

**Final Report  
Wisconsin Child and Family Services Review  
August 2010**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Final Report: Wisconsin Child and Family Services Review**  
**August 2010**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document presents a summary of the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Wisconsin. 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. The CFSR is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) 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 of the Administration for Children and Families within HHS.

The Wisconsin CFSR was conducted the week of April 12, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2009, to April 16, 2010. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Division of Safety and Permanence
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR data period ending September 30, 2008
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 32 cases in Milwaukee County, 17 cases in La Crosse County, and 16 cases drawn from Columbia and Sauk counties (Columbia/Sauk County)
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

**Background Information**

The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to its substantial conformity with seven child and family outcomes and seven systemic factors. For the outcome assessments, each outcome incorporates one or more of the 23 items included in the review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on the results of the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The evaluation options for these outcomes are "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," or "not achieved." For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more 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 with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met.

There are 22 items that are considered in assessing the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors. Each item reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. An item is rated as a Strength or an Area Needing Improvement based on whether State performance on the item meets the Federal program requirements. A determination of the rating is based on information provided in the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Overall performance on each systemic factor 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 (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

### Rating the Systemic Factor

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

A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome or systemic factor must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern associated with that outcome or systemic factor.

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State’s performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round. Key changes in the process that make comparing performance difficult 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

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

outcome and systemic factor. Information also is provided about the State's performance on each outcome and systemic factor during the Federal fiscal year 2003 CFSR.

### **Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes**

The 2010 CFSR identified the following areas of high performance with regard to the State's performance in achieving the outcomes assessed during the review:

- Items pertaining to repeat maltreatment, foster care reentry, and proximity of placement were rated as a Strength for the State.
- The State met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to (1) absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff and (2) timeliness of adoptions.
- Although the State's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive services to meet their educational needs) did not meet the required 95-percent level for substantial conformity, performance on this outcome was fairly high with the outcome being substantially achieved in 87.8 percent of the cases.
- Although the State's performance on the item pertaining to physical health of the child did not reach the 90-percent level required for an overall rating of Strength, 89 percent of the cases reviewed were rated as a Strength for these items.

In addition to these positive CFSR findings, HHS acknowledges the efforts being made by Wisconsin to continuously strengthen the services provided to children and families involved in the child welfare system. DCF's commitment to continuous quality improvement in child welfare case practice and its dedication to maintaining effective partnerships with its State, Tribal, and community stakeholders are clear strengths in Wisconsin's child welfare programming.

The CFSR also identified the following key concerns with regard to the State's performance in achieving the desired outcomes for children and families:

- The State was not in substantial conformity with any of the seven outcomes.
- Some of the lowest performing areas included: caseworker visits with parents; assessing and addressing the needs of children, parents, and foster parents; relative placement; involving children and parents in case planning; and achieving adoption, reunification, and guardianship.
- The State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to (1) absence of maltreatment recurrence, (2) timeliness and permanency of reunification, (3) permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and (4) placement stability.

The State's low performance with regard to these CFSR outcomes and national data standards may be attributed in part to the following key factors:

- Because Wisconsin is a county-administered child welfare system, consistency in practice and application of statewide standards as well as resources among counties is a challenge for the State.
- There is no standardized tool to assess the needs of children in out-of-home care.

- The effectiveness of permanency hearings may be impacting progress in achieving timely permanency outcomes for youth.
- The State has not made consistent, concerted efforts statewide to locate and engage fathers in case planning, assessment, and service provision.
- There are some challenges in implementing a family-centered approach and maintaining consistent follow-through in child welfare case practice and service delivery, particularly with regard to in-home and juvenile justice cases.

### **Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors**

With regard to systemic factors, Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factors pertaining to Statewide Information System; Quality Assurance System; Agency Responsiveness to the Community; and Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factors pertaining to Case Review System, Staff and Provider Training, and Service Array and Resource Development.

