communication with the family about goals
- Sequential, not concurrent, case planning
- Inappropriate continuation of efforts to reunify the family beyond one year

Visitation

- Lack of a visitation plan
- Inadequate visitation plan
- Lack of agency support for parent-child visitation
- Lack of agency contact with parents

Delays in

- Goal-setting
- Family engagement
- Court and agency review hearings
- Identification of relatives, guardians, and noncustodial parents, especially fathers
- Finalization of guardianship home studies and agreements
- ICPC agreements

Other Barriers

- Child or parent incarcerated
- Child or parent unable to be located
- Child or parent noncompliance with the case plan requirements

Item 9 Strengths

Strong use of relative placements

- Concerted efforts to find relatives early in the process
- Initial placement made with relatives who were willing to adopt
- Inappropriate relative providers explored and ruled out

Timely completion of legal process

- TPRs filed and granted timely
- Court moved through proceedings expeditiously with infrequent use of continuances
- Voluntary relinquishments sought and obtained
- Diligent search for fathers conducted early; strong efforts to resolve paternity issues
- Agency and court collaborated
- Agency connected adoptive parents to attorneys for adoption finalization and helped pay legal fees

Good use of concurrent planning

- Reunification services provided and efforts to identify an adoptive resource were made simultaneously
- Open communication conducted with biological parents about permanency and adoption
- When reunification efforts failed, focus shifted quickly to concurrent plan of adoption

Strong adoptive home recruitment efforts

- Use of tools such as Web listings on AdoptUSKids, State-specific Web sites, Wednesday's Child, Wendy's Kids, Heart Gallery, and recruitment fairs
- Exploration of relative resources
- Aggressive recruitment of adoptive resources including individualized recruitment plans, recruiting out-of-State, and recruiting for special needs children
- Outreach to home where siblings already placed
- Early communication with placement providers to determine interest in adoption
- Backup placements identified if current placement disrupts

Timely completion of steps in adoption process

- Home studies and all steps in licensure process completed early
- Assistance given to current resource homes to obtain adoptive home licensing prior to TPR
- ICPC placements processed timely

Streamlined agency processes

- Proactive rather than reactive approach
- Use of adoption specialists, recruitment specialists, and referrals to outside agencies
- Appropriate and timely case transfers
- Use of permanency staffing and Family Team Decision Making meetings
- Careful placement matching process; use of matching meetings
- Use of adoption agreements with resource homes
- Supports and services for resource homes
- Assistance with processing paperwork, especially to relative homes
- Frequent communication with caseworker
- Post-adoption services, such as adoption subsidy, and efforts to ensure continuation of existing services

Supports and services for children

- Counseling and other services provided to children to stabilize them in current placements or to prepare them for community placement
- Sensitivity shown to transitioning children to new placements by conducting visits prior to placement
- Respect given for children's ambivalence about adoption and efforts made to address their fears and concerns about adoption

- Efforts made to keep sibling groups together
- “Life books” created for children

Item 9 Challenges

Delays with legal processes

- Agency delays in filing TPRs
- Court delays in granting TPRs; e.g., many continuances granted
- Parents’ appeal of TPRs
- General court delays and staffing problems (frequent change of attorneys, extended delays in judges signing paperwork, agency and court disagreements about TPRs and case plans)
- Difficulty and delays in establishing paternity
- Challenges coordinating TPRs with incarcerated parents and parents whose whereabouts were unknown
- Relatives challenged adoptive placements, but were not approved to be adoptive homes themselves

Case management challenges

- Lack of concurrent planning
- No efforts to support adoption process until finalization of TPR
- Untimely establishment of goal of adoption
- Maintaining goal of reunification despite the extreme unlikelihood of achievement
- Goal of adoption no longer appropriate (should have been changed to IL, guardianship, or OPPLA)
- Insufficient services to children and pre-adoptive parents to support adoption
- Insufficient effort to explore adoption for youth
- Lack of agency communication about adoption goal to biological parents, children, and prospective adoptive homes; i.e., goal of adoption on paper only
- Additional complications and delays from efforts to keep siblings together
- Failure to complete paperwork on time and insufficient agency support for the completion of paperwork

