

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report: Kansas Child and Family Services Review
March 2008

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Kansas. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau (CB) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Kansas CFSR was conducted the week of June 11, 2007. The period under review was from April 1, 2006, to June 11, 2007. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2003, FY 2004, and FY 2005
- Reviews of 64 cases at three sites throughout the State, including 31 cases in Sedgwick County, 16 cases in Lyon County, and 17 cases in Douglas County¹
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance on 23 items relevant to seven outcomes and 22 items pertaining to seven systemic factors. In the Systemic Factors section of the report, each item incorporated in each systemic factor is rated as either a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on whether State performance on the item meets Federal policy requirements. Information relevant to each item comes from the Statewide Assessment and the stakeholder interviews conducted during the week of the onsite CFSR. The overall rating for the systemic factors is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor a State is rated as being either "in substantial conformity" with that factor (i.e., a score of 3 or 4) or "not in substantial conformity" with that factor (a score of 1 or 2).

¹ Although the CFSR usually involves a review of 65 cases, during the Onsite Review, one case in Lyon County was eliminated because it did not meet the requirements of the sample.

Items relevant to the seven outcomes are discussed in the Outcomes section of the report. An overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items, depending on the percentage of cases that receive a Strength rating in the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as a Strength. Performance ratings for each of the seven outcomes are based on item ratings for each case. A State may be rated as having Substantially Achieved, Partially Achieved, or Not Achieved the outcome. The determination of whether a State is in substantial conformity with a particular outcome is based on the percentage of cases that were determined to have substantially achieved the outcome. Specifically, for a State to be in substantial conformity with an outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome.

ACF has set very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be acceptable. The focus of the CFSR process is on continuous quality improvement; high standards are set to ensure ongoing attention to the goal of achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95 percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review at the end of their PIP implementation. ACF recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often are time-consuming to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with ACF to establish a specified amount of improvement or implement specified activities for their PIP. That is, for each outcome or item that is an area needing improvement, each State (working in conjunction with CB) specifies how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the areas needing improvement and determines the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its PIP and still not perform at the 95 percent (for outcomes) or 90 percent (for items) level as required by the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR assesses a State's current level of functioning with regard to achieving desired child and family outcomes by once more applying high standards and a consistent, comprehensive case-review methodology. This is intended to serve as a basis for continued planning in areas in which the State still needs to improve. The goal is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the closing of the PIP.

Because many changes have been made in the onsite 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 CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of percentages. Key changes in the CFSR process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews are 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 relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas, such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents

Special Features of the Kansas Child Welfare System

There are two somewhat unique features of the Kansas child welfare system that are useful to understand in reviewing the CFSR Final Report. One feature is that many of the child welfare services in Kansas are provided by private agencies through Child Welfare Community Based Services (CWCBS) contracts. Kansas has implemented this privatized service delivery system since 1996. Currently, contracts are awarded in five regions of the State. The CWCBS contractor agencies are responsible for providing family preservation, foster care, reunification, and adoption services throughout the life of a case. Once a child is referred to a CWCBS agency, the agency assumes full case management responsibilities and provides all necessary services to the child, family, and foster family, including foster care placement and collaboration with community resources to ensure community-based service delivery.

The SRS, through its regional offices, directly manages the child abuse and neglect investigations and the in-home services cases; provides overall management, quality assurance, and direction to the child welfare program; and monitors CWCBS agency performance and adherence to contract requirements. It should be noted that the CFSR process is designed to assess State child welfare systems, including contracted service providers when they are delegated to have full case management responsibilities. Therefore, it should be understood that for the cases in which the CWCBS agencies have full case management responsibilities, the CFSR process assesses those cases based on the actions and case practice of the CWCBS agencies. When reference is made to caseworkers who are providing foster care or adoption-related services, these caseworkers are employees of the CWCBS agencies. Throughout this CFSR Final Report, the contracted agencies are referred to as CWCBS agencies.

A second somewhat unique feature of the Kansas child welfare system is that, for a substantial number of children who come into contact with the child welfare system in the State, the primary reason for agency involvement is the child's behavior rather than abuse or neglect. In addition, a key "child behavior" problem that brings children into contact with the Kansas child welfare system is truancy. In the sample of cases reviewed for the 2007 CFSR, 15 (35.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases involved children whose primary reason for contact with the child welfare system was noted to be "child's behavior"; in 8 of these cases, the presenting problem was identified as truancy. In 10 (42 percent) of the 24 in-home services cases, the reason for the family's contact with the agency was identified as "child's behavior," and in 2 of these cases, the presenting problem was truancy.

Performance on Outcomes: Summary of CFSR Findings

The 2007 CFSR identified several areas of high performance in Kansas with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children. Kansas data for FY 2005 meet the national standards for the safety-related data indicators pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence and

the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff members. Kansas also meets the national standard for Permanency Outcome 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.

Although Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven CFSR outcomes, there were three outcomes in which 90 percent or more of the cases were found to have substantially achieved the outcome, although the percentages did not quite meet the standard of 95 percent or higher. The highest level of performance occurred for Safety Outcome 1: Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect. That outcome was substantially achieved in 94 percent of the cases. A high level of performance also was found for Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs, with that outcome substantially achieved in 91 percent of the cases. Finally, the CFSR found that Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved, was substantially achieved in 90 percent of the cases reviewed.

In addition to its high level of performance on these outcomes, the State received overall ratings of Strength on the following indicators:

- Timeliness of investigations (item 1)
- Repeat maltreatment (item 2)
- Services to prevent the removal of children from their homes (item 3)
- Foster care reentry (item 5)
- Proximity of placement (item 11)
- Placement with siblings (item 12)
- Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care (item 13)
- Relative placement (item 15)
- Relationship of child in foster care with parents (item 16)
- Physical health of child (item 22)

The CFSR also identified areas in which improvements are needed to achieve better outcomes for children and families. One of the key areas of concern pertains to the State's performance on Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. This outcome was substantially achieved in only 51 percent of the cases reviewed. In addition, Kansas did not meet the national standards for three of the four data composites associated with Permanency Outcome 1. These are Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification, Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoption, and Permanency Composite 3: Placement stability.

A primary concern pertaining to Permanency Outcome 1 was the lack of placement stability for children in foster care. This item was rated as a Strength in only 67 percent of the cases reviewed. In addition, the State performed below the median on all three national measures of placement stability included in the national data composite. Another primary concern pertained to the timeliness of adoptions. This item was rated as a Strength in only 47 percent of the cases reviewed. Case reviewers and stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR suggested that the State's performance on this item may be attributed in part to the lack of concurrent planning.

It was noted that although concurrent planning is established in policy, and concurrent goals often are established for children early on in a case, most caseworkers focus on these goals sequentially rather than simultaneously.

The State's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs, also indicates that this is an area needing improvement. This outcome was substantially achieved in only 65.6 percent of the cases reviewed, and all items incorporated in the outcome were rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Key concerns with regard to this outcome were found for item 17, which pertains to meeting the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. The item was rated as a Strength in only 69 percent of the cases. Case review findings, however, revealed that in over 90 percent of the cases, the agency was effective in meeting the needs of children in both the foster care and in-home services cases and in meeting the needs of foster parents. However, the agency was somewhat less effective in meeting the service needs of the mothers and substantially less effective in meeting the service needs of fathers.

Another area of concern within Well-Being Outcome 1 pertains to caseworker visits with the parents of the children in their caseloads (item 20). This item was rated as a Strength in only 64 percent of the cases. Again, the case reviews found that although the agency was somewhat effective in establishing frequent and meaningful contact with mothers, it was not at all effective in this regard with fathers. Reviewers found that caseworkers had infrequent contact or no contact at all with fathers in 47 percent of the applicable cases.

Performance on Systemic Factors: Summary of Findings

Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with four of the seven systemic factors assessed during the 2007 CFSR. These were Statewide Information System; Quality Assurance System; Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention.

Case Review System, Training, and Service Array were the three systemic factors that were not in substantial conformity. The two primary issues identified in connection with the Case Review System have to do with concerns about engaging fathers in case planning and information from the Statewide Assessment reporting that permanency hearings were held in a timely manner only 82.6 percent of the time in State FY 2006. For Training, identified issues included the significant differences between preservice training requirements for SRS caseworkers and caseworkers for the CWCBS agencies. In addition, for ongoing training, it was noted that quality assurance is an issue because of the number of agencies providing different models of training. One of the most salient issues that emerged from the CFSR pertaining to Service Array was the lack of accessibility to appropriate mental health and substance abuse services for children and parents. Another concern pertained to the lack of key services in the western part of the State and in the more rural areas of the State.

The specific findings with regard to the State's performance on the safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of the Executive Summary. Findings regarding the well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance on the seven systemic factors assessed during the CFSR. In the following section, key findings are summarized for each outcome.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two indicators. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (item 2).

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. Although both items included in the outcome were rated as a Strength, taken together, the percentage of cases determined to be substantially achieved did not reach the required 95 percent. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 94 percent of the applicable cases, which is very close to the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. This outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 100 percent of Lyon County and Sedgwick County cases and 78 percent of Douglas County cases. Kansas met the national standards for the safety-related data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome for its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concern identified in the 2001 CFSR was that in some of the cases reviewed, there were extensive delays in assigning reports to an investigative caseworker. The agency addressed this concern in its PIP by developing and implementing policy requiring that all reports must be screened within 24 hours of receipt. Kansas met its target goal for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.

The concern pertaining to timely screening and assignment of reports that was found in the 2001 CFSR was not found in the 2007 CFSR. The 2007 CFSR found that reports were investigated in a timely manner, and there was little evidence of recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period. Stakeholders attributed the low rate of maltreatment recurrence to agency efforts to provide crisis management services and family-based services to address all existing concerns.

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

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two indicators. One indicator (item 3) addresses the issue of child welfare agency efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing services to the families that ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other indicator (item 4) pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to reduce risk of harm to children.

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 75 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance

on this item varied across counties. The outcome was substantially achieved in 71 percent of Douglas County cases, 56 percent of Lyon County cases, and 87 percent of Sedgwick County cases. Kansas was in substantial conformity with this outcome for its 2001 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key findings of the case reviews conducted in the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- The agency generally is effective in preventing the removal of children from their homes through provision of services to the family.
- The agency was not consistent with regard to conducting risk and safety assessments both initially and on an ongoing basis.
- In some cases, services were not provided to address risk and safety issues, or the services that were provided were not adequate to address the concerns in the family.

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

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency's efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency's efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9) or to ensure that children who have Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangements (OPPLA) as a case goal are in stable placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 52.5 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for FY 2005, the State did not meet the national standards for Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification, Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions, or Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability.

However, the State did meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.

Although performance on this outcome was low in all sites, there was some variation across sites. The outcome was found to be substantially achieved in 40 percent of Douglas County cases, 50 percent of Lyon County cases, and 60 percent of Sedgwick County cases.

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. Kansas implemented the following strategies in its PIP to address these concerns:

- Developed transitional planning for youth aged 16 and older
- Improved the agency's communication to youth in foster care about the services that are available to them
- Developed statewide training for staff to address the issue of placement stability
- Developed specialized training for foster parents to address placement stability
- Developed training focusing on concurrent planning and establishing appropriate permanency goals
- In collaboration with the courts, conducted a study of the termination of parental rights (TPR) process to determine the causes of delays in achieving TPR

Kansas met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.

With the exception of item 5, all items included in Permanency Outcome 1 were rated as Areas Needing Improvement in the State's 2007 CFSR. Some of the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR also were found in the 2007 CFSR. For example, in the 2007 CFSR, children in many of the cases reviewed did not experience placement stability; in many cases, appropriate permanency goals were not established in a timely manner; and, although concurrent planning is now specified in policy, in practice, caseworkers are not focusing on achieving the concurrent goals simultaneously. Instead, one goal is not pursued until efforts to attain the other goal have been exhausted.

Other key findings of the 2007 CFSR case reviews were the following:

- There was little evidence in the cases reviewed of reentry into foster care within a 12-month period.
- The goal of OPPLA is used frequently, and it is not clear that all other permanency options are carefully considered and ruled out before establishing this goal.

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

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six indicators that assess the child welfare agency's performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care in close proximity to their parents and close relatives (item 11); (2) placing siblings together (item 12); (3) ensuring frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings in foster care (item 13); (4) preserving connections of children in foster care with extended family, community, cultural heritage, religion, and schools (item 14); (5) seeking relatives as potential placement resources (item 15); and (6) promoting the relationship between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as Substantially Achieved in 90 percent of the cases, which is close to the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. There was some variation in

performance on this item across sites. The item was determined to be substantially achieved in 100 percent of Douglas County cases and 95 percent of Sedgwick County cases, compared to 70 percent of Lyon County cases.

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. Key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR were the following:

- The number of foster homes was insufficient to accommodate sibling groups, resulting in siblings not being placed together.
- Agency policies regarding visitation between children and parents and among siblings were not being followed consistently.
- Connections with previous foster homes were not being preserved when children moved to a new placement.

To address these concerns, Kansas implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Implemented practices and policies to ensure that siblings are placed together at their initial placement
- Developed policy that mandates that when siblings are placed separately, a plan must be established for their eventual placement together, if appropriate
- Established policy pertaining to the frequency of in-person parent-child visits and in-person sibling visits (Note: Current policy requires at least weekly face-to-face parent-child visits unless parental rights have been terminated or visits are not in the best interests of the child)
- Developed an action plan that included specific strategies for ensuring that family connections, including connections with previous foster families, are preserved

Kansas met its target goal for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.

The key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR were not noted in the 2007 CFSR. For example, in the 2007 CFSR, case reviews found that siblings were placed together when appropriate in 100 percent of the cases reviewed. Case reviews also found that the CWCBS agencies were adhering to policy regarding the frequency of parent-child visits and sibling visits. Also, the concern regarding the lack of connections with previous foster homes was not identified in the 2007 CFSR.

Additional key findings in the 2007 CFSR with regard to this outcome were the following:

- For the most part, children were placed in close proximity to their parents or close relatives (item 11).
- The agency generally made concerted efforts to search for and assess relatives as potential placement resources (item 15).
- The agency was generally effective in supporting the relationship between children in foster care and their parents (item 16).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to ensuring that children's connections with extended family, community, school and friends, religion, and cultural heritage were preserved while the child was in foster care (item 14).

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

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four indicators. One pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to ensure that the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents are assessed and that the necessary services are provided to meet identified needs (item 17). A second indicator examines the child welfare agency's efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining indicators examine the frequency and quality of caseworker's contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 65.6 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 53 percent of Douglas County cases, 63 percent of Lyon County cases, and 74 percent of Sedgwick County cases. Performance also varied slightly based on the type of case. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70 percent of foster care cases, compared to 58 percent of in-home services cases.

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR pertained to inadequate service delivery systems to meet the needs of children, parents, and foster parents, particularly service delivery systems that involved mental health, substance abuse treatment, and family-focused services. To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Developed policy requiring that an initial team meeting be held within 24 hours of the child's or family's contact with the child welfare system to identify service needs early in a case
- Developed and implemented family group conferencing to promote a more family-focused service approach
- Developed a screening tool to identify children with intensive mental health needs and established a process for referring those children to community mental health centers and an automated case-review process to monitor these activities
- Strengthened services to foster parents to assist them in parenting children with severe emotional disorders or behavioral problems

The concern identified in the 2001 CFSR regarding a lack of adequate service delivery systems also was noted in the 2007 CFSR with regard to services to parents, but not with regard to services to children and foster parents. In the 2007 CFSR, case reviews indicated that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting the needs of over 90 percent of children and foster parents. Additional key findings of the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- The agency was more effective in assessing and meeting the service needs of children, mothers, and foster parents than it was in assessing and meeting the needs of fathers (item 17).
- The agency was more effective in engaging mothers and children in case planning than it was in engaging fathers in case planning (item 18).
- In many cases, caseworker visits with children were not of sufficient frequency or quality (item 19).
- There was insufficient contact between caseworkers and parents, although contact with mothers occurred more frequently than contact with fathers (item 20).

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

There is only one indicator for Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to the child welfare agency's efforts to address and meet the educational needs of children in both foster care and in-home services cases (item 21).

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 91 percent of the cases reviewed. This is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity, although it is very close to this requirement. There was little variation in performance on this outcome across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 85 percent of Douglas County cases, 93 percent of Lyon County cases, and 95 percent of Sedgwick County cases. There also was no variation in performance based on the type of case. The outcome was rated as Substantially Achieved in 91 percent of foster care cases and 93 percent of in-home services cases. Kansas was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and, therefore, did not address the outcome in its PIP.

A key finding of the 2007 CFSR is that, in the vast majority of cases reviewed, the child's educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed concern about delays in transferring school records when children have to move to another school, which results in delays in enrollment in the new school. However, stakeholders also noted that SRS has been working with the schools and the Department of Education on strategies to expedite this process.

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

This outcome incorporates two indicators that assess the child welfare agency's efforts to meet children's physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs.

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 85.5 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. There was little variation in performance on this outcome across sites. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 81 percent of Douglas County cases, 81 percent of Lyon County cases, and 90 percent of Sedgwick County cases. There was some variation in performance on the outcome by type of case. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 97.5 percent of foster care cases and 82 percent of the 22 applicable in-home services cases.

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome for its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified during the 2001 CFSR with regard to Well-Being Outcome 3 were the following:

- A lack of dental health providers who accept Medicaid
- A lack of therapeutic foster homes to meet the needs of the children with special mental and behavioral health needs

- A lack of substance abuse treatment resources that can be provided while children remain in the family
- A lack of substance abuse treatment services for parents who do not have private insurance to pay for the treatment
- A lack of knowledge among caseworkers about drug and alcohol abuse and how to assess for problems and needs
- Inappropriate assessments of children’s mental health needs and inadequate services to meet the identified level of intensity
- A lack of timely provision of mental health services

Kansas implemented the following strategies in its PIP to address these concerns:

- Collaborated with Oral Health Kansas in an effort to expand the number of sites where dental hygienists can perform assessments, cleaning, and fluoride treatments and apply sealants
- Collaborated with EDS, the Kansas Medicaid agent, in an effort to increase the number of dentists who are Medicaid providers
- Developed and implemented the Child Welfare/Mental Health Initiative, which included identifying gaps in mental health services and developing an assessment tool for mental health needs and training staff on implementing the tool

Kansas met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period.

The concern identified in the 2001 CFSR with regard to a lack of dental health providers was not noted in the 2007 CFSR. In general, the case review findings indicate that children’s health needs (medical and dental) were routinely assessed and services were provided as needed. However, concerns continued to be identified with regard to meeting children’s mental health needs, particularly with regard to the timely provision of mental health services and to the appropriate assessment of children’s mental health needs.

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of a Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating a statewide information system that can identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in foster care.