## **I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES**

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

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two items. 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 within a 6-month time period (item 2). Safety Outcome 1 also incorporates two national data indicators for which national standards have been established. These data indicators measure the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 65.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 60 percent of applicable Columbia/Sauk County cases, 80 percent of applicable La Crosse County cases, and 63 percent of applicable Milwaukee County cases. In addition, the State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or residential facility staff but did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, in 100 percent of the cases, there was no maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period. However, the 2010 CFSR case reviews also found that the agency was not consistent in initiating a response to a maltreatment report within the timeframes established by State policy.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not meet the national standards for (1) the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period or (2) the percentage of children maltreated by foster parents or facility staff.
- The State was not consistent in responding to maltreatment reports and establishing face-to-face contact with children in accordance with the required timeframes established by agency policy.
- Maltreatment allegations received on ongoing cases were not reported routinely for a formal investigation.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed and provided training on the Child Protective Services (CPS) Access Standard for Receipt and Analysis of Report Information
- Developed and provided training on the CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards
- Developed and provided training on the CPS Safety Intervention Standards

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

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

Performance on Safety Outcome 2 is assessed through two items. One item (item 3) assesses State efforts to prevent children's removal from their homes by providing the family with services to ensure children's safety while they remain in their homes. The other item (item 4) assesses efforts to manage safety and reduce risk of harm to children in their own homes and in their foster care placements.

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 63.1 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 25 percent of Columbia/Sauk County cases, 71 percent of La Crosse County cases, and 78 percent of Milwaukee County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, in many cases, the agency was effective in providing services to the family to prevent the child's removal from the home and in conducting initial and ongoing risk and safety assessments to ensure the child's safety.

However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in some of the cases reviewed:

- Children remaining in their own homes continued to be at risk either because services to prevent removal were not provided or the services that were provided were inadequate.
- There was a lack of initial and ongoing safety and risk assessments.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to maintain children safely in their homes.
- In some cases, children were not being removed from home when risk of harm was present.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed and provided training on the CPS Safety Intervention Standards
- Developed and provided training on the CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards
- Developed and provided training on the Criteria for Assessing the Safety of a Foster Home or Relative Placement policy

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

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

Six items are incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all of the foster care cases reviewed. The items pertain to State 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 as well as seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining items focus on an assessment of State efforts to achieve permanency goals

(such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, or permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9), or to ensure that children who have a case goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) are in stable long-term placements and are adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 32.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 30 percent of Columbia/Sauk County cases, 50 percent of La Crosse County cases, and 25 percent of Milwaukee County cases. In addition to case review findings, Wisconsin met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to timeliness of adoptions but did not meet the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and placement stability.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found no foster care reentry and that, in most cases, children experienced placement stability while in foster care. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The child's permanency goal was either not appropriate or not established in a timely manner.
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.
- There was a lack of concerted effort to achieve reunification with parents or relatives in a timely manner.
- There were agency-related delays in achieving adoptions in a timely manner as well as delays due to appeals of TPR decisions.
- There was a lack of concerted effort to support the goal of OPPLA.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children who
  - Reentered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode
  - Were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care
  - Were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care
- The State was not consistently effective with regard to establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The State was not consistently effective with regard to reunifying children in a timely manner or achieving finalized adoptions in a timely manner.
- The State did not consistently file for TPR in accordance with Federal requirements.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Conducted an analysis of targeted case reviews in counties demonstrating high reentry rates and frequent placement changes to better understand the factors influencing State performance
- Developed the policy: Trial Reunification for Children in Out-of-Home Care for trial home visits
- Developed the policy: Support Service for Foster Families
- Implemented a statewide permanency plan review report template to ensure that all permanency plan reviews include all appropriate determinations and recommendations to the court required by State and Federal law
- Developed and facilitated training for judges, county human/social service agency directors, and legal staff involved in the children's court process on critical child welfare issues and their effects on the court system, including actions that impact reasonable efforts and permanency planning
- Issued guidance regarding data entry associated with the use of shelter and detention facilities for use in juvenile justice cases
- Developed the policy: Continuous Permanency Planning Timeline regarding concurrent planning

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

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

Permanency Outcome 2 incorporates six items that assess State performance with regard to (1) placing children in foster care near 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 relationships between children and their parents while the children are in foster care (item 16).