Administrative issues

- Staff turnover (multiple case transfers)
- ICPC-related delays (lost paperwork, delayed home studies, lack of communication between sending and receiving caseworkers)
- Slow case transfers to adoption specialists

- Delays in home studies (often due to problems with the contracting agency)
- Delays in obtaining children's birth certificates
- Paperwork delays (paperwork lost, completed incorrectly, or not given by agency to pre-adoptive parents)
- Adoptive home licensing delays (problems with background checks and untimely completion of home studies)
- General delays in completion of the adoption process caused the adoption to be consummated in more than 24 months
- Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)-related delays (delays in searching for relatives and coordinating with Tribes)

Adoptive resource-related barriers

- Concern about losing funds specific to foster children (subsidies, health care, etc.) once adoption takes place, especially for special needs children
- Indecision about adopting (especially if an extended period of time passes, and child acts out)

Delays related to licensure of pre-adoptive homes

- Criminal background of foster and/or pre-adoptive parents or someone in home
- Divorce not yet final
- Abuse or neglect reports on resource homes
- Lack of financial or other resources to accommodate children
- Overburdened with other foster children or biological children, or siblings of target child
- Health concerns (illness among resource families, elderly resource families, or one spouse dies while adoption is in process)

Lack of consistent recruitment efforts

- Failure to identify adoptive resource
- Failure to follow up with resources who express interest in adoption
- Failure to evaluate more than one potential resource at the same time (no backup plan in place if a placement cannot be licensed or is disrupted)
- Delays in identifying relative placements until after child has bonded with nonrelative resource home, and initial placement is disrupted in favor of relative placement

Challenges due to child's circumstances

- Children ambivalent about adoption or do not wish to be adopted;
- Challenging behaviors caused disruption

Item 10 Strengths

Agency/administrative efforts

- Despite difficulty of working with a youth's challenging circumstances and finding a suitable permanent placement, agency made concerted efforts to do so
- Concerted efforts were made to find a permanent placement for the youth, and the youth thrived within the foster home
- Prepared youth for IL
- Provided IL services that were appropriate for age and special needs of youth

Provision of services/IL services including:

- Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) services
- Summer job program
- Sexual education courses
- Parenting courses
- Budgeting and money management (opening a bank account, etc.)
- Career planning (vocational training, jobs and interview skills building, resume writing)
- Building positive peer and adult relationships
- Positive self-image, self-esteem, self-care
- Household management (finding an apartment, grocery shopping, cooking nutritious food, laundry, cleaning house)
- Obtaining medical care
- Communication skills
- Community access and mobility (driver's education)
- Anger management, coping skills
- Health and hygiene
- Emergency/safety skills
- Goal-setting
- GED attainment
- Applying for financial aid/attending college

Concerted efforts by agency to provide support and services to child

- For youth who are emancipating, assistance with child obtaining services independently
- Services offered that support concurrent planning efforts

- Services offered even after youth reaches age of majority
- Adults provided mentoring role for youth (therapist, relatives) and were committed to involvement with youth after emancipation
- Extension of custody for youth with IL goal who needed more time and assistance before emancipation

Case management

- Goal of OPPLA actively pursued
- Concurrent planning in place
- Backup placement plans in the event of placement disruption
- Active caseworker follow-through
- Other permanency goals (reunification, guardianship and adoption) ruled out
- Outreach conducted to relatives for placements and support
- Placement in least restrictive setting to meet the needs of youth
- Agency assessment of youth's needs (e.g., Ansell/Casey assessment)
- Appropriate and timely plans
- Coordination with Tribe

Parent(s)/guardian/foster parent

- Support provided by the foster parent to youth; i.e., committed to caring for youth after emancipation and/or described relationship as a permanent lifelong connection
- Stable foster home existed; committed to providing placement to youth, formal documentation
- Therapeutic support provided to foster parent
- Parental support of the placement and engagement in visitation
- Foster parent adoption
- Maintained connections between biological parents and children even if they were unable to reunify.