Kansas is in substantial conformity with this factor. Kansas also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP. The 2007 CFSR determined that Kansas has an effective integrated statewide information system that allows quick and direct access to the legal status, demographics, location, and goals for every child in foster care.

Case Review System

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance with regard to the systemic factor of a Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

Kansas is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of a Case Review System. Kansas was in substantial conformity with this factor during the 2001 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key findings of the 2007 CFSR included the following:

- Although case plans are developed in a timely manner, there was a lack of consistency in involving fathers in case planning (item 25).
- Periodic case reviews are conducted at least every 6 months or more frequently in some cases (item 26).
- Permanency hearings are not consistently being conducted in a timely manner (item 27).
- The State has a process in place for filing TPR for children in foster care in a timely manner. This was attributed in large part to the involvement of SRS, judges, guardians *ad litem*, district attorneys, and attorneys in keeping track of the 15-month deadline (item 28).
- Foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers are routinely given notice regarding reviews and hearings and are encouraged to provide input during all reviews and hearings (item 29).

Quality Assurance System

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of a Quality Assurance System is based on whether the State has developed standards to ensure the safety and health of children in foster care (item 30) and whether the State is operating a statewide quality assurance system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and measures program strengths and areas needing improvement (item 31).

Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of a Quality Assurance System. Kansas received a rating of Strength for both items included in this systemic factor. Kansas was in substantial conformity with this factor during the 2001 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key findings of the 2007 CFSR include the following:

- The State has developed and implemented licensing standards and other provisions that promote better protection for children in the foster care system (item 30).

- Several identifiable quality assurance systems are in operation in Kansas through contract management and through monthly case reads that are described as replicating the Federal CFSR process (item 31).

Training

The systemic factor of Training incorporates an assessment of the State's new caseworker training program (item 32), ongoing training for child welfare agency staff (item 33), and training for foster and adoptive parents (item 34).

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training during the 2007 CFSR. Only one of the three items in the factor achieved a Strength rating. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its PIP. The following concerns were identified during the 2001 CFSR:

- Initial training was insufficient to meet the needs of the caseworkers and to support their duties and responsibilities.
- There was no comprehensive system for ongoing in-service training that focused on the needs of child welfare caseworkers from entry level to advanced caseworkers and supervisors.
- Foster parents were not receiving training in caring for special needs children.

To address these concerns, Kansas revised its training for new caseworkers and developed a more structured program of in-service training to meet staff needs. Kansas met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of the PIP implementation period.

Key findings of the 2007 CFSR were as follows:

- Although a comprehensive pre-service training system is in place for SRS caseworkers and SRS caseworkers are required to complete training prior to carrying a caseload, the pre-service training and requirements provided by the CWCBS agencies do not adhere to the same requirements (item 32).
- The Child Welfare Resource Network, Children's Alliance of Kansas, the Butler Institute, and the University of Denver are partnering to provide ongoing staff training (item 33).
- Foster parent training is provided through the CWCBS agencies and the Children's Alliance of Kansas using the Model Approach to Parenting and Partnership (PS-MAPP), which is a 10-week pre-service training. Stakeholders commented that resource parents are required to complete this training before licensure is issued. Once licensed, foster parents are required to participate in 15 to 16 hours of ongoing training each year (item 34).

Service Array

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array addresses three questions: (1) Does the State have in place an array of services to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? (2) Are these services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? (3) Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and family served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Kansas is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and received a Strength rating for only one item included in this factor. The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its PIP.

Key findings of the 2007 CFSR with regard to Service Array are the following:

- The State does not have in place an array of services to assess the strengths and needs of children and families. In addition, the lack of a meaningful service array is a barrier to enabling children to remain safely with their parents when appropriate (item 35).
- Services are not accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP). In particular, access to substance abuse treatment services and mental health treatment varies across the State. There also are waiting lists for providers who offer free or low-cost services. Because services are limited in rural areas, extensive travel often is required to access the services (item 36).
- Despite the identified concerns, the State has the ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the child welfare system through use of flexible funding resources and wraparound community-based services.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the CFSP (items 38 and 39) and the extent to which the State coordinates child welfare services with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population (item 40).

Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with the factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community, and all items included in this systemic factor achieved Strength ratings. Kansas also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2001 CFSR and did not need to address this factor in its PIP.

General findings in the 2007 CFSR included the following:

- Kansas engages in ongoing consultation with a broad array of individuals and organizations to obtain their input regarding the goals and objectives of the CFSP and to develop annual reports of progress and services (items 38 and 39).
- There is extensive collaboration between SRS and other Federal or Federally assisted programs to ensure a coordinated service delivery system for children and families who are served by multiple agencies (item 40).

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's

efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities with regard to using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).

Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention, and all items received a rating of Strength. Kansas also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2001 CFSR and did not need to address this factor in its PIP.

Key findings of the 2007 CFSR are as follows:

- Kansas has implemented licensing and approval standards for foster family homes and child care institutions, and the standards are applied equally to all approved and licensed homes receiving title IV-E and IV-B funding (items 41 and 42).
- Criminal background checks are completed for all persons seeking foster parent licensure. Those who have lived in Kansas less than 2 years are required to undergo a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal background check (item 43).
- Regional recruitment teams focus on recruitment and retention of resource families that reflect ethnic and racial diversity of children in their region that need placement. A special initiative to recruit African-American families resulted in a substantial increase in available African-American foster family homes (item 44).
- There is an identifiable recruitment process for intrastate and interstate resources with appropriate follow-up, including use of adoption exchanges and the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (item 45).

Table 1. Kansas CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved*	Met National Standards?	Rating**	Percent Strength
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	93.8	Yes		
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				Strength	97
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				Strength	93
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	75.0			
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				Strength	95
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	77
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	52.5	Met 1, did not meet 3		
Item 5: Foster care reentry				Strength	91
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	67
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	74
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	82
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	47
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				ANI	80
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	90.0			
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	93
Item 12: Placement with siblings				Strength	100
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				Strength	97
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	84
Item 15: Relative placement				Strength	91
Item 16: Relationship of child in foster care with parents				Strength	90

*95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases must be rated as a Strength.

Table 2. Kansas CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved*	Rating**	Percent Strength
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs	No	65.6		
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	69
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	75
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child			ANI	73
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	64
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	91.5		
Item 21: Educational needs of child			ANI	91
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	85..5		
Item 22: Physical health of child			Strength	92
Item 23: Mental health of child			ANI	88

*95 percent of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome for the State to be in substantial conformity with the outcome.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of item 21) must be rated as a Strength. Because item 21 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95 percent Strength rating applies.

Table 3. Kansas CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Statewide Information System	Yes	4	
Item 24: The State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care			Strength
Case Review System	No	2	
Item 25: Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parents that includes the required provisions			ANI
Item 26: 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			Strength
Item 27: 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			ANI
Item 28: Provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the ASFA			Strength
Item 29: Provides a process for foster parents, preadoptive 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			Strength
Quality Assurance System	Yes	4	
Item 30: 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			Strength
Item 31: The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the 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			Strength

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Training	No	2	
Item 32: 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, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services			ANI
Item 33: 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			ANI
Item 34: The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E, and the training addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children			Strength
Service Array	No	2	
Item 35: 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			ANI
Item 36: The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP			ANI
Item 37: The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency			Strength
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Yes	4	
Item 38: 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			Strength
Item 39: The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP			Strength
Item 40: The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population			Strength

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Yes	4	
Item 41: The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			Strength
Item 42: The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds			Strength
Item 43: 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			Strength
Item 44: 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 adoptive homes are needed			Strength
Item 45: 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			Strength

*Scores range from 1 to 4. A score of 1 or 2 means that the factor is not in substantial conformity. A score of 3 or 4 means that the factor is in substantial conformity.

**Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement (ANI)

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

Final Report
Kansas Child and Family Services Review
March 2008

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
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INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Kansas. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau (CB) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within HHS.

The Kansas CFSR was conducted the week of June 11, 2007. The period under review was from April 1, 2006, to June 11, 2006. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB within HHS, which provides State child welfare data for 2003, 2004, and 2005
- Reviews of 64 cases at three sites throughout the State (31 cases in Sedgwick County, 16 cases in Lyon County, and 17 cases in Douglas County)¹
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including but not limited to children, parents, foster parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, and attorneys

Information from each resource is presented for all of the items reviewed. All 64 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the 64 cases reviewed are presented in the Table of Case Characteristics on the following page.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of the State's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR review, the State's status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Differences in findings across the sites included in the Onsite Review are described when noteworthy. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic

¹Although the CFSR usually involves a review of 65 cases, during the Onsite Review one case in Lyon County was eliminated because it did not meet the requirements of the sample.

Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Special Features of the Kansas Child Welfare System

There are two somewhat unique features of the Kansas child welfare system that are useful to understand in reviewing the CFSR Final Report. One feature is that many of the child welfare services in Kansas are provided by private agencies through Child Welfare Community Based Services (CWCBS) contracts. Kansas has used this privatized service delivery system since 1996. Currently, contracts are awarded in five regions of the State. The CWCBS contractor agencies are responsible for providing family preservation, foster care, reunification, and adoption services throughout the life of a case. Once a child is referred to a CWCBS agency, the agency assumes full case management responsibilities and provides all necessary services to the child, family, and foster family, including foster care placement and collaboration with community resources to ensure community-based service delivery.

The SRS, through its regional offices, directly manages the child abuse and neglect investigations and in-home services cases; provides overall management, quality assurance (QA), and direction to the child welfare program; and monitors CWCBS agency performance and adherence to contract requirements. It should be noted that the CFSR process is designed to assess State child welfare systems, including contracted service providers when they are delegated to have full case management responsibilities. Therefore, it should be understood that for the cases in which the CWCBS agencies have full case management responsibilities, the CFSR process assesses those cases based on the actions and case practices of the CWCBS agencies. When reference is made to caseworkers who are providing foster care or adoption-related services, these caseworkers are employees of the CWCBS agencies. Throughout this CFSR Final Report, the contracted agencies are referred to as CWCBS agencies.

A second, somewhat unique feature of the Kansas child welfare system is that for a substantial number of children who come into contact with the child welfare system in the State, the primary reason for agency involvement is the child's behavior rather than abuse or neglect. In addition, a key "child behavior" problem that brings children into contact with the Kansas child welfare system is truancy. In the sample of cases reviewed for the fiscal year (FY) 2007 CFSR, 15 (35.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases involved children whose primary reason for contact with the child welfare system was noted to be "child's behavior." In eight of these cases, the presenting problem was identified as truancy. In 10 (42 percent) of the 24 in-home services cases, the reason for the family's contact with the agency was identified as "child's behavior," and in 2 of these cases, the presenting problem was truancy.

Table of Case Characteristics

Case Characteristics	Foster Care Cases	In-Home Cases
	40	24
When case was opened/child entered foster care		
Open prior to the period under review	30	5
Open during the period under review	10	19
Child entered foster care during the period under review	11	NA
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than age 10	21 (52.5%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	3 (7.5%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	8 (20%)	*
16 and older	8 (20%)	*
Race/Ethnicity		
African-American (Non-Hispanic)	5 (13%)	*
White (Non-Hispanic)	24 (60%)	*
Hispanic (of all races)	4 (10%)	*
Two or more races	7 (18%)	*
Primary reason for opening case	N = 40	N = 24
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	3 (7.5%)	8 (33%)
Physical abuse	3 (7.5%)	2 (8%)
Sexual abuse	2 (2.5%)	0
Medical neglect	4 (10%)	1 (4%)
Substance abuse by parent	4 (10%)	0
Substance abuse by child	1 (2.5%)	0
Domestic violence in child's home	3 (7.5%)	0
Emotional maltreatment	1 (2.5%)	2 (8%)
Abandonment	3 (7.5%)	1 (4%)
Child's behavior	15 (37.5%)	10 (42%)
Mental/physical health of parents	2 (5%)	0

*Information on these characteristics for in-home services cases is not provided because all children in the family are considered in these cases.

SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes section of the CSFR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 indicators (items) reviewed. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. In addition to the item ratings, States are evaluated with regard to performance on seven outcomes, each of which incorporates one or more of the individual items. The evaluation options for these outcomes are Substantially Achieved, Partially Achieved, and Not Achieved. In order for a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having Substantially Achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance on seven national data indicators. In order for a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, the national standards for each data indicator must be met, as well as the case review requirements. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

ACF has set a very high standard of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our country's most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. The standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being. The goal of the CFSR is to promote continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95 percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review at the end of their PIP implementation. ACF recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often are time-consuming to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with ACF to establish a specified amount of improvement or implement specified activities for their PIP. That is, for each outcome or item that is an area needing improvement, each State (working in conjunction with CB) specifies how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the areas needing improvement and determines the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its PIP and still not perform at the 95- or 90-percent level required by the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSR is intended to assess a State's current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and consistent comprehensive case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued PIPs addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior PIP requirements may have been achieved. The goal is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the closing of a PIP.

In the following sections, for each outcome assessed there is information pertaining to how the State performed on that outcome in the first round. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round of the CFSR, there is a discussion of the key concerns identified at that time and the strategies implemented in the PIP to address those concerns. This discussion also focuses on whether the key concerns that emerged in the first CFSR continued to be present in the second review, or whether those concerns were resolved but other concerns emerged.

Because many changes have been made in the onsite 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 CFSR is not directly comparable with its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and Area Needing Improvement ratings. Key changes in the CFSR process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews are 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 relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to increase consistency and to ensure an assessment of critical areas, such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	7	11	12	30	93.8
Partially Achieved	1	0	0	1	3.1
Not Achieved or Addressed	1	0	0	1	3.1
Total Applicable Cases	9	11	12	32	
Not Applicable Cases	8	5	19	32	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	
Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards					
	National Standard (%)		State's Percentage		Meets Standard
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6		94.6		Yes
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68		99.87		Yes

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. Although both items included in the outcome were rated as a Strength, taken together the percentage of cases determined to be Substantially Achieved did not reach the required 95 percent. The outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 93.8 percent of the applicable cases, which is very close to the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. This outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 100 percent of Lyon County and Sedgwick County cases and 78 percent of Douglas County cases.

Kansas did meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome for its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concern identified in the 2001 CFSR was that in some of the cases reviewed, the time from the receipt of a report to the assignment of the report to an investigative worker was longer than that required by the State. The agency addressed this concern in its PIP by developing and implementing a policy requiring that all reports be screened within 24 hours of receipt.

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

The concern pertaining to timely screening and assignment of reports that was found in the 2001 CFSR was not found in the 2007 CFSR. In addition, the 2007 CFSR found that reports were investigated in a timely manner, and there was little evidence of recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period. Stakeholders attributed the low rate of maltreatment recurrence to agency efforts to provide services to address existing concerns. The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented below.

Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 32 (50 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no reports of child maltreatment during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

In accordance with SRS policy, the response time for initiating an investigation begins with the time of the assignment to the investigative caseworker. SRS policy prioritizes response times for investigations of child maltreatment allegations as well as nonabuse/neglect assessments based on the following criteria:

- The investigation must be initiated on the same day when there is reason to believe that a child has been seriously injured or is in imminent danger. SRS ascertains the safety of the child by face-to-face contact and either takes necessary action to protect the child or requests that action be taken by emergency personnel, such as law enforcement officers, the same day the report is received.

- The investigation must be initiated within 72 hours (excluding weekends and State holidays) when any allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect is not assigned a same-day response. SRS must ascertain the safety of the child by face-to-face contact within 72 hours.
- The investigation must be initiated within 20 working days if a report is accepted as an assessment. The department must initiate action as soon as practical but within 20 working days of the acceptance of the report. Action has been initiated when the child, a parent, guardian, or caregiver of the child has been contacted by SRS. Contact in person is preferable, but telephone contact or a letter offering services may be used in situations that do not appear to pose a serious risk to the child. Case findings are not made on reports assigned for an assessment, as no child maltreatment is alleged to have occurred.

The results of the assessment of item 1 are presented in the table below:

Item 1	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	8	11	12	31	97
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	3
Total Applicable Cases	9	11	12	32	
Not Applicable	8	5	19	32	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Lyon County and Sedgwick County cases and 89 percent of Douglas County cases. This item was rated as a Strength when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was established with the child within the timeframes required by State policy or law. In the one case rated as an Area Needing Improvement, a 72-hour response time was assigned; however, face-to-face contact with the alleged victim was not made until 1 week after assignment of the report.

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with the required timeframes. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent required for an overall item rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s first CFSR, conducted in 2001.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders reported that SRS and law enforcement conduct joint investigations during regular working hours on Monday through Friday. However, on the weekends and after 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, the investigations are conducted only by law enforcement with an SRS supervisor available by phone for consultation. Stakeholders noted that when law enforcement conducts the investigation

alone, children needing out-of-home placement are taken into police protective custody if it is deemed necessary to ensure the safety of the child.

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were in general agreement that SRS initiates investigations of child maltreatment in a timely manner. They noted that allegations are reported to a centralized Protection Report Center (PRC). The PRC assigns a priority to the report and then sends it to the local office for assignment to an investigative caseworker. Some stakeholders expressed concern about the accuracy of the information that PRC submits to the local agency offices. A few Lyon County stakeholders also expressed concern about delays in routing calls to the local office, which may take several days.

A few stakeholders indicated that when reports come in during the evening hours, the case may not be assigned until the next morning, even if the report is prioritized as a same-day response. Sedgwick County stakeholders suggested that when a report is received during evening hours and is prioritized as a same-day response, law enforcement should be notified within 4 hours rather than waiting for the next day.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a review of Children and Family Services (CFS) Case Read data for Federal FY 2006 indicated that 92 percent of the intake and assessment cases included in the review were assigned to an investigation caseworker in the next “half working day,” and 99 percent were investigated within the required response times.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 15 (23 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine whether there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review, 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. The results of this assessment are provided in the table below:

Item 2	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	2	4	8	14	93
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	7
Total Applicable Cases	3	4	8	15	
Not Applicable	14	12	23	49	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

This item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Lyon County and Sedgwick County cases and 67 percent of Douglas County cases. However, because of the very small sample sizes for each county, the percentage differences are not meaningful.

Item 2 was rated as a Strength when there was no indication of two or more substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period, or when there were two or more substantiated reports but they did not involve the same perpetrator or circumstances. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case in which there were two substantiated reports of child maltreatment within the same month. The allegation in both reports was “lack of adequate supervision.”

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the cases, which exceeds the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that although repeat maltreatment does occur in some cases, the rate of recurrence is low. Stakeholders attributed the low rate of maltreatment recurrence to the effectiveness of the agency in assessing safety concerns and providing home-based and case-management services to families to address those concerns. Stakeholders also noted that there are flexible funding resources that can be used to support maltreatment prevention efforts.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, SRS caseworkers refer families to many different agencies providing family preservation services, mental health services, drug and alcohol services, and safety plan development. However, the Statewide Assessment reports that if families do not follow through with what is recommended, repeat referrals may be made to the agency because the problems leading to the first report were not resolved.