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 55.0 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70 percent of Columbia/Sauk County cases, 90 percent of La Crosse County cases, and 30 percent of Milwaukee County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that the State was effective with regard to placing children in close proximity to their parents, and in many cases the State made concerted efforts to ensure that the connections of children in foster care were maintained. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The agency had not made concerted efforts to place children with their siblings in foster care.

- The frequency and quality of visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings were insufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.

- The agency had not made concerted efforts to search for either maternal or paternal relatives as potential placement resources.
- The agency had not made concerted efforts to support the child's relationship with the mother or father while the child was in foster care.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to place siblings together and ensure frequent visitation between children and parents and between children and their siblings in foster care.
- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to maintain children's connections, seek relatives as placement resources, and promote the bond between parents and children while the children are in foster care.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed the policy: Placement of a Child with a Foster Parent, Adoptive Parent or Proposed Adoptive Parent of the Child's Sibling
- Developed and provided technical assistance and training on the policy regarding visitation: Family Interaction for Child Protective Services Cases When a Child is in Out-of-Home Care
- Developed the policy: Locating and Involving Non-Custodial Parents, Alleged Fathers and Other Relatives with a related Resource Guide to support caseworkers in their practice
- Hired an Indian child welfare consultant to work with Tribal, State, county, and private agency staff on Indian child welfare issues, incorporated the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) into the State Quality Service Review (QSR) process, and developed new Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) templates to support consistent statewide implementation of ICWA notification requirements

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

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

Well-Being Outcome 1 incorporates four items. One item pertains to State 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 item

examines State efforts to actively involve parents and children (when appropriate) in the case planning process (item 18). The two remaining items examine the frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with the children in their caseloads (item 19) and with the children's parents (item 20).

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 32.3 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 40 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 20 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 25 percent of Columbia/Sauk County cases, 47 percent of La Crosse County cases, and 28 percent of Milwaukee County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the service needs of children and foster parents and that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children in foster care was sufficient to ensure the child's safety and well-being. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to assess and address the service needs of mothers and/or fathers.
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to involve children, mothers, and fathers in case planning, although children in foster care were involved in case planning in many of the cases.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children in the in-home services cases were not sufficient to appropriately address case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were not sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to assess needs and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents.
- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to involve children and parents in case planning.
- The State was not consistently effective in establishing face-to-face contact with parents with sufficient frequency and of sufficient quality to ensure children's safety and/or promote attainment of case goals.
- The State did not make concerted efforts to engage fathers in case planning, assess fathers' service needs, provide services to fathers, or establish frequent contact with fathers.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed and provided training on CPS Safety Intervention Standards
- Developed the policy: Criteria for Assessing the Safety of a Foster Home or Relative Placement
- Established a Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to serve the needs of foster and special needs adoptive parents and to support county foster care recruitment
- Developed and provided training on the policy: Family Interaction for Child Protective Services Cases When a Child is in Out-of-Home Care
- Developed the policy: Face-to-Face Contacts with Children and Families Following the Initiation of Ongoing Services
- Developed the policy: Locating and Involving Non-Custodial Parents, Alleged Fathers and Other Relatives

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

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

Only one item is incorporated under Well-Being Outcome 2. It pertains to State efforts to assess and meet the educational needs of children in foster care and, when relevant, children in the in-home services cases (item 21).

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87.8 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 94 percent of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 70 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 92 percent of applicable Columbia/Sauk County cases, 100 percent of applicable La Crosse County cases, and 80 percent of applicable Milwaukee County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that in general, the educational needs of children in foster care were being appropriately and adequately assessed and addressed. However, in a few of the applicable in-home services cases, educational needs were not assessed or addressed, although education-related concerns were apparent. Wisconsin was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

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

This outcome incorporates two items pertaining to State efforts to assess and meet the physical health (item 22) and mental health (item 23) needs of children in foster care and children in the in-home services cases, if relevant.