Youth

- College attendance
- Enrolled in vocational classes and interested in continuing education
- Part-time/summer employment
- Money management (e.g., was saving money/had a savings account)
- Wanted to finish high school and attend college
- Strong sibling connections

- Verbalized a strong connection to foster parents and wished to remain with them
- Viewed foster home as permanent home; i.e., a place to which he or she could return for holidays and during vacations from college

Court/legal

- Court approved long-term foster care placement
- Agency filed petition for youth to continue to live with foster parent while in college
- Emancipation order prior to age 18
- Compelling reasons not to terminate parental rights existed
- Juvenile justice coordination regarding incarcerated youth
- Involvement of Tribal court

Item 10 Challenges

Agency/administrative challenges

- Agency lack of action/effort to achieve permanent living arrangement
- Agency action/effort, but still no permanent living arrangement

Case management

- Lack of concurrent planning
- Lack of IL services because youth was too young
- No documentation of efforts to achieve OPPLA
- No verbal commitment sought by agency AND no formal documentation as to permanent living arrangement
- Verbal commitment, but no formal documentation as to permanent living arrangement
- Agency lack of communication with youth/relative/foster parent
- Inappropriate goal of long-term foster care for young child
- No IL plan once youth became adult
- Inadequate search for relative placement

Placement issues

- Group home placement
- Multiple placement moves
- Lack of space for youth at preferred placement

No provision of services, or services were difficult to access

- Lack of IL skills or training services
- Incomplete IL skills assessment
- Lack of transportation to services/classes
- Lack of support to foster parent
- Lack of IL or transition planning

Issues facing parent(s)/guardian/foster parent

- Limited mental capacity of parent
- Uninvolved/uninterested parents or relatives

Issues facing children

- Lack of engagement in services or youth's refusal to participate (e.g., in IL classes)
- Youth on runaway status
- Youth's desire to live with parent
- Youth's mental health precluding participation in services
- Youth's specific needs (e.g., developmental, cognitive, behavioral)
- Youth's maladaptive behaviors
- Youth facing homelessness after emancipation

Court/legal issues

- Awaiting court ruling to grant "non-reunification" before changing plan from reunification
- Goal of OPPLA not sanctioned by the court

Appendix C: Relative Risk Ratios for Racial/Ethnic Comparisons

*Figure App. C-1: Relative Risk Ratios for Ratings on Outcomes and Items by Race: Comparing Children Across Other Racial/Ethnic Groups to White Children as a Reference Group**

Outcome/ Item	Description	American Indian or Alaska Native	Black/ African American	More Than One Race	Hispanic
Safety 1	Children protected from abuse and neglect	1.080	1.003	1.019	0.938
Item 1	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of maltreatment	1.075	0.973	0.993	0.981
Item 2	Repeat maltreatment	1.018	1.047	1.068	0.928
Safety 2	Children safely maintained in home	0.997	0.959	1.055	0.956
Item 3	Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or foster care re-entry	1.032	**0.904**	0.971	0.904
Item 4	Risk assessment and safety management	0.967	0.951	1.047	0.968
Permanency 1	Children have permanency and stability in living situation	0.952	**0.784**	0.965	0.916
Item 5	Foster care re-entries	1.035	1.013	1.033	0.968
Item 6	Stability of foster care placement	1.065	0.979	0.948	0.947
Item 7	Permanency goal for child	1.029	**0.904**	1.030	1.037
Item 8	Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	0.785	**0.768**	1.077	0.934
Item 9	Adoption	0.823	**0.745**	1.032	0.929
Item 10	OPPLA	1.200	0.891	0.981	0.945
Permanency 2	Continuity of family relationships and connections preserved	1.098	**0.788**	0.994	**0.904**
Item 11	Proximity of foster care placement	0.992	0.997	1.013	1.003
Item 12	Placement with siblings	1.029	**0.932**	0.958	0.925
Item 13	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	1.134	**0.757**	**0.951**	0.875
Item 14	Preserving connections	1.014	**0.906**	0.931	1.001
Item 15	Relative placement	**1.167**	0.933	1.044	**0.893**
Item 16	Relationship of child in care with parents	1.062	**0.690**	0.924	0.851