Safety Outcome 2

Safety Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	12	9	27	48	75.0
Partially Achieved	3	3	0	6	9.4
Not Achieved or Addressed	2	4	4	10	15.6
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 75 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. Performance on this item varied across counties. The outcome was Substantially Achieved in 71 percent of Douglas County cases, 56 percent of Lyon County cases, and 87 percent of Sedgwick County cases. Kansas was in substantial conformity with this outcome for its 2001 CFSR and was not required to address it in the State's PIP.

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

Key findings of the case reviews conducted in the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- The agency generally is effective in preventing the removal of children from their homes through provision of services to the family.
- The agency did not consistently conduct risk assessments on an ongoing basis.
- In some cases, services were not provided or the services that were provided were not adequate to address the risk issues in the family.

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 2 are presented below.

Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 38 (59 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were excluded from this assessment if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home, or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For this item, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent the placement of children in foster care while at the same time ensuring their safety. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below:

Item 3	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	9	8	19	36	95
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	0	2	5
Total Applicable Cases	10	9	19	38	
Not Applicable	7	7	12	26	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

There was little variation in this item across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of Douglas County cases, 89 percent of Lyon County cases, and 100 percent of Sedgwick County cases.

Item 3 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were provided to the parents and child to prevent removal (18 cases).
- Services were provided to the parents and child after reunification to monitor the child’s safety (six cases).
- The child was placed with relatives, and services were provided to the relatives, parents, and child (three cases).
- The child was appropriately removed from the home because the removal was necessary to ensure the child’s safety (nine cases).

The case reviews identified a variety of services that were provided to families, including mental health services, stress and behavior management, family preservation and family enhancement services, in-home intensive family services, individual and family crisis counseling, parenting skills training, life skills training, independent living (IL) services, drug testing and substance abuse counseling, respite care, financial services, transportation services, assistance with home repairs and utilities, child care, Head Start services, child support assistance, job assistance, and immigration services.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases. In one case, no services were provided and the children remained at risk in the home. In the other case, insufficient services were provided to a parent to ensure the child’s safety in the home.

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 95 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that SRS had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is generally effective in providing services to prevent the removal of children from their homes. Stakeholders mentioned a variety of services that contribute to the agency’s success, particularly the State’s Family Preservation Program, which provides intensive, family-focused, in-home services. Stakeholders also said that aftercare services, which are provided for up to 12 months after reunification occurs, are effective in ensuring the stability of the family so that reentry does not occur. Several stakeholders also mentioned that the availability of grant money for community services has helped to ensure that children can be safely maintained in their homes.

One key concern expressed by Sedgwick County stakeholders was that a clarification in the child in need of care (CINC) code requirements has reduced the time available to work with these families from two consecutive 72-hour protective custody holds to only one 72-hour protective custody hold. These stakeholders reported that this has resulted in some of these children being taken into foster care because the 72 hours is not sufficient time for the agency to address the family’s crisis. They noted that this has increased the number of foster care cases in Sedgwick County and, consequently, the caseload burden for caseworkers.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, an evaluation of family preservation services over a 4-year period resulted in the finding that, for 6 months following services, over 90 percent of the children in families that received family preservation services did not enter out-of-home care and did not have a substantiated abuse or neglect report.

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 64 cases. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below:

Item 4	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	12	10	27	49	77
Area Needing Improvement	5	6	4	15	23
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Performance on this item differed across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 71 percent of Douglas County cases, 63 percent of Lyon County cases, and 87 percent of Sedgwick County cases. There was little variation in performance based on the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 73 percent (29 cases) of the 40 applicable foster care cases and 83 percent (20 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.

Item 4 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children’s home or foster home and addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment. Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement primarily when reviewers determined the following:

- There was risk of harm to the children when they were in their homes, and the services necessary to reduce that risk were not provided, or the safety plan that was established was not sufficient to address the risk (six cases).
- There was insufficient ongoing risk assessment in the foster home placement setting (three cases).
- There was risk of harm to the child due to continual running away, and this risk was not being adequately addressed by the agency (three cases).
- There were safety and risk-of-harm concerns during visitation with parents, particularly trial home visits, and the agency did not address the risk concerns (three cases).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 77 percent of the applicable cases reviewers determined that the agency had appropriately addressed the risk of harm to the children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for an overall rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is effective in assessing safety and risk. Stakeholders identified monthly home visits, the use of two risk assessment tools, monthly reports regarding children’s safety and risk, family preservation services, and collaboration with community child-serving agencies as strategies used by SRS to ensure safety and reduce risk of harm. In addition, stakeholders noted that in difficult cases involving physical abuse, sexual abuse, or other serious allegations of maltreatment, SRS assigns a special investigator to assist caseworkers in investigating reports, assessing

safety, and developing safety plans. Stakeholders also noted that the CWCBS agencies are expected to conduct informal ongoing assessments throughout the life of a case and incorporate elements of the safety and risk assessments into their service plans.

Despite these positive perceptions, several stakeholders expressed concern about the effectiveness of law enforcement personnel in assessing children's safety needs because they are not adequately trained in this area. According to these stakeholders, the lack of law enforcement training in safety assessment is a key concern because law enforcement personnel conduct investigations on weekends and after regular business hours and often place children in a relative's home without a comprehensive safety and risk assessment of the relative's home.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following agency strategies are designed to assess safety and reduce the risk of harm to children:

- The Family Based Assessment process, which includes questions regarding substance abuse to assist staff in determining the need for further screening and assessment services
- The Collaboration between SRS and the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, which is designed to enhance agency interventions with families in which domestic violence is a concern by implementing screening tools that are effective in assessing for the risk of harm to children when domestic violence is identified in the home

The Statewide Assessment also notes that there was a recent review of the State's child abuse and neglect intake and assessment process conducted with assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Protective Services. This resulted in recommendations for improving these processes.

II. PERMANENCY

Permanency Outcome 1

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	4	5	12	21	52.5
Partially Achieved	5	3	6	14	35.0
Not Achieved or Addressed	1	2	2	5	12.5
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	
Total Cases	10	10	20	40	
Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards					
	National Standard (Scaled Score)		State's Composite Score		Meets Standard (Yes/No)
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +		115.6		No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +		86.3		No
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +		123.9		Yes
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +		77.5		No

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings:

- The outcome was Substantially Achieved in 52.5 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity.
- The State Data Profile indicates that for Federal FY 2005, the State did not meet the national standards for Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification, Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions, or Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability.

However, the State did meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. Performance on the individual measures included in all composites is presented in the discussion of the items related to each measure.

Although performance on this outcome was low in all sites, there was some variation across sites. The outcome was found to be Substantially Achieved in 40 percent of Douglas County cases, 50 percent of Lyon County cases, and 60 percent of Sedgwick County cases.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during the first CFSR and was required to address it in its PIP. Key concerns identified during the 2001 CFSR with regard to Permanency Outcome 1 were the following:

- Stakeholders indicated that IL services were not available in all areas.
- Some caseworkers and youth were not aware that IL services could be accessed for children who were 18 years of age or older.
- Children in out-of-home placements experienced multiple placement changes.
- Concurrent planning was not being implemented in a consistent manner.
- The agency was not consistent with regard to establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.

Kansas implemented the following strategies in its PIP to address these concerns:

- Developed transitional planning for youth ages 16 and older and voluntary IL services for youth ages 21 to 23 who are enrolled in an educational training program
- Improved the agency's communication to youth in foster care about the services that are available to them
- Extended Medicaid coverage for youth until the month of their 21st birthday
- Developed statewide training for staff to address the issue of placement stability
- Developed specialized training for foster parents to address placement stability
- Developed training focusing on concurrent planning and establishing appropriate permanency goals
- In collaboration with the courts, conducted a study of the termination of parental rights (TPR) process to determine the causes of delays in achieving TPRs

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

With the exception of item 5, all items included in Permanency Outcome 1 were rated as Areas Needing Improvement in the State's 2007 CFSR. Some of the concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR also were found in the 2007 CFSR. For example, in the 2007 CFSR,

children in many of the cases reviewed did not experience placement stability. In many cases, appropriate permanency goals were not established in a timely manner, and although concurrent planning is now specified in policy, caseworkers are not focusing on the concurrent goals simultaneously.

Other key findings of the 2007 CFSR case reviews were the following:

- There was little evidence in the cases reviewed of reentry into foster care within a 12-month period.
- The goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA) is used frequently, but it is not clear that all other permanency options were ruled out before establishing this goal.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented below.

Item 5. Foster care reentries

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 11 (28 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for assessment if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 5	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	1	4	5	10	91
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	9
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	4	5	11	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	6	15	29	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

This item was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of Douglas County cases, 100 percent of Lyon County cases, and 100 percent of Sedgwick County cases. However, because of the small percentages in each site, percentage differences in performance are not meaningful.

State performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: 7.0 percent of the children exiting foster care reentered foster care in less than 12 months. This is less than the 25th percentile of 9.9 percent. For this measure, lower percentages are associated with higher levels of performance. Therefore, the data indicate that Kansas performed better than at least 75 percent of the States on this measure.

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 10 cases in which the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case in which the reentry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of the child’s discharge from a prior foster care episode.

Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 91 percent of the cases, which exceeds the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item in the onsite CFSR generally agreed that the rate of reentry of children in foster care has been consistently low across the State. Some stakeholders attributed the low reentry rate to the implementation of a new assessment tool that is used at the time of reunification, as well as on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the case. As one stakeholder from a foster care provider agency said, since implementing the assessment tool 2 years ago, only five children have reentered foster care out of 246 cases. Various stakeholders also attributed the low reentry rate to the provision of aftercare services for up to 1 year after reunification and the use of 30-day trial home visits and reintegration assessments prior to final discharge from foster care.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kansas excels in preventing reentry of children into the child welfare system once they have been discharged to a permanent setting. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, services to prevent reentry into foster care have consistently met or exceeded expectations. One program mentioned in the Statewide Assessment as contributing to the State’s success in preventing reentries is the aftercare services program that provides services to families for 1 year after reintegration.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 6 was applicable for 39 (98 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, 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 current placement setting. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 6	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	6	6	14	26	67
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	6	13	33
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	10	20	39	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	0	0	1	
Total Cases	10	10	20	40	

Performance on this item did not vary substantively across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 67 percent of Douglas County cases, 60 percent of Lyon County cases, and 70 percent of Sedgwick County cases.

Kansas performance on the individual measures of placement stability included in Composite 4: Placement stability is presented below:

- 74.2 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is less than the national median of 83.3 percent.
- 49.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is less than the national median of 59.9 percent.
- 22.9 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings, which is less than the national median of 33.9 percent.

These data indicate that Kansas performed below the national median on all three measures of placement stability.

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child did not experience a placement change during the period under review, and either the current placement was stable or the child was discharged from foster care during the period under review (21 cases).
- The placement changes experienced were in the child's best interest and were intended either to further achievement of the child's permanency goal or to provide specialized services to the child (five cases).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when reviewers determined that the child had been in multiple placement settings during the period under review and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to further attain the child's permanency goal (13 cases). Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 21 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in six cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in 12 cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability or that changes in placements were in the best interests of the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that placement stability for children in foster care is an area needing improvement. Several noted that placement stability is particularly problematic for older youth with mental health and behavioral issues. Various stakeholders identified the following as contributing to the lack of placement stability:

- Children are not being placed in appropriate placements that match their needs, due primarily to a scarcity of foster family homes.
- The agency does not provide sufficient supportive services to foster parents, such as respite care, especially in rural areas.
- The practice of having law enforcement take protective custody often leads to children moving to another placement with 72 hours of being removed from their homes.
- Some children have behavior problems that foster parents are not adequately prepared to handle.
- Children are frequently placed in short-term emergency placement shelters either at entry into foster care or when a placement disrupts.

Despite these concerns, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State is making concerted efforts to improve placement stability through the following actions:

- The Kansas Child Welfare Quality Improvement Council (KCWQIC) is focusing on placement stability as a key concern.
- SRS is focusing on staff qualifications to ensure that highly trained staff members are conducting the assessments of children's placement needs.
- SRS is working to ensure children have faster access to mental health services to address some of the behavioral concerns that result in placement disruptions.

- Efforts are being made to recruit specialty foster homes to serve adolescent girls who are chronic runaways.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, foster care placement stability is a concern in the State. The Statewide Assessment notes that placement stability is most problematic for large sibling groups and for children who have significant behavioral issues because there are insufficient placement resources to meet the needs of these populations.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that stability is problematic for adolescents with mental health concerns and those with sexual acting-out behaviors. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Kansas struggles with maintaining an adequate number of specialized residential care placements specifically for sexually acting-out and violent youth who have not been adjudicated as juvenile offenders. The Statewide Assessment notes that, at the end of the 2006 legislative session, a commission was established to investigate and make recommendations regarding the development of these services.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 7 was applicable for 39 (98 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. 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. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 7	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	6	6	17	29	74
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	3	10	26
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	10	20	39	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	0	0	1	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

Performance on this item varied somewhat across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of Sedgwick County cases, 67 percent of Douglas County cases, and 60 percent of Lyon County cases.

Kansas performance in FY 2005 with regard to the individual measures incorporated in Permanency Composite 3: Achieving permanency for children in foster care for an extended time period was as follows:

- 29.8 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the fiscal year were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (i.e., adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the fiscal year. This percentage is slightly higher than the national 75th percentile of 29.1 percent.
- 91.1 percent of the children exiting foster care in 2005 who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is lower than the national median of 96.8 percent.
- 37.5 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care in FY 2005 with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is lower than the national median of 47.8 percent but higher than the 25th percentile.

These data suggest that, compared with other States, Kansas is effective in achieving permanency for children in foster care for 24 months or longer. However, Kansas is less effective than most of the other States in achieving permanency for children who are legally free for adoption at the time of exit from foster care.

Item 7 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child's permanency goal was appropriate and had been established in a timely manner. The case was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child's current permanency goal was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (two cases).
- The child's permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (five cases).
- The agency failed to specify a compelling reason for not filing for TPR per the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (three cases).

Case review findings pertaining to case goals were as follows:

- Nine children had a goal of adoption only.
- Seven children had a goal of OPPLA only.
- Thirteen children had a goal of reunification, guardianship, or living with other relatives.
- Seven children had concurrent goals of adoption and reunification (including guardianship or permanent placement with relatives).
- One child had concurrent goals of adoption and OPPLA.
- Two children had concurrent goals of OPPLA and reunification (including guardianship or permanent placement with relatives).

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 74 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. In the State's 2001 CFSR, this item was rated as a Strength.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders differed in their opinions about the effectiveness of SRS in establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in a timely manner. Stakeholders in Douglas and Sedgwick Counties suggested that the agency is effective in establishing appropriate goals for children and attributed this to the effective use of concurrent case planning that incorporates both reunification and adoption. State-level stakeholders, however, indicated that although progress has been made in the area of concurrent planning, there is room for improvement. Although concurrent goals are being established, caseworkers generally focus on them sequentially rather than simultaneously. Stakeholders expressed the opinion that when there are concurrent goals of adoption and reunification, caseworkers rarely focus on the adoption goal until efforts to reunify the child have not been successful.

Various stakeholders identified the following State and agency practices as contributing to the establishment of appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner:

- Developing case plans within 30 days of child entering foster care
- Holding frequent permanency-related case staffings
- Identifying potential adoption resources at the onset of a case
- Ensuring that county attorneys have a thorough understanding of children's need for permanency
- Establishing a new statute that requires cases to be adjudicated within 60 days
- Continually assessing and changing permanency goals when appropriate throughout the life of the case

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, policy requires that SRS and CWCBS agencies practice concurrent planning for every child placed in an out-of-home setting, even if reunification is the goal. The Statewide Assessment notes that exceptions to this requirement must be the decision of the Child and Family Team and must be documented in the Family-Child Case Plan.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that Kansas has adopted the family-centered systems of care model in working with families. This model includes family team meetings for case-planning purposes. Some of the responsibilities of the providers and the family, as part of the case planning team, include establishing the permanency goal as well as the concurrent goal and conducting a review of the plan on a regular basis to determine if modifications are needed to achieve the goals.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 22 (55 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. 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, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below:

Item 8	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	5	5	8	18	82
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	2	4	18
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	7	10	22	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	3	10	18	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

This item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Douglas County cases, 71 percent of Lyon County cases, and 80 percent of Sedgwick County cases. However, because of the small sample sizes and variation in the sample size across sites, percentage differences in performance are not meaningful.

Kansas performance in FY 2005 on the timeliness of reunification measures included in Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification were as follows:

- 60.9 percent of the reunifications occurred in less than 12 months of the child’s entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 69.9 percent.
- The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to adoption was 9.3 months. This length of stay exceeds the national median of 6.5 months. (Note that a lower number of months means higher performance.)
- 28.9 percent of children entering foster care in the last 6 months prior to FY 2005 were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

These data indicate that Kansas performed below the national medians for all measures of timeliness of reunification. State performance on the fourth measure in the composite, which assesses the permanency of reunification (i.e., the rate of reentry into foster care for children who are reunified), is discussed under item 5.

Item 8 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency was making concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made diligent efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner.

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 82 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. In the State's 2001 CFSR, there was no comparable item. At that time, item 8 pertained to IL services. The change for item 8 from an assessment of IL services to an assessment of timeliness in achieving goals of reunification, guardianship, and permanent placement of relatives was not made until Federal FY 2002.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the effectiveness of the agency in achieving reunifications and guardianships in timely manner. Some stakeholders noted that the agency has implemented a program in which foster parents work with biological parents in parenting the children and serve as role models for biological parents. They suggested that this program promotes timely reunification because it ensures that the parents are focusing on their case plan and learning appropriate parenting skills. Other stakeholders, however, expressed the opinion that reunification efforts are hampered by a lack of services for parents, relative caregivers, and children with significant mental health concerns.

A few stakeholders reported that timely reunifications sometimes are difficult to achieve because some court orders include numerous requirements that parents must meet before the child can be returned to their care. Stakeholders suggested that many of these requirements may not be necessary and result in frustrated and overwhelmed parents.

Stakeholders noted that the goal of guardianship is not used frequently in the State. However, they noted that it is an appropriate and useful goal when the bond between a parent and child is so strong that it may not be in the best interest of the child to terminate parental rights.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the agency implements several practices to promote timely reunification, including establishing concurrent case plan goals, assuring that tasks and services are clearly spelled out and articulated in case plans, and helping the family follow through with and access identified tasks and services.