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 72.2 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 36 percent of the 14 applicable in-home services cases. In

addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 67 percent of applicable Columbia/Sauk County cases, 85 percent of applicable La Crosse County cases, and 69 percent of applicable Milwaukee County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, in most of the cases, the physical, dental, and mental health needs of children in foster care were appropriately assessed and adequately addressed. However, the 2010 CFSR also found that for several children in the in-home services cases, physical, dental, and/or mental health needs were not adequately assessed and/or addressed.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in addressing children's physical health service needs.
- The State was not consistently effective in assessing or addressing children's mental health needs even when the nature of the maltreatment indicated that a mental health assessment was warranted.

To address the identified concerns, in its Program Improvement Plan, the State developed a mental health screening tool to effectively identify children who may need mental health assessments and subsequent treatment.

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## **II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS**

### **Statewide Information System**

Substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System is determined by whether the State is operating an information system that can provide accurate and timely information pertaining to the status, demographic characteristics, location, and case goals for the placement of every child in foster care.

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The 2010 CFSR determined that the Wisconsin SACWIS (eWiSACWIS) can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for every child in foster care.

Wisconsin also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

## **Case Review System**

Five items are included in the assessment of State performance for the systemic factor of Case Review System. The items examine 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), implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in ASFA (item 28), and notification of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers about case reviews and hearings to be held regarding the children in their care and about their right to be heard in those proceedings (item 29).

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The 2010 CFSR found that the State has a process for the periodic review of the status of each child every 6 months. However, the 2010 CFSR identified the following concerns:

- Although the State has a process to develop case plans for children, the State is not effective in ensuring that a case plan with a permanency goal is developed for each child jointly with the child's parents in a timely manner.
- Although the State has a process to conduct permanency hearings for children in foster care every 12 months, this process is not consistently implemented across the State.
- Although the State has a process for filing TPR petitions in accordance with the provisions of ASFA, this process is not consistently implemented across the State.
- Although the State has a process to notify caregivers of hearings for children in their care, the process is not consistently implemented across the State, and caregivers are not given the opportunity to be heard in hearings consistently.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not routinely involve parents (particularly fathers) in the case planning process and in the development of the case plan.
- The TPR process was not implemented consistently in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
- The process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers about reviews and hearings was not implemented in a timely or consistent manner throughout the State.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- The State ensured that new administrative rules governing child welfare practice and policy for children in out-of-home care include requirements for family involvement in case planning.
- The State increased training, communication of legislative requirements, and analysis of TPR case processing.
- The State issued guidance on how caregivers can provide information to the court or permanency review panel and incorporated information about caregiver roles and responsibilities into existing pre-service foster parent training, child welfare training, and the foster parent model handbook.

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

### **Quality Assurance System**

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

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided with quality services that protect their health and safety. In addition, the State is operating a QA system, the QSR process.

Wisconsin was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The key concern identified in the 2003 review was that the State did not have a QA system that had the capacity to evaluate the quality of services, provide relevant reports, and evaluate the implementation of program improvement measures.

To address the identified concern, in its Program Improvement Plan, the State implemented a statewide, comprehensive QA program, the QSR process.

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## **Staff and Provider Training**

The systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training incorporates an assessment of the State's training provided to new caseworkers (item 32), the ongoing training provided to agency staff (item 33), and both initial and ongoing training provided to foster and adoptive parents (item 34). This systemic factor does not assess the training of service providers other than child welfare agency staff unless the service providers are private agency caseworkers, operating under a contract with the State, who have full case management responsibilities.

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The 2010 CFSR identified the following concerns with regard to training:

- Although the State has a pre-service training program in place, the State does not have a process in place to ensure that all staff who deliver services have fulfilled initial training requirements.
- Although the State provides ongoing training, the State does not have a process in place to ensure that all staff, including licensed caseworkers, who deliver services have fulfilled ongoing training requirements.
- Although the State has developed a new requirement for initial and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents, at this time the State does not provide or require training for foster and adoptive parents to address the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of children in foster care.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The training program did not ensure that newly hired caseworkers in all county child welfare offices received the initial training necessary to provide services that support the goals and objectives of the CFSP prior to the assignment of caseloads.
- The State did not have statewide requirements for staff to participate in ongoing training.
- The State did not mandate pre-placement or ongoing training for foster parents.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- The State developed and implemented minimum training requirements for initial and ongoing training for child welfare staff.
- The State developed modules for ongoing eWiSACWIS training.
- The State developed opportunities for county and Tribal staff to access child welfare training.
- The State expanded the capacity of the child welfare training system to meet minimum training requirements.