Outcome/ Item	Description	American Indian or Alaska Native	Black/ African American	More Than One Race	Hispanic
Well-Being 1	Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children	1.127	**0.843**	1.086	0.941
Item 17	All needs and services	1.164	**0.840**	1.062	0.904
Item 17a	Needs and services for child	0.965	0.960	0.977	0.963
Item 17b	Needs and services for parents	1.050	**0.737**	1.093	**0.811**
Item 17c	Needs and services for foster care parents	0.999	0.988	0.985	0.934
Item 18	Child and family involvement in case planning	1.099	**0.813**	1.103	0.932
Item 19	Caseworker visits with child	**0.863**	0.963	1.035	0.982
Item 20	Caseworker visits with parents	1.018	**0.680**	1.035	0.921
Well-Being 2	Children receive appropriate educational services	**0.908**	0.969	1.019	**0.929**
Item 21	Child's educational needs	**0.908**	0.969	1.019	**0.929**
Well-Being 3	Children receive adequate physical & mental health services	0.936	0.975	1.019	**0.933**
Item 22	Child's physical health	0.950	0.991	0.998	0.974
Item 23	Child's mental/behavioral health	0.895	0.962	1.003	**0.901**

*Items in bold are significant for chi-square (p <.05).

Figure App. C-2: Ratings on Supporting Questions by Race and Family Role: Comparing Racial/Ethnic Groups to Whites as a Reference Group

Item	Variable	American Indian or Alaska Native	Black/African American	More Than One Race	Hispanic
Item 13	Mother-child visitation frequency	0.963	**0.890**	0.926	0.954
-	Mother-child visitation quality	0.950	**0.888**	0.932	0.973
Item 16	Mother: relationship	1.006	**0.789**	0.933	**0.880**
Item 17b	Mother: assessment	1.007	**0.892**	0.960	**0.914**
-	Mother: services	0.914	**0.878**	1.010	0.902
Item 18	Mother: involvement	1.009	**0.846**	0.993	0.917
Item 20	Mother-caseworker visitation frequency	0.914	**0.822**	1.000	0.975

Item	Variable	American Indian or Alaska Native	Black/African American	More Than One Race	Hispanic
-	Mother-caseworker visitation quality	0.989	**0.869**	0.994	0.979
Item 13	Father-child visitation frequency	1.098	**0.652**	1.028	0.894
-	Father-child visitation quality	1.058	**0.852**	0.911	0.951
Item 16	Father: relationship	1.080	**0.577**	0.957	0.877
Item 17b	Father: assessment	0.970	**0.615**	1.093	**0.771**
-	Father: services	0.954	**0.583**	1.139	**0.748**
Item 18	Father: involvement	1.103	**0.618**	0.967	**0.793**
Item 20	Father-caseworker visitation frequency	1.006	**0.508**	0.993	**0.810**
-	Father-caseworker visitation quality	1.001	**0.678**	1.161	0.944
Item 17 a	Child needs assessment	0.948	**0.969**	**0.957**	**0.960**
-	Child services	0.991	**0.956**	0.977	0.950
Item 18	Child involvement	0.977	0.952	**1.122**	0.956
Item 19	Child-caseworker visitation frequency	**0.856**	1.018	1.010	0.995
-	Child-caseworker visitation quality	**0.881**	0.959	1.037	0.974

Relative Risk ratios where chi-square is significant (p<.05) are in bold.