The Statewide Assessment reports that stakeholders identified the following barriers to timely reunification:

- Lack of community resources, including transportation and affordable housing
- Incarcerated parents.
- Delays in getting Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) approvals
- Conflicts between parents

Item 9: Adoption

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 17 (43 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. The results are shown in the table below:

Item 9	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	1	2	5	8	47
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	2	9	53
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	6	7	17	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	4	13	23	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 25 percent of Douglas County cases, 33 percent of Lyon County cases, and 71 percent of Sedgwick County cases. However, because of the very small sample sizes, percentage differences are not meaningful.

The following information describes Kansas performance in FY 2005 on the individual measures included in the CFSR Data Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions:

- 29.2 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage exceeds the national median of 26.8 percent but is less than the national 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 30.9 months. This length of stay is less than the national median of 32.4 months but exceeds the 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (Note that a lower number of months equates to a higher level of performance.)

- 23.7 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage exceeds the national 75th percentile of 22.7 percent.
- 7.4 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is less than the national median of 8.8 percent.
- 28.0 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is less than the national median of 45.8 percent.

These data suggest that Kansas's strongest performance relative to other States pertains to achieving adoptions for children in foster care for 17 months or longer. Its lowest performance relative to other States is in the area of achieving finalized adoptions in a timely manner for children who are legally free for adoption.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in nine cases when reviewers identified the following concerns:

- Court-related delays pertaining to scheduling of hearings or to granting continuances, which result in the postponement of hearings (three cases)
- Delays due to the agency not filing for TPR in a timely manner or not requesting a court hearing on a finalized adoption (two cases)
- Lack of concerted efforts on the part of the agency to seek an adoptive family for a child (four cases)

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. Case reviewers determined that SRS had made diligent efforts to achieve adoptions in a timely manner in only 47 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR. Kansas also did not meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the following factors as creating delays in the adoption process and thus affecting the agency's ability to achieve timely adoptions:

- Difficulty of finding adoptive families for children with special needs, older children, large sibling groups, and children with behavioral problems
- Financial disincentives for foster parents to adopt the children in their care (The financial resources they receive as foster parents and the services, particularly medical and mental health services, that the children receive as foster children are necessary to adequately meet the needs of the children, and those resources are not necessarily provided after adoption.)

- Reluctance of some judges to terminate parental rights for older children and children with special needs, which results in delays in that process until a placement is found
- Delays in placements and finalizations due to the ICPC process
- Change in adoption contractors, which has resulted in discontinuity of services due to staff changes
- Lengthy timespan for processing paperwork and receiving TPR hearing transcripts to process appeals, which may take up to 10 months

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the adoption CWCBS agency manages all adoption efforts for the entire State, which reduces some of the competition for resources among agencies. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that stakeholders who were asked about the adoption process identified the following barriers:

- Court-related delays due to scheduling issues
- Court-related delays due to the lengthy appeals process
- Children often having no identified adoptive resource
- Delays due to the need to find adoptive placements for large sibling groups, children with behavioral problems, and older youth

Item 10. Permanency goal of OPPLA

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 10 (25 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. 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. The results are presented in the table below:

Item 10	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	3	1	4	8	80
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	1	2	20
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	2	5	10	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	7	8	15	30	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

Item 10 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was receiving the necessary services and supports to promote a successful transition from foster care to independent living once the child reached the age of emancipation (four cases).
- The child had long-term special needs that were being adequately addressed in a specialized institutional setting, and the State was planning a transition to a supervised living arrangement at the age of majority (four cases).

Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The agency was not providing the child with sufficient services to assist in transitioning to independent living (one case).
- The permanency plan was not discussed with the foster parent or with the child (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 80 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders noted that many improvements have been made in the Independent Living Program (ILP) and that it is effective. They noted that the agency starts working with children as young as 14 years old and provides a variety of services for them, including Chafee funds, tuition waivers, and Education and Training Vouchers. Stakeholders also praised the effectiveness of the Ansell-Casey Assessment instrument in identifying the strengths and needs of youth and the I-Grad Program, which addresses the educational needs of youth ages 15 and older who are in out-of-home placements.

Despite these positive perceptions, some Lyon County stakeholders expressed the opinion that the current model of IL services is not as effective as it needs to be because it does not provide youth with the practical independent living skills that are critical for successful transition to independent living. Some stakeholders also suggested that IL services are not available for all youth who need them.

Stakeholders also reported that OPPLA is used frequently even though it is not a first choice for a permanency goal. They noted that the concurrent goals that often are established for youth are reunification and OPPLA.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, increased emphasis has been placed on including in the case plan the option for youth to have an adult mentor who will remain part of the youth's support system after he or she turns 18 years of age. The Statewide Assessment

also indicates that CFS has demonstrated its commitment to youth through providing resources for the ILP. This program is designed for youth who are in an out-of-home placement and also serves youth who have left foster care but who request services from the agency. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, youth involved in the ILP may receive assistance with room and board, medical services, completion of high school or attaining a GED, postsecondary education or training, mentors, career planning, life skills, and other services as identified by the youth. Also mentioned in the Statewide Assessment is the fact that, in 2003, Kansas took the Chafee Medicaid option and extended Medicaid coverage for youth until the month of their 21st birthday.

Permanency Outcome 2

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	10	7	19	36	90.0
Partially Achieved	0	1	0	1	2.5
Not Achieved	0	2	1	3	7.5
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	0	0	0	
Total Cases	10	10	20	40	

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as Substantially Achieved in 90 percent of the cases, which is close to but still less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. There was some variation in performance on this item across sites. The item was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 100 percent of Douglas County cases and 95 percent of Sedgwick County cases, compared with 70 percent of Lyon County cases.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and was required to address it in its PIP. Key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR were the following:

- The number of foster homes was insufficient to accommodate sibling groups, resulting in siblings not being placed together.
- Agency policies regarding visitation between children and parents and among siblings were not being followed consistently.
- Connections with previous foster homes were not being preserved when children moved to a new placement.

To address these concerns, Kansas implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Implemented practices and policies to ensure that siblings are placed together at their initial placement
- Developed policy that mandates that when siblings are placed separately, a plan must be established for their eventual placement together, if appropriate
- Established policy pertaining to the frequency of in-person parent-child visits and in-person sibling visits (Note: Current policy requires at least weekly face-to-face parent-child visits unless parental rights have been terminated or visits are not in the best interests of the child.)
- Developed an action plan that included specific strategies for ensuring that family connections, including connections with previous foster families, are preserved

Key Findings From the 2007 CFSR

The key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR were not noted in the 2007 CFSR. For example, in the 2007 CFSR, case reviews found that siblings were placed together when appropriate in 100 percent of the cases reviewed and that the CWCBS agencies were adhering to agency policy regarding the frequency of parent-child visits and sibling visits. Also, concerns about connections with previous foster homes were not identified in the 2007 CFSR.

Additional key findings in the 2007 CFSR with regard to this outcome were the following:

- For the most part, children were placed in close proximity to their parents or close relatives (item 11).
- The agency generally made concerted efforts to search for and assess relatives as potential placement resources (item 15).
- The agency was generally effective in supporting the relationship between children in foster care and their parents (item 16).
- The agency was not consistent with regard to ensuring that children’s connections with extended family, community, school and friends, religion, and cultural heritage were preserved while the child was in foster care (item 14).

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 30 (75 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases determined to be not applicable were those in which TPR had been attained prior to the period under review, contact with parents was not considered to be in the child’s best interest, 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 in close proximity to the child’s parents or close relatives. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 11	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	4	8	16	28	93
Area Needing Improvement	2	0	0	2	7
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	8	16	30	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	2	4	10	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Lyon County and Sedgwick County cases, compared with 67 percent of Douglas County cases.

Item 11 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed in the same community or county as the parents or that the child’s placement was not in the same community or county but was still in close proximity to the parents. The item also was rated as a Strength if the child was placed out of the same community or county as parents but was necessary to meet the needs of the child and for further attainment of the permanency goal. Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases. In one of these cases, the child had multiple out-of-county placements because there were no available beds locally. In the second case, children were placed 3 hours away from parents, which prevented the parents from being able to visit children with sufficient frequency.

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 93 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that SRS had made diligent efforts to ensure that children were placed in foster care placements that were in close proximity to their parents or relatives or that were necessary to meet special needs. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that SRS makes diligent efforts to place children in close proximity to their families. Stakeholders noted that sometimes SRS is unable to accomplish this goal because of a general lack of foster homes, particularly for adolescents, children with special needs, children with mental health and behavioral problems, and large sibling groups. However, a few stakeholders reported that when children are placed far away from their families, the agency makes concerted efforts to move them closer to their families when a foster home becomes available.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the agency maintains that proximity of placement is a critical factor in increasing the potential for reintegration (reunification), and CWCBS agencies are expected to find placements for children that are as close to home as possible. The Statewide Assessment notes that youth needing specialized mental health services or services to address developmental disabilities are at the greatest risk of being placed away from their parents. However, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment, when children are placed away from their parents, frequent phone visits or longer in-person visits are initiated to maintain connections. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the State does not place children out of the State unless it is with a relative or in an adoptive home and the placement is considered to be in the best interest of the child.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 21 (53 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were, or had been, placed together and, if not, whether the separation was necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 12	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	5	4	12	21	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	4	12	21	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	6	8	19	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed with all siblings, or if siblings were separated, it was due to the special needs of one of the siblings or to the fact that placement with siblings was not in the child's best interest.

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever possible and appropriate. In the State's first CFSR, this item also was rated as a Strength.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that placing siblings together is a priority for the agency. They also noted that when siblings are separated, the possibility of reuniting them is reviewed on an ongoing basis. A few stakeholders noted, however, that the lack of a sufficient number of foster homes who are able to accept large sibling groups is a barrier to the agency's effectiveness in this area. Stakeholders also reported that if children cannot be placed in the same foster home, efforts are made to place them in the same community. Sedgwick County stakeholders stated that they may place siblings in separate homes if it means they can keep them in their general communities.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, information obtained from the Family and Child Tracking System (FACTS) in State FY 2006 indicates that 71.7 percent of all children in out-of-home placement were placed with a sibling when other siblings also were placed in out-of-home care. The Statewide Assessment notes that the State sets the expectation that placing siblings together is a high priority and a best practice in achieving permanency. The Statewide Assessment reports that feedback from stakeholders indicates that the CWCBS providers are performing well in keeping siblings together in their placements.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that, in the event that siblings are not placed together initially and the separate placement is not due to therapeutic reasons, a plan must be established for the eventual placement of all siblings together, and this plan must be reviewed on or before a maximum of 90 days after placement. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, siblings who are not placed together are required to have personal contact with one another at least twice per month, with at least one of these contacts occurring during a parent visit. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, this requirement enables all siblings and parents to be together at least once each month.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 31 (78 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: (1) TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life (or parents were deceased), or (2) visitation with a parent was considered to be not 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 siblings in foster care and whether these visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families.

The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 13	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	6	7	17	30	97
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	0	1	3
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	8	17	31	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	2	3	9	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

There was some variation in performance on this item across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Douglas County and Sedgwick County cases and 88 percent of Lyon County cases.

Item 13 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency and quality of visitation with parents and/or siblings met the needs of the children (21 cases).
- The frequency of visitation did not meet the child's needs, but the agency made concerted efforts to promote visitation (six cases).
- The frequency of visitation did not meet the child's needs despite agency efforts, and the agency provided alternative forms of contact, such as telephone or email (three cases).

Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined the agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father.

The frequency of visitation with mothers, fathers, and siblings during the period under review is presented in the table below:

Visitation Frequency for Children in Foster Care (During the period under review)	Visits With Mother	Visits With Father	Visits With Siblings in Foster Care
Visits occurred at least on a weekly basis	16	8	6
Visits occurred less than weekly, but at least twice a month	4	2	2
Visits occurred less than twice a month, but at least once a month	2	4	3
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	6	6	1
There were no visits during the period under review	1	3	0
Total cases for which item 13 was applicable	29	23	12

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions regarding the effectiveness of the agency in promoting frequent visits between children and their parents and siblings in foster care. Although many stakeholders suggested that children visit with their mothers and fathers on a fairly routine basis, other stakeholders voiced concern that some children have very little, if any, contact with either their parents or siblings and often do not know where they are. Some stakeholders also noted that visits often are only for 1 hour per week and, therefore, are inadequate to maintain relationships. A few stakeholders expressed concern that foster parents sometimes do not allow children to have contact with their biological parents and other family members.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, CFS has embraced this item as a priority and maintains a strong expectation with the CWCBS agencies that visitation is a contract and practice requirement. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that all CWCBS agencies are to ensure at least weekly face-to-face parent-child interaction in a natural setting, unless parental rights have been terminated or it is considered not in the best interest of the child to have family contact. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, having visits occur in a community setting, family or relative's home, church, recreation center, resource family home, or office in which the individuals feel comfortable is an important factor in engaging the families and ensuring the value of the visits. The Statewide Assessment reports that offices generally are not the preferred location unless secured visits are necessary. The Statewide

Assessment states that when distance becomes a challenge for weekly visits, the caseworkers are expected to arrange longer visits or weekend passes and provide the necessary transportation.

Item 14. Preserving connections

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for 38 (95 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. 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, heritage, extended family, faith, 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. The results of the assessment are provided in the table below:

Item 14	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	8	8	16	32	84
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	4	6	16
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	10	20	38	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	0	0	2	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

Performance on this item varied somewhat across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Douglas County cases and 80 percent of Lyon County and Sedgwick County cases.

Item 14 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members and friends (e.g., through phone contact and visits) (21 cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the child’s religious or cultural heritage (two cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with the school and community (e.g., selecting placements that do not require a change of school, jobs, etc.) (seven cases).
- The agency made concerted efforts to preserve connections, but none were identified as appropriate or in the best interest of the child (two cases).

Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family (four cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections with the child's religious or cultural heritage (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to preserve the child's connections with school or community (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement. In 84 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school. This is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency makes efforts to maintain children's connections with extended family, community, friends, and cultural heritage. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that, although the agency makes efforts to preserve connections, it often is difficult to achieve this goal when children are placed away from their families or experience multiple placements.

Stakeholders also expressed the opinion that the agency has a process for identifying Native American children at the onset of a case and on an ongoing basis, if necessary. According to stakeholders, the agency has an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) liaison at the State level who tracks ICWA cases. Stakeholders suggested that caseworkers are aware of the issues that impact Native American children who live on reservations.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the initial family meeting, which is designed to set permanency goals, and the SRS-contractor meetings provide ongoing forums for establishing and assessing the connections that are important to maintain. Additional efforts are placed on those connections that have an extraordinary dimension, such as with a Tribal community.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that foster families are being encouraged and trained to take on the role of coach and mentor to birth families. One CWCBS agency is using an ecomap method called Permanency and Safety: Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP) to keep track of important resources and connections within the foster child's family.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, if the intake form indicates that a child is of Native American descent, it is the responsibility of the court and the district attorney’s office to provide the follow-up necessary under ICWA of contacting the Tribes to establish whether the child is enrolled.

Item 15. Relative placement

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 34 (85 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if (1) relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period or (2) 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 had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal) as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 15	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	8	8	15	31	91
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	2	3	9
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	8	17	34	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	1	2	3	6	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

There were slight variations in performance on this item across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Lyon County cases, 89 percent of Douglas County cases, and 88 percent of Sedgwick County cases.

Item 15 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with relatives (12 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives (19 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three cases when reviewers determined that, during the period under review, the agency had not made diligent efforts to search for either maternal or paternal relatives.

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 91 percent of cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the agency is effective in identifying relatives as potential placement resources. Stakeholders reported that relatives often are identified during the investigation stage of a case and are documented on the intake form. Stakeholders also reported that maternal and paternal relatives participate in the initial meeting with SRS, which takes place within 24 hours of a child entering the child welfare system.

Various stakeholders identified the following strategies as promoting agency efforts to seek and assess relatives as placement resources:

- The agency has a kinship specialist, and Sedgwick County has a Kinship Advisory Committee.
- The agency's system of care practice model emphasizes and supports kinship placements.
- The agency is using a family-centered approach to service delivery that further supports kinship placements.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, placement with relatives or other kin is the preferred placement. The Statewide Assessment notes that 25.8 percent of the children in out-of-home placements were placed in the care of a relative. The Statewide Assessment also notes, however, that the courts and child welfare agencies often are in conflict concerning the identification and management of cases in which a child is placed with a relative. The Statewide Assessment suggests that, at times, the judge, district attorney's office, and child welfare agencies tend to operate from different perspectives regarding the strengths and capabilities of relatives. The Statewide Assessment notes that judges have ultimate decision-making authority regarding a child's placement.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Family Group Conferencing is a valuable asset in identifying relatives as potential placements for a child.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 29 (73 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. 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. The results of this assessment are provided in the table below:

Item 16	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	5	6	15	26	90
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	1	3	10
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	8	16	29	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	2	4	11	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	

There was variation in performance on this item across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Douglas County cases, 94 percent of Sedgwick County cases, and 75 percent of Lyon County cases.

Item 16 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through one or more of the following activities:

- Encouraged parent’s participation in school or afterschool activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events (eight cases)
- Provided transportation so that parents could participate in events (three cases)
- Provided opportunities for family therapeutic situations (six cases)
- Encouraged foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as role models for parenting (six cases)
- Made concerted efforts to maintain connections with parents who were available only by telephone (three cases: in one case the parent was confined to a wheelchair in her home, in one case the parent was incarcerated, and in one case the child was given a calling card to connect with her father)

Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases. In one of these cases, reviewers determined that the agency did not make concerted efforts to support the child’s relationship with the father. In the second case, reviewers determined that the agency did not make concerted efforts to support the child’s relationship with either parent.

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 90 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage meets the 90 percent or higher requirement for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR cited the following as examples of how SRS supports and strengthens the parent-child relationship while the child is in foster care:

- Providing resource families with training on how to connect with birth families
- Emphasizing children's involvement with parents through a System of Care grant
- Involving incarcerated parents in their children's lives through phone calls when possible

However, several stakeholders expressed the opinion that once-a-week visitation between parents and children is not sufficient to maintain relationships, particularly when the children are very young.