The State met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## **Service Array and Resource Development**

The assessment of the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development incorporates answers to three questions: Does the State have in place an array of services that meets the needs of children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 35)? Are the services accessible to families and children throughout the State (item 36)? Can services be individualized to meet the unique needs of the children and families served by the child welfare agency (item 37)?

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State has an appropriate array of key services to meet the needs of children and families. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns:

- There is a lack of sufficient services and resources available within the same community or county as the family or child live. In addition, there is a lack of available transportation, and families are required to travel long distances and wait for long periods of time to access needed services, particularly mental health, substance abuse, parenting education, and independent living services.
- Although the State has the ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families through the use of case planning tools and flexible funding mechanisms, the State does not consistently individualize service delivery to meet the needs of children and families due in part to insufficient services and resources available.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not have in place an array of services to address the needs of children and families to enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable and to help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.
- Services were not accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions.

To address the identified concerns, in its Program Improvement Plan, the State conducted a comprehensive survey of services available in counties to determine where gaps and barriers exist to client access to needed services.

The State met its goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## **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 and producing Annual Progress and Service Reports (APSR) (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).

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State engages in ongoing consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in developing the goals and objectives for the CFSP and in preparing the APSRs. In addition, the State's child welfare agency services are coordinated with the services and benefits of other Federal or federally-assisted programs.

Wisconsin also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

## **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 that 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).

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The 2010 CFSR determined the following:

- The State has implemented appropriate licensing standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are based on national standards.
- The State conducts criminal background clearances prior to placing children in licensed and unlicensed relative, foster, and pre-adoptive homes.
- The State has a recruitment plan and assists counties in the identification and recruitment of families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.
- The State has a process to facilitate cross-jurisdictional adoptive and permanent placements for children.

However, the 2010 CFSR also identified that licensing standards are not applied equally statewide, and there is no process to monitor county foster care licensing processes and practices to ensure equal application of licensing standards.

Wisconsin also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Table 1. Wisconsin 2010 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
<b>Safety Outcome 1:</b> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	65.5	Met 1 of 2		
Item 1. Timeliness of investigations				ANI	66
Item 2. Repeat maltreatment				Strength	100
<b>Safety Outcome 2:</b> Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	63.1			
Item 3. Services to protect children in home				ANI	71
Item 4. Risk of harm				ANI	65
<b>Permanency Outcome 1:</b> Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	32.5	Met 1 of 4		
Item 5. Foster care reentry				Strength	100
Item 6. Stability of foster care placements				ANI	70
Item 7. Permanency goal for child				ANI	60
Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	47
Item 9. Adoption				ANI	35
Item 10. Other planned living arrangement				ANI	53
<b>Permanency Outcome 2:</b> The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	55.0			
Item 11. Proximity of placement				Strength	97
Item 12. Placement with siblings				ANI	62.5
Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	58
Item 14. Preserving connections				ANI	70
Item 15. Relative placement				ANI	44
Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	56

\* 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 Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI). For an overall rating of Strength, 90 percent of cases must be rated as a Strength.