Appendix D: Comparison of CFSR Sample and AFCARS Data

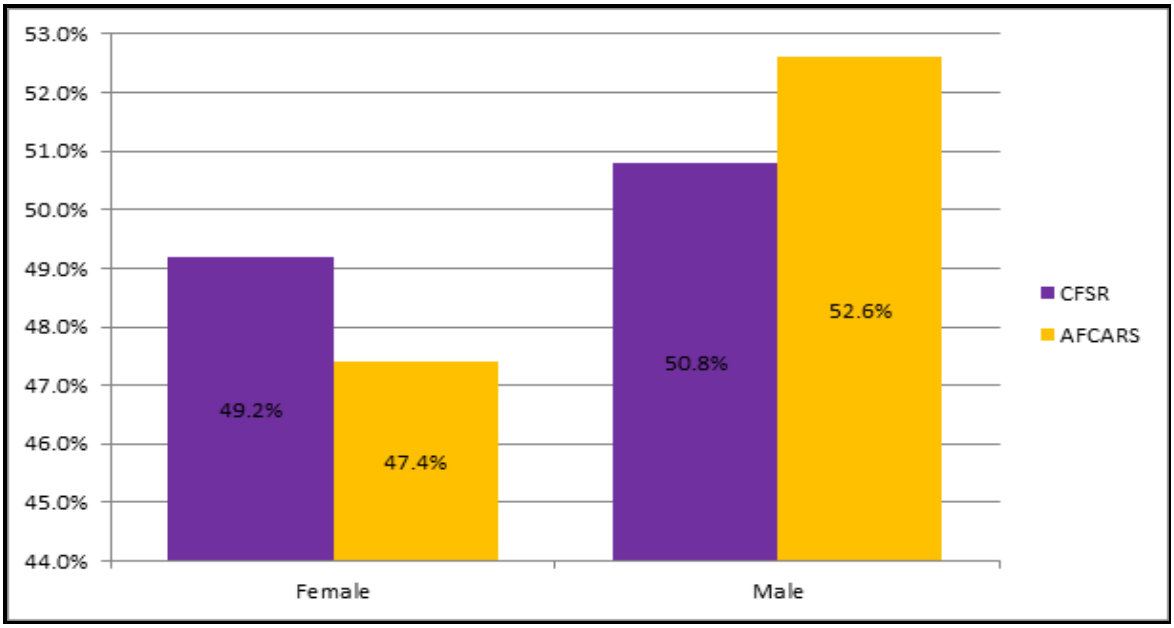
We compared the demographic characteristics of the CFSR sample of children in foster care with the population of children represented in Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) in FY 2009.[23] AFCARS collects case level information on all children in foster care for whom State child welfare agencies have responsibility for placement, care or supervision and on children who are adopted under the auspices of the State's public child welfare agency.

There are three demographic variables that can be used to compare the CFSR sample with the population of children represented in the AFCARS data: gender, age, and race. As expected, a comparison of these variables shows that the children that make up the CFSR case sample are not entirely representative of the population of children in foster care as shown by the AFCARS data. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the CFSR cases are not a random sample of children involved in the State's child welfare systems, but represent a collection of 52 non-random samples, one from each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Gender

Figure App. D-1 shows the gender of children in the CFSR sample compared with that of children represented by AFCARS.

Figure App. D-1. Gender of Children in AFCARS Compared to Children in CFSR Sample



[23] We selected FY 2009 as representative of AFCARS data during round 2. The comparison of the data is limited because CFSR data was collected over a period of five years.

As shown in **Figure App. D-1**, compared to AFCARS data, the CFSR data contain a significantly higher proportion of females.[24]

Race/Ethnicity

Figure App. D-2 shows the percentage of children by race/ethnicity in the CFSR sample compared with that of children represented by AFCARS.

Figure App. D-2. Race/Ethnicity of Children in AFCARS Compared to Children in the CFSR Sample