Statewide Assessment Information

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, CFS and the CWCBS providers have placed major emphasis on creating the most family- and child-friendly environments for the families served by the agency. The Statewide Assessment notes that this facilitates a level of engagement crucial to successful outcomes related to permanency and stability. In addition to visits in a natural setting, the level of engagement may include participation in doctor's visits, school activities, and other special events that are important to the child.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	9	10	23	42	65.6
Partially Achieved	2	4	8	14	21.9
Not Achieved or Addressed	6	2	0	8	12.5
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Status of Well-Being Outcome I

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was rated as Substantially Achieved in 65.6 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Performance on this outcome varied across sites. The outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 53 percent of Douglas County cases, 63 percent of Lyon County cases, and 74 percent of Sedgwick County cases. Performance also varied slightly based on the type of case. The outcome was Substantially Achieved in 70 percent of foster care cases, compared with 58 percent of in-home services cases.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. In the 2001 CFSR, all items were rated as a Strength for this outcome except for item 17, which pertains to needs and services of children, parents, and foster parents. The key concerns identified in the 2001 CFSR pertained to inadequate service delivery systems to meet the needs of children, parents, and foster parents, particularly service delivery systems that involved mental health, substance abuse treatment, and family-focused services.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- Developed policy that requires that an initial team meeting must be held within 24 hours of the child's or family's contact with the child welfare system in order to identify the service needs
- Developed and implemented family group conferencing to promote a more family-focused service approach

- Developed a screening tool to identify children with intensive mental health needs and established a process for referring those children to community mental health centers and an automated case-review process to monitor these activities
- Strengthened services to foster parents to assist them in parenting children with severe emotional disorders or behavioral problems

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

In contrast to the 2001 CFSR, all items included under Well-Being Outcome 1 were rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the 2007 CFSR. The concern identified in the 2001 CFSR regarding a lack of adequate service delivery systems also was noted in the 2007 CFSR with regard to parents. However, in the 2007 CFSR, case reviews indicated that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting the needs of children and foster parents. Additional key findings of the 2007 CFSR were the following:

- The agency was more effective in assessing and meeting the service needs of children, mothers, and foster parents than it was in assessing and meeting the needs of fathers (item 17).
- The agency was more effective in engaging mothers and children in case planning than it was in engaging fathers in case planning (item 18).
- In many cases, caseworker visits with children were not of sufficient frequency or quality (item 19).
- There was insufficient contact between caseworkers and parents, although contact with mothers occurred more frequently than contact with fathers (item 20).

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 64 cases. 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 educational, physical health, and mental health needs. These are addressed in later items. The case review results appear in the table below:

Item 17	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	9	10	25	44	69
Area Needing Improvement	8	6	6	20	31
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 81 percent of Sedgwick County cases, 63 percent of Lyon County cases, and 53 percent of Douglas County cases. Performance also varied somewhat based on the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 75 percent (30 cases) of the 40 foster care cases, compared with 58 percent (14 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.

Item 17 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that services had been provided to address identified needs. Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that there was either inadequate assessment of needs or inadequate services to meet identified needs.

Specific case review findings suggest that the agency is less effective in assessing and meeting service needs for fathers than it is for children, foster parents, and mothers. Case review findings for item 17 are shown in the table below:

Item 17: Table of Needs Assessment and Services	Evaluation Results		No. of Applicable Cases
	No	Yes	
Mother's needs assessed and met?	8 (15%)	47(85%)	55
Father's needs assessed and met?	16 (36%)	29(64%)	45
Foster parent's needs assessed and met?	2 (5%)	35(95%)	37
Child's needs assessed and met?	6 (0%)	58(91%)	64

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 69 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children and parents. This is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that the agency is working collaboratively with other agencies to ensure that needs are assessed and appropriate services are provided to children and their parents. Some stakeholders noted that the service needs of children and parents are assessed during the initial safety and risk assessment process. They noted that, at that time, a

determination is made regarding the types of services that are needed, including family preservation services, home-based services, and foster care services. Several stakeholders also praised the services provided through the ILP and noted that the Ansell-Casey assessment tool is highly effective in identifying the service needs of youth necessary to prepare them for independent living.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, each child in SRS custody is required to have an individual case plan, and the child's functioning must be assessed in order to develop an appropriate and effective case plan. The Statewide Assessment notes that this initial assessment establishes a foundation for identifying the needs of all relevant individuals.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following stakeholder concerns that pertain to addressing family needs:

- Mental health assessments often are not completed in a timely manner because it is difficult to obtain an appointment.
- Some families are reluctant to disclose problems and their need for assistance.
- Parents may refuse to participate in the development of the case plan.
- There is a high rate of turnover in the social services profession, which results in a workforce that includes many new and inexperienced caseworkers who may not be able to conduct assessments in the most effective manner possible.
- There is a need for greater coordination and communication between the assessment work and the actual casework in order to enhance the process of case plan development.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable in all 64 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, and the child was too young or 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 (if age-appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child's best interest. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child had actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. This assessment produced the following findings:

Item 18	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	9	14	25	48	75
Area Needing Improvement	8	2	6	16	25
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of Lyon County cases, 81 percent of Sedgwick County cases, and 53 percent of Douglas County cases. Performance also varied based on the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 88 percent (35 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 54 percent (13 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.

Item 18 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process. Some key findings with regard to this item were as follows:

- No attempts were made to locate the father and/or to involve the father in case planning (nine cases).
- No efforts were made to involve the mother in case planning, although the father and child were involved (one case).
- Children who were old enough to have been involved in case planning were not involved, although parents were involved (one case).
- No efforts were made to actively involve the mother, father, or the child in case planning (five cases).

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in case planning. This is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that caseworkers effectively engage parents and age-appropriate children in case planning using a family-centered approach. In addition, some stakeholders indicated that there has been an increase in parental participation in case planning since the agency implemented and trained caseworkers in the strength-based assessment process. Stakeholders also mentioned that diligent efforts are made to find and invite noncustodial parents to participate in case planning, either in person or by telephone.

Stakeholders also expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to ensure that parents understand the case-planning process. They noted that in some areas of the State, parents are given a parent handbook that provides information about the court

process, the child welfare process, and other information. In other areas of the State, the agency recently has implemented the Family Navigator program, which is a partnering arrangement between a birth parent and a foster parent that is designed to help parents understand their roles and to encourage them to participate in developing case plans.

Additional stakeholder comments regarding the case planning process are provided in the Systemic Factors section under item 25.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the initial case plan is developed cooperatively with the family, the child, SRS caseworkers, case management providers, service providers, and other supports as identified by the family within 20 calendar days of the date the services are negotiated. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the family and child participate in the first team meeting, which occurs within 24 hours of contact with the child welfare system.

Item 19. Worker visits with child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 19 was applicable for all 64 foster care cases. In conducting the assessment of 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. The results of the assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 19	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	10	10	27	47	73
Area Needing Improvement	7	6	4	17	27
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 87 percent of Sedgwick County cases, 63 percent of Lyon County cases, and 59 percent of Douglas County cases.

Item 19 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s safety and well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, and the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (eight cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur they were substantive (two cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (four cases).
- There were long periods of time during the period under review in which there were no visits with the child (three cases).

Data from item 19 indicate that, in most cases, caseworkers visited with children at least once a month in both the foster care cases and the in-home services cases. Specific information from the case reviews is presented in the table below:

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child	Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)	In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)
Visits occurred on at least a weekly basis	7 (17.5%)	11 (46%)
Visits occurred less than weekly, but at least twice a month	10 (25%)	4 (17%)
Visits occurred less than twice a month, but at least once a month	15 (37.5%)	5 (21%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (17.5%)	4 (17%)
There were no visits during the period under review	1 (2.5%)	0
Total cases	40	24

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 73 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and/or quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders differed in their opinions regarding the effectiveness of caseworker visits with children. Some State-level and Sedgwick County stakeholders expressed the opinion that caseworkers are performing well with regard to visiting children and that visits are of high quality. Also, a few stakeholders commented that caseworkers will travel long distances to make sure visits occur. However, a few stakeholders at the State level expressed concerns regarding the quality of visits, and several stakeholders expressed concern that the high caseloads carried by caseworkers and high level of staff turnover make it difficult to ensure sufficient frequency of caseworker visits.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworker visits with the children in their caseloads is an area that presents challenges to SRS. Caseworkers are mandated to visit children in foster care at least once each month. Foster parent feedback indicates that visits with foster children do take place on a regular basis. The Statewide Assessment also notes that caseworker visits with children receiving in-home services tend to occur more frequently than visits with children in foster care.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following barriers were identified with regard to ensuring frequent and high quality visits with children:

- The lack of sufficiently trained staff who are equipped to manage difficult cases, due to frequent staff turnover
- The resistance of the child in meeting with a caseworker
- The time constraints experienced by caseworkers with large caseloads
- The distance that some caseworkers must travel to visit children
- The shortage of caseworkers in the State

Item 20. Worker visits with parents

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 56 (88 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of the children. All cases that were not applicable were foster care cases. 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/or ensure the children's safety and well-being. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 20	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	5	11	20	36	64
Area Needing Improvement	9	4	7	20	36
Total Applicable Cases	14	15	27	56	
Not Applicable Cases	3	1	4	8	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Performance on this item varied across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 74 percent of Sedgwick County cases, 73 percent of Lyon County cases, and 36 percent of Douglas County cases. Performance also varied based on the type of case. The item was rated as a Strength in 69 percent (22 cases) of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 58 percent (14 cases) of the 24 in-home services cases.

Item 20 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children, and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the frequency and quality of visits with mother and father were not sufficient to meet the needs of parents and children, and that visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table below: These data indicate that in the foster care cases, caseworkers were more likely to visit mothers at least once a month (80 percent) than they were to visit fathers at least once a month (56 percent). Similarly, for the in-home services cases, caseworkers were more likely to visit mothers at least once a month (83 percent of cases) than they were to visit fathers (51 percent of cases).

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least weekly	4 (13%)	3 (12%)	11(46%)	5 (28%)
Visits occurred less than weekly, but at least twice a month	6 (20%)	2 (8%)	5 (21%)	1(6%)
Visits occurred less than twice a month, but at least once a month	14 (47%)	9 (36%)	4 (17%)	3 (17%)
Visits occurred less frequency than once a month	4 (13%)	4 (16%)	3 (13%)	2 (11%)
There were no visits during the period under review	2 (7%)	7 (28%)	1(4%)	7 (39%)
Total Applicable Cases	30	25	24	18

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 64 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that contact with parents tends to vary from case to case and across geographic areas. According to stakeholders, agency standards require at least one contact per month with parents. Lyon

County stakeholders stated that often monthly visits cannot be made because of high caseloads. However, Sedgwick County stakeholders reported that caseworkers in that county see parents at least monthly on a regular basis. A few stakeholders reported that when a case is transferred to a new caseworker, there often is a time period when parents are not being visited.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the issues outlined in item 19 (caseworker visits with child) present a close parallel to the challenges of caseworker visits with parents. The Statewide Assessment notes that SRS CFS currently is placing greater emphasis on supporting the parents as well as the child. The Statewide Assessment added that SRS and CWCBS agencies recognize that visits with parents are key in engaging and supporting parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that a Case Read review in FY 2006 of 400 cases reviewed for this item resulted in the finding that 50 percent of the cases were rated as positive in response to the question, “Were caseworker-parent visits held at least once per month?”

Well-Being Outcome 2

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	11	13	19	43	91.5
Not Achieved	2	1	1	4	8.5
Total Applicable Cases	13	14	20	47	
Not Applicable Cases	4	2	11	17	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. Reviewers determined that 91 percent of the cases reviewed Substantially Achieved this outcome. This is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity, although it is very close to this requirement. There was little variation in performance on this outcome across sites. The outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 85 percent of Douglas County cases, 93 percent of Lyon County cases, and 95 percent of Sedgwick County cases. There was no variation in performance based on the type of case. The outcome was rated as Substantially

Achieved in 91 percent of foster care cases and 93 percent of in-home services cases. Kansas was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2001 CFSR and therefore did not address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

A key finding of the 2007 CFSR is that, in the vast majority of cases reviewed, the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided if necessary. A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed concern about delays in transferring school records when children have to move to another school, which results in delays in enrollment in the new school. However, stakeholders also noted that SRS has been working with the schools and the Department of Education to expedite this process.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 47 (73 percent) of the 64 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if children were not of school age or children in in-home cases did not have 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. The results of this assessment are provided below:

Item 21	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	11	13	19	43	91
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	1	4	9
Total Applicable Cases	13	14	20	47	
Not Applicable	4	2	11	17	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Variations in performance across sites and as a function of type of case are noted in the discussion of the outcome.

Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when case reviewers determined that there

was a lack of assessment of educational needs even when there was clear evidence that the child was experiencing school-related problems. This was found in three foster care cases and one in-home services case.

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 91 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95 percent standard instead of a 90 percent standard is set for this item because it is the only item assessed for Well-being Outcome 2. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that sometimes there is a problem with transferring school records when a child's placement change requires enrollment in a new school. They noted that this can result in delays in school enrollment and sometimes a loss of credits. Stakeholders reported, however, that SRS is working collaboratively with the Department of Education and with local schools across the State to ensure that children's records are transferred in a timely manner and school settings remains stable.

Stakeholders also voiced concern that obtaining key education information in interjurisdictional placements is particularly difficult. Sedgwick County stakeholders mentioned the Educational Enrollment Information Form (EEIF) data system, which is a foster care database that allows the contractor to enter information about children and the schools to access the information.

Stakeholders identified the following programs as designed to ensure that children's educational needs are being assessed and met:

- The I-Grad program, which addresses the educational needs of children in out-of-home placements
- The Coalition of Early Childhood, which uses a family resource team to provides services to children from birth to 3 years of age who have severe disabilities
- The Truancy Diversion Program in Douglas County, which assigns interns to work with families, schools, and children to address school attendance issues on a weekly basis

According to stakeholders, SRS collaborated with other State departments to promote the enactment of recent legislation that allows payment of 100 percent of college tuition for children who "age out" of foster care.

A few stakeholders expressed concern about the delays in meeting educational needs that can occur if a child in foster care needs particular services, such as an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), and the parents cannot be located. They noted that, in Kansas, unless parental rights have been terminated, any educational services must be approved by parents. When parents cannot be located, the

agency must request the court to assign an educational advocate who can then approve the educational service. This can be a lengthy process, creating delays in services.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, SRS identifies children’s education needs by obtaining school records and contacting foster parents and schools to learn about how the child is doing. The Statewide Assessment reports that if an IEP is necessary, or if the child already has an IEP at the time of the custody referral, the caseworker sends IEP information with the referral and informs the foster care contractor about any known special educational needs. If the child does not have an IEP at the time of entry into foster care, the Statewide Assessment reports that it is usually the responsibility of the foster parent to determine whether there is a need for an IEP or for other education-related services. If an IEP is necessary, the birth parents must sign it or, if the parents cannot be located, a judge may assign an individual as an education advocate who can sign the IEP.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that CFS is responsible for providing schools with necessary information for children who are in the custody of the secretary and in an out-of-home placement. A database has been developed as an electronic method for staff to provide educational enrollment information to a school prior to or at the time of the child’s enrollment. The Statewide Assessment notes that for children in an out-of-home placement, CFS is responsible for tracking the length of time that elapses between one school’s request for the child’s records from another school and the receipt of those records. The Statewide Assessment indicates that SRS prepares an annual report for the legislature regarding these data. The position of educational liaison was established within SRS to be responsible for ensuring that records are transferred in a timely fashion.

Well-Being Outcome 3

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Substantially Achieved	13	13	27	53	85.5
Partially Achieved	1	2	2	5	8.0
Not Achieved or Addressed	2	1	1	4	6.5
Total Applicable Cases	16	16	30	62	
Not Applicable	1	0	1	2	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Kansas did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 85.5 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. There was little variation in performance on this outcome across sites. The outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 90 percent of Sedgwick County cases, 81 percent of Douglas County cases, and 81 percent of Lyon County cases. There also was little variation in performance on the outcome by type of case. The outcome was determined to be Substantially Achieved in 97.5 percent of foster care cases and 82 percent of the 22 applicable in-home services cases.

Key Concerns From the 2001 CFSR

Kansas was not in substantial conformity with this outcome for its 2001 CFSR and was required to address it in its PIP. The key concerns identified during the 2001 CFSR with regard to Well-Being Outcome 3 were the following:

- A lack of dental health providers who accept Medicaid
- A lack of therapeutic foster homes to meet the needs of the children with special mental and behavioral health needs
- A lack of substance abuse treatment resources that can be provided while children remain in the family
- A lack of substance abuse treatment services for parents who do not have private insurance to pay for the treatment
- A lack of knowledge among caseworkers about drug and alcohol abuse and how to assess for problems and needs
- Inappropriate assessments of children's mental health needs and inadequate services to meet the identified level of intensity
- A lack of timely provision of mental health services

Kansas implemented the following strategies in its PIP to address these concerns:

- Collaborated with Oral Health Kansas in an effort to expand the number of sites where extended care benefits permit hygienists to perform assessments, provide cleanings, administer fluoride treatments, and apply sealants
- Collaborated with EDS, the Kansas Medicaid agent, in efforts to increase the number of dentists who are Medicaid providers
- Developed and implemented the Child Welfare/Mental Health Initiative, which included identifying gaps in mental health services, developing an assessment tool for mental health needs, and training staff on implementing the tool

Key Findings of the 2007 CFSR

The concern identified in the 2001 CFSR with regard to a lack of dental health providers was not noted in the 2007 CFSR. In general, the case review findings indicate that children's health needs (medical and dental) were routinely assessed and services provided as

needed. However, concerns continued to be identified with regard to meeting children’s mental health needs, particularly with regard to the timely provision of mental health services and to the appropriate assessment of children’s mental health needs.

Findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 3 are presented and discussed below.

Item 22. Physical health of the child

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 52 (81 percent) of the 64 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. 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. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 22	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	12	12	24	48	92
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	1	4	8
Total Applicable Cases	14	13	25	52	
Not Applicable Cases	3	3	6	12	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Performance on this item did not vary substantially across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 96 percent of Sedgwick County cases, 92 percent of Lyon County cases, and 86 percent of Douglas County cases.

Item 22 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s health needs (medical and dental) were routinely assessed and services provided as needed. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- There were no assessments of physical or dental health needs noted in the case file (one case).
- Medical needs were assessed and identified, but no services were provided (two cases).
- There were delays in providing health care services to a child because of difficulties obtaining a Medical Card (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 92 percent of the applicable cases reviewers determined that the agency was adequately addressing the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. This meets the 90 percent or higher requirement for a rating of Strength. This item was also rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that SRS is effective in addressing the physical and dental health needs of children. Stakeholders reported that Oral Health Kansas was developed 3 years ago and has expanded to include school-based dental hygienist services for children in foster care. Stakeholders noted that the Kan-Be-Healthy program provides medical screening for children when they enter foster care and conducts a physical exam of each child within 30 days of placement. Stakeholders also noted that the Health Wave program allows families in family preservation and home-based services programs to receive health services using sliding scale fees for services at health centers. Sedgwick County stakeholders stated that providers refer children who are 3 years old and younger to Rainbows, which has 100 dental care providers.