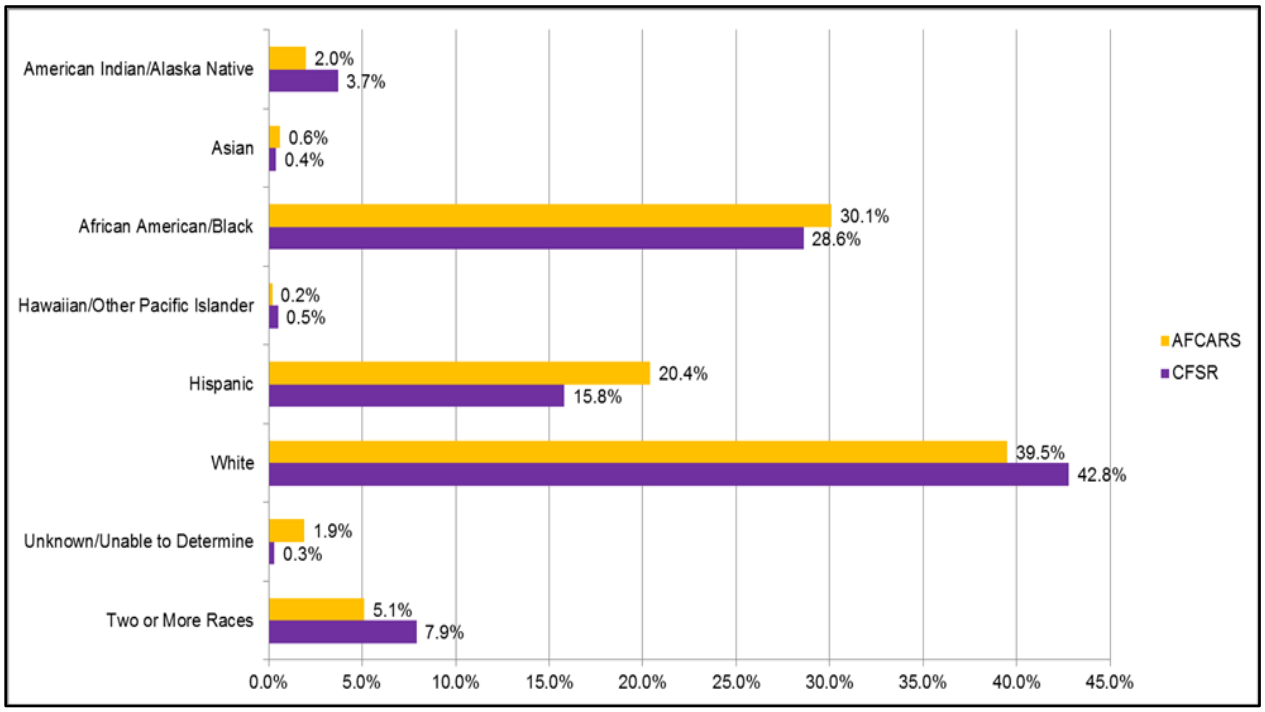


Figure App. D-2 shows the racial/ethnic make-up of the two data sets. Again the data are significantly different.[25] American Indian/Alaska Natives, Whites, and those identified as having two or more races are over-represented while African Americans and Hispanics are under-represented in the CFSR data.

Age

Figure App. D-3 shows the percentage of children by age in the CFSR sample compared with that of children represented by AFCARS.

[24] The one sample binomial significance test of differences shows a one-tailed p = .07. Although not strongly significant, this test indicates that there is a substantial difference in the gender makeup of the two data sets.
[25] Chi-square =340.721, p <.001)

Figure App. D-3 Age of Children in AFCARS Compared to Children in the CFSR Sample

	CFSR	AFCARS 2009
Age in Years	**Percent**	**Percent**
0	10%	6%
1	6%	7%
2	6%	7%
3	5%	6%
4	4%	5%
5	4%	5%
6	4%	4%
7	4%	4%
8	3%	4%
9	3%	4%
10	3%	4%
11	4%	4%
12	3%	4%
13	5%	4%
14	7%	5%
15	10%	7%
16	12%	8%
17	6%	9%
18	NA	3%
19	NA	1%
20	NA	1%
Total	100%	102%*

*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

As **Figure App. D-3** shows, the CFSR sample excludes cases where the youth involved in the child welfare system were 18 years of age or older.

By removing all of the AFCARS cases where the youth is 18 years of age or older, we can compare the CFSR sample to the AFCARS population statistically. We found significant differences by age between the two data sets, with infants and teens over-represented in the CFSR data.[26]

[26] Chi-square = 181.413, p <.001