Despite these positive views, various stakeholders identified the following concerns pertaining to meeting children’s health-care needs:

- There are not enough dentists who will accept Medicaid patients, which results in long waits to access services and, in some areas of the State, extensive travel to access dental services.
- There are limited pediatric services in rural areas.
- Specialty care for children is difficult to obtain because it is not covered under Medicaid.
- When children in foster care must be hospitalized for medical procedures, there can be delays in providing critical information to the hospital, and there is confusion regarding who is authorized to sign consent forms.
- Medical providers are not receiving timely payment for services, which makes it difficult to use the State’s medical card.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the “Case Read” QA review asks, “Did the CWCBS agency document in the case file that the physical health care needs of the child were addressed?” The review found that in 84 percent of the cases read, the case readers indicated that there was documentation that these needs were addressed. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that the CWCBS agency identifies these needs through both initial and ongoing assessments. The Statewide Assessment also notes that caseworkers are expected to include identified physical and dental health needs in the case plan.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Oral Health Kansas is seeking an expansion of the sites where extended care allows hygienists to perform assessments, provide cleanings, administer fluoride treatments, and apply sealants. Currently these services are

performed in schools, nursing homes, Head Start, and Early Head Start sites. Some of the additional proposed sites are in the homes of children receiving home-based services and family preservation services and in the out-of-home placements for children in foster care.

Item 23. Mental health of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 49 (77 percent) of the 64 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below:

Item 23	Douglas	Lyon	Sedgwick	Total Number	Percentage
Strength	12	12	19	43	88
Area Needing Improvement	1	3	2	6	12
Total Applicable Cases	13	15	21	49	
Not Applicable Cases	4	1	10	15	
Total Cases	17	16	31	64	

Performance on this item varied slightly across sites. The item was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of Douglas County cases, 90 percent of Sedgwick County cases, and 80 percent of Lyon County cases.

Item 23 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were not assessed nor addressed (three cases).
- There were delays in providing mental health care services for the child because of difficulties obtaining a Medical Card (one case).
- Mental health needs were assessed but services were not provided to address identified needs (one case).
- Mental health services were provided but they were not appropriate to the child’s needs (one case).

Ratings Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 88 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the Kansas 2001 CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is effective in conducting appropriate mental health assessments of children when they enter the foster care system. They noted that the agency uses an assessment tool at the time children enter foster care that focuses on whether there are child or family behaviors indicating a need for a more comprehensive assessment. Stakeholders reported that this assessment is provided to the Mental Health Center for each child. Stakeholders in Douglas County stated it is very rare to have a waiting list at the Mental Health Center, and that children in foster care are given priority with regard to scheduling assessments. Some stakeholders praised the Working to Recognize Alternative Possibilities (WRAP) program, which is a mental health program located in some school districts.

Several stakeholders reported that changes were made to Medicaid that will be effective on July 1, 2007 (the onsite CFSR was conducted in June 2007). The changes involve a complete restructuring of the mental health system with respect to how services are obtained and include a managed care system that is expected to reduce the wait time for services. Stakeholders also stated that children who are not screened into a high level of mental health services are automatically referred for aggressive wraparound services in the community.

The key concerns identified by stakeholders with regard to meeting children's mental health needs were the following:

- Sometimes there are delays in obtaining mental health services for children, either because the mental health service providers do not receive information about the children in a timely manner or because of delays in obtaining the State Medicaid medical cards for the children.
- Inpatient mental health and substance abuse services are limited and may be difficult to access for some cultural or ethnic groups due to a lack of language-competent translators.
- It takes about 6 months to receive a psychiatric evaluation report.
- There is a cap on the number of counseling sessions in which children can participate.
- There are limited services for sexually reactive children.
- There is a shortage of experienced mental health providers in western Kansas.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, there are concerns in the State regarding resource availability, accessibility, and adequacy of mental health services, particularly in the western part of the State and in the more rural areas. The Statewide Assessment also notes that stakeholders commenting on this issue in focus groups and interviews expressed dissatisfaction with the mental health system and, in particular, noted the lack of timeliness of mental health services. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, at the time of the onsite CFSR review, the State was preparing to embark on a major system change in how mental health services are managed in Kansas.

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the CFSR Final Report provides information regarding the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors examined during the CFSR. Information on the items included in each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders conducted during the onsite CFSR. A score for substantial conformity is established for each systemic factor. A score of either 1 or 2 represents that a State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor; a rating of 1 means that none of the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) requirements is in place, and a 2 indicates that some or all of the CFSP requirements are in place but more than one of the requirements fails to function. Scores of 3 and 4 represent substantial conformity; a rating of 3 means that all of the CFSP requirements are in place and no more than one fails to function, and a 4 indicates all of the CFSP requirements are in place and functioning. In addition, information is provided regarding the State’s performance on each systemic factor for the State’s first CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s PIP, the key concerns addressed in the PIP and the strategies for assessing those concerns would be noted, as well as any changes in ratings that occurred as a result of the State’s second CFSR.

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
Rating	1	2	3	4X

Status of Statewide Information System

Kansas is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The State was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR and therefore was not required to address it in its PIP. Findings for the item assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 24. State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength because the State's information systems meets the minimum requirements and identifies the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care. This item was rated as a Strength in the Kansas 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kansas is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the legal status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the previous 12 months, has been) in foster care. The Statewide Assessment reports that Kansas does not have a Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), but instead uses three automated information systems to track child welfare system data and information. These systems are FACTS, the Kansas Initiative for Decision Support (KIDS), and the Statewide Contractor Reimbursement Information and Payment Tracking (SCRIPTS). Brief descriptions of the systems as provided in the Statewide Assessment are as follows:

- FACTS is a statewide mainframe-based information system created to collect and maintain information regarding individuals, families, and providers who receive services from or interact with the SRS CFS. It allows the State to collect and report data as requested by the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), the Kansas Post-Legislative Audit, and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).
- KIDS is a statewide web-based application used to record, maintain, and report information regarding individual children, caregivers of children, alleged perpetrators of neglect and/or abuse, and reports from third parties and facilities who receive services from or interact with the SRS CFS.
- SCRIPTS is designed to bring accuracy and accountability to the payment structure and to eliminate payment barriers that may hamper the achievement of permanency outcomes for children.

The Statewide Assessment reports that stakeholders commenting on the child welfare information system during focus groups and key informant meetings generally expressed positive opinions about the accessibility of the data, the quality and reliability of the data, the general capacity of the system, and the opportunities available to use the data for practice improvement. The Statewide Assessment notes that these areas represent the key areas of improvement since the State's PIP implementation. However, the Statewide Assessment also notes that these stakeholders indicated that improvements are needed with regard to increasing the capacity of the system to analyze data, broadening access to data by the CWCBS agencies, and ensuring that there is sufficient time to train users and make system modifications.

The Statewide Assessment also identified the following as areas where the system could be improved, although it was noted that these are not deficiencies of the system:

- The need to address the incompatibility of data systems with the CWCBS agencies

- The need to develop user-friendly systems for field staff to access data and to train field staff on how to use the automated systems

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders interviewed during the 2007 CFSR reported that information contained in FACTS is available statewide and expressed the opinion that FACTS is an effective, integrated automated system that includes the legal status, demographics, location, and goals for every child in foster care, as well as information about children in the juvenile justice system. One stakeholder described a situation in which one community was able to locate all of the children in foster care within hours of a tornado. Lyon County stakeholders commented that the FACTS and KIDS systems provide accurate and critical information about children and families.

Despite praise from most stakeholders regarding the availability and effectiveness of information from FACTS and KIDS, various stakeholders identified the following concerns:

- It is not as user-friendly as it should be, and it can be difficult to access the data and to navigate the system. KIDS was viewed as being more user-friendly than FACTS.
- A general search cannot be done unless the user has the correct spelling of the case name or the case number.
- FACTS does not track visitation.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
Rating	1	2X	3	4

Status of Case Review System

Kansas is not in substantial conformity with the factor of the Case Review System. Kansas was in substantial conformity with this factor during its 2001 CFSR and therefore, was not required to address this factor in its PIP.

Specific findings for each item included in this systemic factor and the reasons for item ratings are presented below.

Item 25. 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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although a process is in place to ensure that individual case plans are developed in a timely manner and in conjunction with the child's parents, it is not being implemented as intended. Information from the Statewide Assessment, stakeholder interviews, and case reviews during the onsite CFSR identified concerns with regard to engaging fathers in case planning. In particular, in the case reviews, only 75 percent of the cases were rated as a Strength for involving parents in case planning, and the key concern identified was a lack of involvement of fathers.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, SRS policy requires that each child in SRS custody has his or her own individual case plan. The Statewide Assessment reports that, to ensure timely decision-making, case planning meetings are conducted every 170 days. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that the first case plan is to be completed no later than 20 days from the date that the CWCBS agency receives the case information (i.e., the referral) and is to include the active participation of all persons participating in the initial team meeting, as well as other possible resources identified by the family. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the initial team meetings provide an opportunity for the team to clarify each person's role and begin the process of building a support network for the child and his or her family. In addition, during this meeting, the first parent-child interaction is scheduled, and possible relative placement resources are identified. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, this initial meeting is expected to include as many relevant individuals as possible given the short turnaround timeframe. These individuals would include the child (if appropriate), the birth family, SRS staff, CWCBS agency staff, resource parents, and other interested parties. Telephone participation is encouraged if in-person participation is not possible. According to the Statewide Assessment, a key feature of this meeting that represents an enhancement since the first CFSR is the focus on early identification of relatives as both possible placement resources and as supports for birth families.

The Statewide Assessment notes that although policy requires caseworkers to make diligent efforts to locate both parents to involve them in case planning, stakeholders reported that SRS and the CWCBS agencies "could do a better job" locating and engaging absent parents, especially fathers. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, in some areas of the State, district attorneys publish notices in newspapers in an attempt to locate missing fathers. In addition, according to the Statewide Assessment, the 2007 Kansas Legislature introduced and passed legislation that addresses the methods that can be used for publication in an attempt to assist this process while protecting due process.

The Statewide Assessment also says that stakeholders participating in focus groups or interviews expressed the opinion that families need to be better informed of the importance of the case planning process and the consequences of not meeting case plan tasks and goals. However, these stakeholders praised the current training for staff on case planning and indicated that this training should be maintained.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that case plans are developed in a timely manner and that the CWCBS agencies are effective in actively involving parents in case planning, particularly in the initial stages of a case. They noted that the CWCBS agencies do not develop case plans and then ask parents to sign them, but instead engage parents in the process of developing the plan. In addition, stakeholders in the three CFSR sites reported that all case plans are completed within the required State timeframes and are updated within the 170 days required by SRS policy or more frequently, if necessary.

However, many stakeholders also expressed the opinion that although parents are involved in case planning in the initial meeting, this involvement is not always effectively maintained in subsequent case planning meetings. Several stakeholders also voiced concern about the lack of consistency with regard to identifying absent parents and involving them in case planning.

Additional concerns identified regarding case planning were the following:

- The requirements and tasks outlined in case plans sometimes are too lengthy, too ambitious, and/or too complex and thus can be overwhelming for the parents.
- When a case is transitioned from one caseworker to another, there sometimes is a lack of attention to the case while this transition occurs.
- Many of the court-ordered assessments and services that are part of the formal case plan have a “cookie cutter” approach instead of individualizing assessments and services to meet the unique needs of the child and the family.

Item 26. 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength because stakeholders and the Statewide Assessment indicate that the status of each child in foster care is reviewed by a court or administrative review body at least every 6 months and sometimes more frequently. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, for those children under court jurisdiction, a report on the status of the child is submitted for review by the judge and all relevant parties every 180 days, and more frequently if requested. CWCBS agencies submit these reports to the court with a copy to SRS at least 10 days in advance of the court hearing, unless the court specifies different requirements.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that periodic reviews of the status of each child in foster care are being conducted by the courts at least every 6 months and sometimes more frequently. Stakeholders also said that Citizen Review Board (CRB) reviews are held every 6 months, and that there is effective communication and collaboration among the multidisciplinary parties that participate in the CRB process. Some stakeholders indicated that judges often issue court orders based on the findings and recommendations of the CRB reviews. A few stakeholders, however, indicated that there sometimes are delays in scheduling the CRB reviews.

Stakeholders also noted that the juvenile court has developed a tracking system to monitor the due dates for reviews. The court sends notices to the State regarding the time of the hearings. In addition, judges can go online to view their courtroom's compliance with the review timeframes. Stakeholders indicated that these strategies were implemented to ensure compliance with the requirements of ASFA.

Item 27. 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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a process to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing every 12 months, the Statewide Assessment reports that data obtained from FACTS in State FY 2006 indicate that, in that year, permanency hearings were held in a timely manner only 82.6 percent of the time. This percentage does not meet the State's established threshold of compliance with permanency hearing timeframes of 95 percent. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, permanency hearings are required within 12 months of placements and at least every 12 months thereafter. CWCBS providers are expected to ensure that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner and to track the

dates when permanency hearings are due. The Statewide Assessment reports that the threshold of compliance with permanency hearing timeframes is set at 95 percent. State FY 2006 data obtained from FACTS indicate that, in that year, permanency hearings were held in a timely manner 82.6 percent of the time.

The Statewide Assessment notes that case-planning conferences are held prior to the date of the permanency hearing to allow enough time for the CWCBS agency to submit comprehensive reports to the court that document permanency recommendations. The CWCBS agency makes a recommendation to the court based on the most current information available regarding the child and his/her family. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, following a permanency hearing, the court reviews evidence and makes a written finding as to whether reasonable efforts were made to accomplish the permanency goal and whether continued out-of-home placement is necessary for the child's safety.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that a permanency hearing is required when there is agreement by case-plan participants that a change in permanency goal is required. In these situations, the CWCBS agency notifies the court of the intended change in permanency goal and the court schedules a permanency hearing to review the request for the goal change.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are routinely conducted at least every 12 months. Sedgwick County and Lyon County stakeholders reported that, in their counties, permanency hearings may be conducted as frequently as every 6 months, depending on the case. The majority of stakeholders also expressed the opinion that judges are committed to holding hearings in a timely manner and to ensuring that permanency and safety issues are addressed during the hearings and the process effectively moves children towards permanency. Stakeholders noted that permanency hearings and 6-month reviews are held for each child, even if parental rights have been terminated.

Sedgwick County stakeholders also reported that the local Sedgwick County Permanency Coordinating Council (SCPCC), which is managed by the courts, has had a positive effect on the achievement of permanency in a timely manner. The SCPCC was developed to review and improve services and processes for families involved in the juvenile court process, which is done through monitoring cases and sponsoring training for child welfare professionals.

A few stakeholders voiced concerns about the quality of permanency hearings. One concern was that caseworkers often are not as prepared for the hearings as they should be to adequately represent the agency's position. Another concern was that guardians *ad litem* (GALs) and parents' attorneys are not sufficiently trained in child welfare issues to ensure high quality legal representation for children and parents.

Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act

X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as a Strength because the State has a process for TPR proceedings. This item was rated as a Strength in the 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, when a child has been in out-of-home placement for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the CWCBS agency conducts an administrative desk review and documents the review in the case file using a specific form. The CWCBS case manager and supervisor participate in the administrative desk review. If reintegration (reunification) remains a viable option, information contained in the file explains why the child has not yet been reintegrated and specifies the anticipated date of reintegration. If reintegration is not viable, information contained in the file must document any compelling reasons why neither adoption nor permanent custodianship is in the child’s best interest. If the case plan goal is changed to adoption, a motion to terminate parental rights must be on file on or before the last day of the 15th month in out-of-home placement.

The Statewide Assessment reports that if the court determines reintegration is not a viable option, the county or district attorney will file a motion for TPR or a motion to establish a permanent custodianship within 30 days of this decision. The court sets a hearing on the motion within 90 days of the filing of the motion.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that if TPR is considered an option, SRS consistently files for TPR within 15 of 22 months of the child’s placement in foster care. Some stakeholders indicated that a wide range of people keep track of the 15-month deadline, including SRS staff, judges, GALs, district attorneys, and agency attorneys.

Despite these generally positive perceptions, various stakeholders identified the following concerns pertaining to filing for TPR in a timely manner:

- When a case is transferred to the child’s Tribe, the Tribal Court Judge sometimes permits more time to be spent working toward reintegration rather than following ASFA-specified timeframes.
- In some rural areas, the agencies and the district attorneys may be reluctant to file for TPR in accordance with ASFA timeframes in order to give the family more time to comply with case plan requirements.

- If a child does not already have an identified adoptive placement and the child is an adolescent or has special needs, the court may defer a ruling on TPR until an adoptive placement can be found.

Item 29. 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

 X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

This item was rated as a Strength because the State has a process in place for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of all reviews and hearings that concern children in their care. Item 29 also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the court is responsible for sending a notice of the permanency hearing to all involved and/or other individuals as appropriate, including resource parents (foster parents) and adoptive parents.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The majority of stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers receive notice of court hearings in a timely and routine manner. However, a few stakeholders noted that if there is a change in a child’s placement and the clerk of the court is not informed about the change, then the new foster parents may not receive the written notification. Stakeholders suggested that notices may be sent out by caseworkers, the courts, or the county attorney’s office. In addition, Sedgwick County stakeholders noted that at each court hearing, notice is given regarding the date of the next hearing, and relative caregivers and foster parents are ordered to attend. Stakeholders reported that the CRB notifies foster parents regarding the dates of the CRB review.

Most stakeholders also expressed the opinion that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers are encouraged to speak at hearings. These stakeholders reported that written or verbal input from foster parents is expected and is taken into consideration by the court. A few stakeholders noted that the courts need to be aware that some caregivers are not comfortable speaking during court hearings because they are intimidated in the court setting, have concerns that their input may not be kept confidential, and/or feel uncomfortable when the birth parents are present. Some stakeholders also indicated that foster parents often become frustrated if court hearing dates are changed after they have rearranged their schedules and taken children out of school to attend the hearings.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

Status of Quality Assurance System

Kansas is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. During its FY 2001 CFSR, Kansas also was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor and therefore was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 30. 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 the children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength because 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 the children. This item also was rated as a Strength during the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State ensures the safety and health of children in foster care through its oversight, tracking, and reporting on the performance of the CWCBS agencies with regard to achieving specified outcomes. By establishing specific outcomes for the CWCBS, the State establishes accountability for the contractors.

Stakeholder Interview Information.

Stakeholders identified the following agency standards as ensuring the safety and health of children in foster care:

- Caseworkers are required to visit children in foster care at least once a month, although this does not always occur due to staff shortages.
- The State has established licensing standards for foster homes, child care facilities, and inpatient substance abuse treatment programs serving youth.
- The CWCBS agencies providing placement services are required to ensure that foster care providers act in accordance with State policies regarding appropriate strategies for disciplining children.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where services included in the 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength because the State has developed a strong QA system since the 2001 CFSR. The State uses aggregate data analyses, case-level review instruments, external committees, and client satisfaction surveys to evaluate the quality of services, identify strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provide relevant reports, and evaluate program improvement measures that have been implemented. The QA structure includes regional contract specialists, a Performance Improvement Division, and opportunities for external involvement. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, there are several QA procedures in place. One key procedure noted in the Statewide Assessment is the monthly Case Read review process. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Case Read reviews are conducted by SRS regional staff to address specific performance issues within the region. The results of Case Reads are reported to the CFS central office through various applications that can tally results of the Case Reads by region, case type, employee, supervisor, etc. According to the Statewide Assessment, cases currently are read in the program areas of intake and assessment, in-home cases, and out-of-home care. Case Reads in the area of adoption services will begin in the fall of 2007. The results are entered into a database for statistical analysis by CFS central office. The Statewide Assessment also reports that each SRS regional office also performs AFCARS/FACTS quality Case Reads to ensure that information contained in the case files match information in FACTS. The sample of cases is drawn from the current AFCARS submission.

Another QA process involves the evaluation of CWCBS agency performance by SRS contract management personnel. The Statewide Assessment notes that annual administrative monitoring is performed when CFS reviewers go to the contractor’s premises to test adherence to general contract requirements, such as employee qualifications, adequate insurance, and resource family licensing. In

addition, CWCBS agencies submit quarterly and/or monthly performance reports relating to grants and contracts. Personnel from the appropriate programs review narrative information that relates to qualitative performance. The Statewide Assessment also states that contract unit personnel review quantitative data and an overall review of the report. Program and contract personnel work together to discuss any areas needing improvement or further monitoring activities.

Although the SRS administrative regions have primary responsibility for QA activities, the Statewide Assessment reports that the CFS central office reviews performance for all entities contracted for services. According to the Statewide Assessment, the regional contract specialist (RCS) is the vital link in monitoring contractor performance on a daily basis and is the primary contact to clarify and resolve contract issues. In addition, these specialists, located in the SRS administrative regions, identify best family-centered practices and noteworthy accomplishments of CWCBS provider and regional office staff. Furthermore, the Statewide Assessment indicates that the central office staff review audit, program, case review, and outcome reports and identify areas of concern and needed improvements. The RCS then works with providers to develop improvement strategies. The RCS determines when corrective action plans are needed with contractors and takes the lead in developing appropriate plans in consultation with others. The RCS serves as liaison and communication link between QA units and the child welfare programs unit in regional offices.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State's Case Read QA process, which replicates the CFSR to some extent, is an effective process for identifying strengths and areas needing improvement with regard to case-level practice. Stakeholders noted that Case Reads take place in all regions and are conducted by SRS regional staff. They also noted that Case Read results are produced in QA reports that are made available online immediately so that they can be accessed by SRS and CWCBS staff. Reports can be prepared that identify performance down to the caseworker level, so that caseworkers can receive individualized outcome reports that they can then review with their supervisors. Stakeholders reported that the results of the Case Reads are shared with the courts. Stakeholders also reported that SRS conducts FACTS-related Case Reads to improve the FACTS data system and ensure that the data in FACTS are accurate. Lyon County and Sedgwick County stakeholders expressed the opinion that the QA system is effective in holding the CWCBS agencies accountable, supporting outcome-based performance contracting, and identifying training needs.

Agency stakeholders indicated that a new QA position recently was created and has been filled by an experienced QA person who is responsible for evaluating, coordinating, and streamlining the child welfare QA system and its reporting elements. In addition, Stakeholders said that SRS uses the Kansas Child Welfare Quality Improvement Council (KCWQIC) to provide data analyses and insights and to develop ideas for improving practice. Most stakeholders agreed that this use of the KCWQIC is an effective way to monitor QA.

A few stakeholders expressed concern that because the QA process increases the workloads of the CWCBS agencies, SRS has decided to reduce the number of cases that are included in the Case Reads. This was a concern to these stakeholders because of the importance of ensuring accountability and quality among CWCBS staff.

IV. TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2 X	3	4

Status of Training

Kansas is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Training. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2001 CFSR and was required to address the systemic factor in its PIP.

The following concerns were identified during the FY 2001 CFSR:

- Initial training was insufficient to meet the needs of the caseworkers and to support their duties and responsibilities.
- There was no comprehensive structured training system that focused on the needs of child welfare caseworkers from entry level to advanced caseworkers and supervisors.
- Caseworkers were not receiving in-service training to enhance their job performance in areas such as working with families affected by alcohol and drug abuse, court procedures, and working with various cultural and ethnic groups.
- Foster parents were not receiving training in caring for children with special needs.

The State implemented the following strategies in its PIP to address these concerns:

- Created an advisory board to review national core competency standards, which were then incorporated into the training program, and developed training materials for the eight Kansas Institute of Social Service Education and Development domains
- Developed a new training curriculum and implemented the new curriculum statewide for SRS and contractor (CWCBS) staff.

- Provided all foster and adoptive parents with the PS-MAPP training and modified the curriculum to include training that emphasizes working with birth families and provides more information and assistance in providing care to children who have issues related to loss and attachment.

Findings from the 2007 CFSR with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 32. 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, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has developed a strong development and training program for SRS staff that supports the goals and objectives of the CFSP, stakeholders identified differences between pre-service training requirements for SRS caseworkers and caseworkers in the CWCBS agencies. Stakeholders also reported variation in pre-service training requirements among CWCBS agencies, particularly with regard to whether caseworkers must complete training before carrying a caseload. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kansas is coordinating a comprehensive child welfare training system that includes not only the SRS training programs but also those of its university partner, Kansas University (KU), and each of the six CWCBS provider agencies. The Statewide Assessment notes that SRS is responsible for developing and delivering training to meet the development needs of SRS employees and providing support for CWCBS employees to attend training to build their skills.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers employed by SRS Children and Family Services are required to have at least a bachelor’s degree in social work from a college or university program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. All caseworkers also must be licensed by the Kansas Behavioral Regulatory Science Board. The Statewide Assessment notes that caseworkers who have not completed the licensing process may be temporarily employed by the agency as special investigators or as caseworkers under a temporary license for up to 6 months pending full licensure and are reclassified as social work specialists at that time.

Furthermore, the Statewide Assessment reported that SRS social work specialists, caseworkers with 6 months or less experience, and special investigators are required to complete initial staff training, which includes pre-service training requirements and trainings that must be completed within 90 days of entering a position.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, effective measures that demonstrate the State's functioning with regard to initial staff training include the following:

- Level One Evaluation data are collected for all initial SRS staff training courses. The results of these evaluations are reviewed and used to identify points of improvement for training content or delivery.
- Level Two Evaluations assess participant's ability to use specific skills and are in place to focus on key concepts as training curriculum has become more focused on skill development.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR identified two different initial training systems for new caseworkers. One system incorporates the training designed and developed by SRS for its new employees. Stakeholders noted that although this training is made available to CWCBS contractor agency staff, they are not required to attend. The other system pertains to training offered by the CWCBS agencies to their new caseworkers. Within this system, training approaches and requirements vary across the contracted agencies.

Most stakeholders commenting on the SRS initial training reported that all new caseworkers hired by SRS must complete training before being given a caseload. They also noted that all SRS caseworkers must be licensed as social workers by a State licensing board, although they can carry cases for 6 months while going through the licensure process. The SRS training is designed primarily for child protective services caseworkers. According to stakeholders, caseworkers must take the first two courses in the training (Investigations and Assessments) during the first 30 days on the job. They may also receive a 2-day training on the computer system during that time. The remainder of the training must be completed within 90 days of being hired. Stakeholders reported that SRS tracks participation in training to ensure that caseworkers do not have a caseload until they complete the training.

Stakeholders noted that for the SRS training, classroom training is combined with on-the-job training that some stakeholders referred to as Passport Training. They noted that Passport Training includes tasks for caseworkers while they are on the job and includes shadowing of experienced caseworkers. Most stakeholders praised shadowing as effective in preparing caseworkers to assume a caseload.

Stakeholders' comments indicate that the new caseworker training for CWCBS employees is not consistent across CWCBS agencies or with the SRS training format. One concern noted by State agency stakeholders is that pre-service training for new caseworkers in

the CWCBS agencies is not standardized across the State. They noted that the intent is to provide pre-service training and they are required to provide this training; however, changes in staffing and the high level of staff turnover make it difficult to ensure that caseworkers in the CWCBS agencies are trained prior to assuming a caseload.

Stakeholders reported that there is extensive variation in the pre-service training requirements among the six CWCBS agencies, ranging from 8 hours of pre-service training in one agency to 4 weeks in another. It also was noted that they all offer some type of on-the-job training through mentors or supervisors. Stakeholders observed that in one of the CWCBS agencies, core training is no longer offered since the recent transition. Some stakeholders indicated that pre-service caseworker training for workers in adoption areas is deficient. Stakeholders also reported that in one of the CWCBS agencies, caseworkers receive a caseload in the first week of employment, although they have mentors who assist them in working on the cases.

Item 33. 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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because, although the State provides for ongoing training, significant barriers were noted in the Statewide Assessment and during the Onsite Review, including difficulties providing training in frontier and rural areas, difficulties in finding facilities to accommodate training and the funding to conduct training, and difficulty monitoring the CWCBS agencies due to the number and variety of training models that they utilize. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, SRS supports ongoing training through internal resources and through a contract with KU. The Statewide Assessment reports that KU's Child Welfare Resource Network is involved extensively with ongoing training for SRS and CWCBS provider staff. The Statewide Assessment notes the following strengths with regard to ongoing training that were identified by stakeholders during the preparation of the Statewide Assessment:

- The strength-based model approach to practice was praised by stakeholders.
- The training models PS-MAPP and Deciding Together also were seen as effective training mechanisms for foster and adoptive parents.
- Overall, there is more openness in the training system; it reflects a better understanding of how to serve the population of children covered by ICWA.

- The training has improved over the years due to the level of increased partnership and sharing of resources. The strength of the system also is reflected in the variety of approaches used by agencies providing training. Most agencies not only provide required elements but build enhanced training opportunities that reflect the specialty of their agencies, such as model clinical approaches or extensive training in serving sexually acting out youth.
- Tracking systems for training have improved significantly with organizations like the Children’s Alliance of Kansas managing training.

According to the Statewide Assessment, SRS tracks all statewide and regionally provided training through Pathlore, a learning management system that allows individual SRS staff members to check the status of their personal training transcript and allows supervisors to assign and monitor training for individual employees.

The Statewide Assessment also noted the following concerns regarding ongoing training that were identified by stakeholders:

- There continue to be difficulties providing training in frontier and rural areas of the State.
- There is a lack of specialized attention to adoption-specific issues in developing training opportunities.
- Although the frequency of training opportunities has increased, they still are not being offered with sufficient frequency given the demand.
- It is difficult to find facilities that can accommodate training and qualified trainers.
- It is difficult to find sufficient financial resources to conduct training.
- Caseworkers often are not able to access training due to caseload demands, which are increased by constant turnover in the caseworker positions and a lack of sufficient staff.
- Exacerbating worker availability is the competitive dimension among the CWCBS service provider agencies. Competing for workers and limiting access to provider agency-based training puts constraints on the ability to improve the training system.
- In the new contract, “one caseworker, one family” has some unintended consequences on caseworker availability. Family preservation workers move to a foster care role as they follow the child placed in foster care. A review of the impact of that requirement is warranted. Recommendations should be developed with appropriate strategies yet to be determined that could address the transition of these caseworkers. Specifically, this should include assisting and providing training to the caseworker to move with the child while at the same time ensuring there is a resource to fill the void left by the caseworker who is moving on.
- Because there are so many agencies providing training through a variety of models, it is difficult to monitor them sufficiently to ensure that they are all of high quality.

Barriers were noted by stakeholders in the Statewide Assessment. Given the number of agencies providing training through a variety of models, a QA challenge is presented. The agency should look at how to improve and coordinate the QA oversight of training and

more clearly define the QA role of the State agency relative to the community-based agency, specifically as it relates to accountability for training activities.

In addition, promising approaches for ongoing training were noted in the Statewide Assessment and included the following:

- There has been greater recognition of the need to support training through staffing and skill development. Staffing requests have been developed and forwarded to support training development, design, and delivery; online course development; web support; evaluation; and data analysis needs.
- Three regions have created regional staff development positions to support training delivery and coaching needs.
- SRS has committed to a vision of training that is designed to build and evaluate key skills, meet adult learning criteria, make use of online and blended learning activities, engage supervisors in coaching and mentoring roles, and share training resources.
- One purpose for redevelopment of the Kansas Institute of Social Service Education and Development curriculum from the original domain format has been to move toward a focus on skill development of staff, use of embedded evaluation, and expectation of learner responsibility in development of skills.
- CFS Independent Living/Life Skills staff, the Kansas Youth Advisory Council, and other stakeholders have been working with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development to develop training for adults working with youth.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that ongoing training for staff effectively addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties. Stakeholders noted that ongoing training for SRS and CWCBS agency staff is made available through partnerships with the Child Welfare Resource Network, Children's Alliance of Kansas, and the Butler Institute at the University of Denver. Sedgwick County stakeholders reported that the Permanency Council in that site arranges for a significant amount of training to address professional needs.

Stakeholders reported that licensure renewal requirements for social workers specify that they must have 40 hours of training every 2 years and additional training in specialty areas. They also are required to have training on ethics and on the DSM. Stakeholders added that there is an additional ongoing training requirement of 8 hours per year for all staff and 16 hours per year for SRS child protective services caseworkers. Stakeholders also stated supervisors have mandated ongoing training. Some stakeholders said that the agency conducts a survey of training needs twice a year and then follows up with training twice a month.

Various stakeholders interviewed during the onsite CFSR expressed the following concerns regarding ongoing training:

- Training staff are not always aware of the agency's policy changes and thus have difficulty providing training in a timely manner when new initiatives are implemented.
- More training is needed in the areas of assessments, interviewing, and cultural diversity.

Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength because the State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed facilities that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties. All foster and adoptive parents receive the nationally accredited PS-MAPP training, a 10-week program designed to prepare foster and adoptive parents for their roles. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment most of the foster and adoptive parent training is provided by or coordinated through the CWCBS agencies and the Children’s Alliance of Kansas. Through this collaborative approach, the Alliance provides an extensive range of services and collects consistent and valuable data about training delivered to the CWCBS provider community. The Statewide Assessment indicates that stakeholders and resource (foster) parents praised the training provided for foster parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that all foster and adoptive parents receive the nationally accredited PS-MAPP training, a 10-week preparatory program. As the new PS-PS-MAPP Update (the new PS-MAPP version) curriculum has come online, SRS and the Alliance have worked in partnership to provide “update” training to all existing foster parents and all child welfare staff over a 2-year period. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, most stakeholders agreed that the State and its contractors are adequately addressing training and that its availability is improving.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR Onsite Review praised the PS-MAPP training for new resource parents. State-level stakeholders stated that resource families are required to complete 30 hours of PS-MAPP training over a 10-week period and two family consultations before a license is issued. Stakeholders reported that the training is offered four times a year.

Stakeholders also noted that 15 to 16 hours of additional training is required each year for resource families. Several stakeholders indicated that KU provides training for resource families and other training opportunities through conferences they may attend and that ongoing training opportunities also are available from the Children’s Alliance. Stakeholders reported that the Children’s Alliance maintains a statewide calendar of training opportunities for resource families.

Stakeholders noted that foster parents would benefit from additional training on providing care for children with mental health issues and learning disabilities and that more in-depth training is needed for foster parents on discipline techniques for children with difficult behavioral problems.

V. SERVICE ARRAY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2X	3	4

Status of Service Array

Kansas is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The State was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

The findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor and the reasons for the ratings are presented below.

Item 35. 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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because the State does not have in place an adequate array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families. The lack of service array not only hinders efforts to meet the needs of children and families in the foster care system, but it also is a barrier to enabling children to remain safely with their parents when appropriate. This item was rated as a Strength in the 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, intake and assessment, family-based services, family preservation services, reintegration/foster care services, and adoption and IL services are provided statewide in all 105 counties. Focus group participants reported that the array of services has improved since the last Statewide Assessment. However, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment, there still are gaps in service availability, as well as gaps in residential treatment, secure care, and emergency care.

The Statewide Assessment reports that a key concern in the State pertains to the lack of capacity to provide appropriate mental health services in a timely manner. The Statewide Assessment adds that it is difficult to know what mental health services are actually received by various consumers because mental health is provided by different HMO managed care agencies that have different data and tracking systems.

The Statewide Assessment notes that in most of the major communities of the State, there are community services guides that list the services available in the community.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR identified the following services as available throughout the State:

- Emergency shelters for youth
- I-Grad program for children with disabilities
- Court Appointed Special Advocate services
- Mediation services to prevent foster care placement and to address conflicts between children and families and conflicts between caseworkers and families
- IL services
- Services to families to prevent foster care reentry, such as parenting skills training, truancy programs, and family counseling

Stakeholders noted that despite the availability of these services, there are numerous service gaps in the State. These were noted to be the following:

- Mental health services for children (Stakeholders noted, however, that the availability of mental health services will increase due to changes in Medicaid that will be effective July 1, 2007, approximately 1 month after the State's onsite CFSR.)
- Substance abuse treatment services for youth
- Domestic violence services
- Out-of-home placements for children who are developmentally delayed or who have multiple disabilities
- Out-of-home placements for chronic runaways

- Culturally appropriate services and services for families who are not fluent in English, particularly for Spanish-speaking families and families from various Asian cultures
- Transportation services

Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement because services are not accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment and by stakeholders that access to substance abuse treatment services and mental health treatment varies across the State. There also are waiting lists for providers who offer free or low-costs services. Because services are limited in rural areas, extensive travel often is required to access the services. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a recent study by HHS confirmed that the availability of services in rural areas of Kansas is severely inadequate. The Statewide Assessment also noted that approximately 69 of 105 counties in Kansas are considered to be rural or frontier counties, where services are limited.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, service delivery across the State is particularly inadequate with regard to mental health services. The Statewide Assessment reports that to address this concern, SRS CFS convened a collaborative workgroup of mental health and child welfare stakeholders that, over the past 2 years, has been working to address the issues of affordability, accessibility, and availability of particular types of mental health services in rural Kansas.

As mentioned in the Statewide Assessment, plans have been underway to make a dramatic change for children’s mental health and residential services. Effective July 1, 2007, the management of out-patient mental health services will be transferred to an independent entity that will be under contract with the State. Services will be delivered to Medicaid recipients statewide through a Medicaid managed care Prepaid Ambulatory Health Plan, and inpatient and outpatient substance abuse services will be delivered through a Prepaid Inpatient Health Plan. Many of the existing Level V and VI facilities will become Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities and will provide comprehensive mental health treatment to children and adolescents who due to mental illness, substance abuse, or severe emotional disturbance are in need of treatment that can most effectively be provided in a psychiatric residential treatment facility. These programs are designed to offer a short-term, intense, focused treatment program to promote the successful return of the child or adolescent to the community.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that adequate services are not available Statewide, particularly with regard to mental health services. However, State-level stakeholders were optimistic that this situation will be improved, particularly for Medicaid-eligible children, once the independent contractor takes over management of mental health services effective July 1, 2007.

Some of the concerns identified by stakeholders with regard to service accessibility were the following:

- There are difficulties obtaining funding to pay for a child's psychiatric evaluation.
- There are long wait lists for services from providers who have no fee or low fees.
- In some locations, public transportation stops at 6:00 p.m.
- In western Kansas and in many rural areas there is a lack of dental services for children that will accept Medicaid, resulting in the need to drive children several hours away to access dental care.

Despite these concerns, stakeholders in two of the sites included in the CFSR indicated that services were generally available in their communities. Sedgwick County stakeholders stated that they are very rich in services and they make sure that families can access services regardless of their ability to pay. Douglas County stakeholders said in that county, there are no waiting lists for mental health services and mental health professionals have been known to go to detention centers to assess children. Stakeholders also reported that there is a special program in the county to support pregnant mothers with substance abuse problems and that parenting educational resources are available in Spanish.

Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as a Strength because the State has demonstrated the ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, culturally respectful assessments of the family and child that address individual and family strengths, needs, and core concerns serve as the beginning of individualized service delivery. Residential secure care and emergency service definitions and requirements have changed to more effectively meet the needs of the child welfare population.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is effective in individualizing services for families. According to some stakeholders, many caseworkers have different specialties and are exceptional in assessing children’s needs and identifying strategies for ensuring that those needs are met. As one stakeholder noted, a youth who has special needs might be placed in a foster home with a nurse or a teacher who can provide assistance in meeting the youth’s needs.

Several stakeholders indicated that educational assessments are particularly effective with regard to identifying unique needs and they praised the Ansell-Casey assessment instrument that is being used for youth over age 14 to identify their needs in preparation for transitioning to independent living. Other stakeholders commented on the effectiveness of the multidisciplinary child protection team that individualizes services, including mental health services. Some stakeholders added that the courts also are involved in individualizing services in that they have a list of preferred providers who address the unique needs of children and families.

Some stakeholders, however, expressed concern about the case-management model for serving families that is now being used by one of the contract service providers. They noted that this model is a “one worker-one family” model that means that caseworkers can have both in-home services cases and foster care cases. These stakeholders indicated that in-home cases require more flexible scheduling around families’ lives and require that caseworkers be available during hours outside of the standard 8-5, 5-day a week work week.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
Rating	1	2	3	4X

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Kansas is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2001 CFSR, and therefore was not required to address it in its PIP.

Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 38. 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength because the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers (including youth in foster care), service providers, foster care providers, and other child- and family-serving agencies in implementing the provisions of the CFSP. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the division continues to engage in ongoing consultation with a broad array of individuals and organizations representing State and local agencies responsible for implementing the CFSP. One of the most valuable citizen review panels for providing input, research on key issues, and a diverse perspective on the functioning of the child welfare system from the standpoint of the community is KCWQIC. The Statewide Assessment notes that KCWQIC is composed of a very broad group of individuals who in some way are connected to the child welfare system in Kansas. Their main function is to advise SRS on how to implement their recommendations about how the child welfare system may be improved. More specifically, KCWQIC looks at the areas for improvement in each of the key systemic components and makes recommendations on how to effectively address those issues.

With regard to engaging the court system, the Statewide Assessment indicates that SRS continues to collaborate with the court system through participation in the Supreme Court’s Task Force on Permanency Planning. In addition, there is active participation by court personnel on the agency’s advisory panels, and there is court and legal system participation on all three citizen review panels—the Child Safety and Permanency Panel, the Child Death Review Board, and KCWQIC.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Kansas Court Improvement Program Reassessment was a 2-year project that provided valuable information regarding the handling of juvenile cases by the Kansas court system. The outgrowth of the reassessment has been the development of a strategic plan to facilitate legal and judicial participation in the CFSR, collaboration with the child welfare agency at all stages of the review, and identification of activities that would inform the legal and judicial community about the reviews and encourage active legal and judicial participation.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, Kansas has demonstrated a commitment to collaboration with the courts that, over time, has created a climate where the shared value of safety, permanence, and well-being for all Kansas children provides the framework for delivery of child welfare services. The Kansas judicial branch collaborates with the State child welfare agency at both local and State levels. Some district courts, such as those in Sedgwick and Johnson Counties, hold monthly stakeholder meetings to address issues impacting the child welfare and judicial systems. Also, according to the Statewide Assessment, Office of Judicial Administration staff, judges, and court service officers serve on the Child and Safety Permanency Panel and the KCWQIC.

Also noted in the Statewide Assessment is the fact that youth have become very involved in addressing service needs of children and families involved in the foster care system. Kansas has active youth councils that represent the “voice of youth in care.” They identify challenges and barriers that affect youth as current and former youth in foster care. In response to those challenges, they work on developing solutions and the specific tasks needed to achieve those solutions.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicated that Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) have been developed to address the needs and service provisions for children and families from each of the four Federally recognized Native American Tribes located in Kansas. Each MOA describes the measures taken by the State to comply with ICWA and affirms the State’s commitment to prevent unnecessary removal of Indian children from their caretakers and to secure an emergency placement with an Indian relative or an Indian foster home whenever possible if placement becomes necessary.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that SRS is effective in engaging community partners and other stakeholders in ongoing consultation. They identified the following entities as particularly critical with regard to the consultation process:

- Tribal representatives (through the MOA)
- The Family Advisory Council
- Citizen Review Panels
- The Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) agency
- The Children’s Cabinet for child maltreatment prevention
- Various youth groups composed of youth currently and formerly in foster care
- The courts and the Court Improvement Program
- Various service providers

Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength because the agency develops annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP in consultation with community representatives. In particular, the agency requests input from the CRBs and community agencies on an ongoing basis. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment

The Statewide Assessment reports that SRS intends to continue its work with the KCWQIC as an important component and mechanism for system oversight and improvement. According to the Statewide Assessment, SRS has numerous and valuable forums to collect and exchange information and establish communication. Examples include the Governor's BEST teams on foster care and licensing, the KCWQIC, the Child Death Review Board, the Child Safety and Permanency Panel, and quarterly CWCBS provider meetings. All of these forums provide valuable information for the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) State plan submission. The Statewide Assessment also noted that the CFSR assessment tool has given SRS a valuable framework that will help them organize the input they receive during the course of the year.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The majority of the stakeholders agreed that various meetings are held to discuss annual reports of progress. State-level stakeholders noted that SRS conducts informal and formal meetings to discuss the CFSR and State Plan. They also invite the Juvenile Justice Authority to participate in discussions about the annual reports. Stakeholders commented that SRS meets quarterly to review APSR and the CFSP and to assess progress and services provided. Stakeholders also noted that local agency directors meet with State staff on a regular basis and provide input into these documents.

Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally assisted programs serving the same population

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because the State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services of other Federally assisted programs serving the same population. The State collaborates with the Systems of Care and CBCAP grantees in order to avoid duplication of services and to provide assistance to a broader range of children and families. In addition, SRS has established a

collaborative relationship with the education system and the juvenile justice agency. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, CFS staff has daily communication with agencies responsible for implementation of other Federal programs and services, including Kan Be Healthy (Federally mandated Medicaid Program) and Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that Kansas law entitles the State to collect child support payments to meet children's foster care and medical expenditures. This has resulted in a close coordination with the Federally assisted Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) that permits CFS to have access to the CSEA's database in order to locate absent parents.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the agency coordinates its service delivery with staff of Economic and Employment Supports (EES) when they determine that a family needs income support. EES staff members have eligibility determination expertise that they can share with CFS staff regarding the following programs:

- Temporary Assistance to Families (cash assistance for families)
- Medical assistance (Medicaid)
- Child care subsidy payments (necessary for employment or education)
- The food stamps program
- Work Program Services (job training, job search, and related employment assistance)
- General assistance (case assistance) for disabled individuals pending SSI/SSA approval
- Funeral assistance (helps with burial expenses)
- Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (helps pay heating and cooling bills)

The Statewide Assessment reports that CFS also coordinates services with the Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KARS) agency, which facilitates the transition of students who are receiving special education services to vocational rehabilitation services under KARS responsibility. The Statewide Assessment also reports that, during 2003, CFS began exchanging information with the Head Start and Early Head Start Programs across the State to increase the number of children in out-of-home placement who are enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start programs. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that, as a result of these efforts, the number of children in out-of-home placement who were enrolled in these programs increased from 193 children during 2004 to 240 during 2005, a 24.35 percent increase. In addition, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, CFS and the Head Start Collaboration have taken steps to increase cooperation related to social/emotional screening for children ages newborn through age 5.

According to the Statewide Assessment, CFS, the State Head Start Collaboration, and Oral Health Kansas (an advocacy organization) will be focusing their efforts on and building their strategies around the oral health needs of children in out-of-home placements. Most

recently in the 2007 legislative session, SRS and Oral Health Kansas worked together to promote and pass SB 176, which extends the practice of dental hygienists in the State.

As stated in the Statewide Assessment, in 2003, Kansas was one of nine sites to be awarded a 5-year \$2 million demonstration grant from ACF to infuse systems of care principles into child welfare policy and practice. As stated in the Statewide Assessment, oversight for the Family Centered Systems of Care (FCSOC) initiative is provided by the FCSOC statewide steering committee to support the pilot communities, Cherokee and Reno Counties. The steering committee also assists in developing and operationalizing FCSOC principles in child welfare practices across the State. The Statewide Assessment describes FCSOC as a concept and a process that provides collaboration between agencies, service clubs, the faith community, Tribal organizations, etc. to develop common values and visions that are family focused and family driven. At the family level this can be done by using family meetings and/or a wraparound processes.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that SRS has a positive outlook concerning changes in the residential treatment system for juvenile justice youth because the new secretary of SRS was the former commissioner of the Juvenile Justice Authority (JJA). In addition, the new commissioner of JJA and the SRS secretary serve together on the Governor's Health and Human Services Subcabinet, setting the stage for closer collaboration.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that SRS coordinates with other Federal and Federally assisted programs. Some of the coordinated efforts noted by stakeholders include the following:

- Coordination with the Kansas Division of Housing Development around facility licensing
- Collaboration with law enforcement
- Collaboration with JJA around risk needs assessments to develop a comprehensive service array for youth
- Collaboration with Child Support Enforcement and Fatherhood Initiatives.
- Collaboration with Child Support through an integrated service team that might look at TANF, food stamps, child support, Medicaid, etc.
- Collaboration with Health in Pregnancy to help pregnant woman with substance abuse problems
- Collaboration with Early Head Start, Youthville, Kansas Children's Service League, and DCCCA on prevention and intervention services
- Collaboration with the Social Security Administration
- Partnership agreements with Medicaid to meet the needs of families and children
- Collaboration with JJA and Medicaid on the transition of the new system to provide mental health and substance abuse services through the Prepaid Ambulatory Health Plan

- Collaboration with the Department of Education

VII. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4X

Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Kansas is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. During the 2001 CFSR, Kansas was found to be in substantial conformity with this factor and therefore was not required to address it in its PIP.

Findings with regard to the specific items assessed for this factor are presented below.

Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength because the State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are in accord with national standards. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has both licensing standards for foster homes and facilities that ensure the safety and health of children. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kansas has had foster home licensing regulations since 1919. In Kansas, foster and adoption home licensing and approval is conducted by KDHE, and licensing and approval standards for foster family homes and child care institutions are in accord with recommended national standards. These standards are applied equally to all approved and licensed

homes that receive title IV-E or IV-B funding. Safety is evaluated in a formal way every 6 months, but is informally evaluated at each home or institutional visit with children, parents, and institutional employees.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the State updates laws and regulations to reflect best practices and changes in national standards. The BEST teams are a mechanism established by the Governor to identify issues and develop strategies to create better efficiency and effective practice in a particular area. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the final draft of the foster home licensing regulations continues through the regulation revision process in KDHE.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders agreed that KDHE has both licensing standards for foster homes and facilities that ensure safety and health of children. They added that the licensing process in Kansas involves the private providers managing the contracts initially and KDHE doing the licensing inspections and background checks. There are established standards. Management is handled jointly among SRS, the CWCBS providers, and KDHE.

Stakeholders mentioned that the BEST Team comprises community partners and looks at regulations and also how partnerships can grow to improve the licensing process. One Stakeholder indicated that the BEST Team has made significant improvements in licensing standards.

Stakeholders noted that resource families are required to complete 30 hours of PS-MAPP training in 10 weeks, along with two family consultations before licensure is issued. Stakeholders also stated that KDHE is very good about following the licensing requirements and monitoring agency application of the requirements.

One of the key concerns stakeholders noted regarding licensing was that there is no timeframe for KDHE to visit the home, which may result in delays in licensing the home.

Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds

 X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength because standards are applied equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews

According to the Statewide Assessment, standards are applied equally to all licensed homes and facilities. Only fully licensed foster homes and child care institutions are claimed by the State for Federal funds reimbursement. Approved homes for relative placements are available in Kansas, but IV-E and IV-B funding is not claimed for these homes until all licensing requirements are met.

As stated in the Statewide Assessment, checking for proper licensing and background checks is part of the case review process. It also indicated select CFS staff in regional and central offices have access to the KDHE database so that licensing and background check documentation can be easily verified.

Stakeholder interview information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that foster care standards for licensed and approved homes are the same. However, if a relative wants to care for relative children, the home may be approved rather than become a licensed home. Stakeholders added that approvals for relative caregivers are renewed annually.

Item 43. 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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength because the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements. In addition, the State has in place a case-planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children. It should be noted that new QA procedures have been implemented for IV-E eligibility that includes checking for criminal background documentation. This item was rated as a Strength in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a criminal background check is completed on all persons seeking to become licensed foster parents or approved relative caregivers, as required by K.S.A. 65-516. The background check includes information obtained from both juvenile and adult records of offenses committed in Kansas. By statute, there are certain crimes for which a conviction prohibits the individual from obtaining a license to be a foster parent. The Statewide Assessment also states that, if the prospective foster parent has lived in Kansas less than 2 years, an FBI criminal background check is completed rather than a Kansas Bureau of Investigation check to ensure that information from all States is included in the check. At the time of the onsite CFSR, new Adam Walsh requirements were pending.

According to the Statewide Assessment, licenses are not issued until the background checks are cleared. Verifying the completeness of background checks is now easily performed by eligibility staff that has access to the KDHE licensing database.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most of the stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that there is an adequate system in place for conducting background checks. They added that background checks are required for licensed and approved foster homes. Some stakeholders reported that Kansas does not include fingerprinting in its background checks but uses a named-based system instead. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that fingerprinting would improve the system. Stakeholders also indicated a legislative post audit found no deficiencies in the Kansas licensing system.

Stakeholder identified a few key concerns as follows:

- Many of the background check requirements are subjective, and not all KDHE workers assess home conditions in the same way.
- It is difficult to have farm sites licensed.

Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as a Strength because efforts are being made to recruit foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. The reintegration/foster care provider in most regions has formed regional recruitment teams to develop a regional plan as was outlined for the AdoptUsKids program. Efforts focus on recruitment and retention of resource families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in each region in need of out-of-home placement. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the development of a statewide resource family recruitment and retention plan continued during 2006 and 2007. The reintegration and foster care providers in most regions have formed regional recruitment teams to develop a regional plan as was outlined for the AdoptUsKids program. Efforts focus on recruitment and retention of resource families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in their region who are in need of out-of-home placement. Additional persons who

can assist in recruitment efforts are added to the regional team as positions become available. The Statewide Assessment reports that team members include older youth, parents, the faith community, school personnel, and other community partners.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that the Children's Alliance is administering funding to support regional recruitment activities. The CWCBS providers meet monthly with the Children's Alliance and report on regional recruitment activities. Children's Alliance consolidates the regional reports into a statewide report and submits it to SRS each month. According to the Statewide Assessment, the Children's Alliance established a web-based calendar for all child-placing agencies in the State to share recruitment activities. The CWCBS provider for adoption continues general, targeted, and child-specific recruitment efforts as a comprehensive approach to raise awareness about adoption, profile specific children, and increase the number of potential adoptive families for children in State custody.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the adoption contractor completed a new campaign to recruit families for African-American children. The campaign resulted in an increase of 64 percent in African-American families in Topeka and Kansas City. The current recruitment campaign is for rural families, as it was found that these families fit the profile of families who are often the most successful adoptive placements for children in foster care.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the private child-placing agencies in Kansas, which include the CWCBS providers, scheduled a number of appreciation activities for resource families during National Foster Care Month. Also according to the Statewide Assessment, CFS is participating in the AdoptUsKids campaign to recruit and train more resource families. In addition, through a contract with Children's Alliance of Kansas, CFS continues to operate a toll-free number for persons to call if they are interested in learning more about becoming a Kansas resource family.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The majority of stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that recruitment efforts are being made. Stakeholders indicated a special initiative to recruit African-American homes resulted in a 64 percent increase in homes, although they suggested that there still are not enough homes. Several stakeholders noted that targeted recruitment efforts are ongoing in rural areas and in Hispanic and African-American communities.

Despite these positive perceptions of recruitment efforts, many stakeholders said that there are still an insufficient number of ethically and racially diverse foster homes as well as foster homes for adolescents, children with special needs, and sibling groups.

Stakeholders indicated that statewide recruitment and child-specific recruitment are done in a variety of ways including the following:

- Kicks for Kids (the State's Heart Gallery website)

- Inclusion of recruitment activities in community events
- Inclusion of information about fostering or adopting children in church bulletins
- Foster care and adoption recruitment through television, radio, and newspaper announcements
- Flyers given to children in school to take home
- AdoptUsKids Adoption Exchange

Item 45. 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength because 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. The State makes use of the Adoption Exchange and places children out of State. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2001 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

The Statewide Assessment indicated that CFS meets the requirements of the Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 for foster care and adoptive placement requests. All other requests for home studies are completed and reported back to the sending State within 60 calendar days from the date the request is received in the Kansas ICPC office.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that adoption exchanges are used to recruit interested pre-adoptive parents from other States and the Interstate Compact is utilized to place children out of State. Stakeholders reported that there is an identifiable recruitment process for statewide and out-of-State resources with appropriate follow-up activities, when interest is expressed. Stakeholders also reported that the CWCBS agencies regularly make use of national resources. They have pursued families in Canada and military families residing outside of Kansas who are interested in adopting foster children from the State. Sedgwick County stakeholders added that the agency is effective in locating out-of-State adoptive families, but they often must wait a significant amount of time before they receive a response from the other State’s ICPC office.