**Table 2. Wisconsin 2010 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
<b>Well-Being Outcome 1:</b> Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs	No	32.3		
Item 17. Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	35
Item 18. Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	44
Item 19. Caseworker visits with child			ANI	71
Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	34
<b>Well-Being Outcome 2:</b> Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	87.8		
Item 21. Educational needs of child			ANI	88
<b>Well-Being Outcome 3:</b> Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	72.2		
Item 22. Physical health of child			ANI	89
Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of child			ANI	70

\* 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 Strengths or as Areas 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. Wisconsin 2010 CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items**

<b>Systemic Factors and Items</b>	<b>Substantial Conformity?</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Item Rating**</b>
<b>STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM</b>	Yes	4	
<i>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</i>			Strength
<b>CASE REVIEW SYSTEM</b>	No	1	
Item 25. The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) that includes the required provisions			ANI
Item 26. The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review			Strength
Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter			ANI
Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act			ANI
Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child			ANI
<b>Quality Assurance System</b>	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 the 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 Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented			Strength
<b>Staff and Provider Training</b>	No	1	
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			

<b>Systemic Factors and Items</b>	<b>Substantial Conformity?</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Item Rating**</b>
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			ANI

<b>Systemic Factors and Items</b>	<b>Substantial Conformity?</b>	<b>Score*</b>	<b>Item Rating**</b>
<b>Service Array and Resource Development</b>	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			Strength
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			ANI
<b>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>	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 Progress and Services Reports 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
<b>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</b>	Yes	3	
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			ANI
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 that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and 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 Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANI).

## INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Wisconsin. 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 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 of the Administration for Children and Families within HHS.

The Wisconsin CFSR was conducted the week of April 12, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2009, to April 16, 2010. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR data period ending September 30, 2008
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 32 cases in Milwaukee County, 17 cases in La Crosse County, and 16 cases drawn from Columbia and Sauk counties (Columbia/Sauk County)
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 65 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the children in the cases reviewed are presented in the table at the end of this section. For this table, and for other tables in the report, figures displayed may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Wisconsin is primarily a State-supervised, county-administered child welfare system. However, the State administers the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) which delivers child welfare services in Milwaukee County as well as the statewide Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). In Wisconsin, many children in the custody of the county agency enter through the juvenile justice system. Children enter the custody of the county agency from the juvenile justice system when they have committed a status offense and are adjudicated as a juvenile in need of protection or services (JIPS) or are placed in foster care under a delinquency order.

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. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

### Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

<b>Case Characteristics</b>	<b>Foster Care</b>	<b>In-Home Services</b>
<b>Total Number of Cases</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Date case was opened</b>		
Open prior to the period under review	<b>36 (90%)</b>	<b>13 (52%)</b>
Open during the period under review	<b>4 (10%)</b>	<b>12 (48%)</b>
<b>Child entered foster care during the period under review</b>	<b>12 (30%)</b>	N/A
<b>Child's age at start of period under review</b>		
Younger than 10	<b>17 (42.5%)</b>	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	<b>3 (7.5 %)</b>	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	<b>12 (30%)</b>	*
16 and older	<b>8 (20%)</b>	*
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	<b>0</b>	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	<b>1 (2.5%)</b>	*
Black Non-Hispanic	<b>16 (40%)</b>	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	<b>0</b>	*
Hispanic (of any race)	<b>2 (5%)</b>	*
White Non-Hispanic	<b>18 (45%)</b>	*
Unknown/Unable to Determine	<b>0</b>	*
Two or More Races Non-Hispanic	<b>3 (7.5%)</b>	*
<b>Primary reason for opening case</b>		
Physical abuse	<b>4 (10%)</b>	<b>8 (32%)</b>
Sexual abuse	<b>1 (2.5%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Emotional maltreatment	<b>1 (2.5%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	<b>14 (35%)</b>	<b>13 (52%)</b>
Medical neglect	<b>1 (2.5%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Abandonment	<b>3 (7.5%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Mental/physical health of parent	<b>3 (7.5%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Mental/physical health of child	<b>1 (2.5%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Substance abuse by parent	<b>2 (5%)</b>	<b>2 (8%)</b>
Child's behavior	<b>4 (10%)</b>	<b>2 (8%)</b>
Domestic violence in child's home	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Child in juvenile justice system	<b>4 (10%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Other	<b>2 (5%)</b>	<b>0</b>

\*Information on in-home services cases is not available for these characteristics.

## SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes Section of the CFSR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items reviewed. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The item ratings are used to determine the performance of a State on the 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.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the applicable 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 with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

The Children’s Bureau has established very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our nation’s most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. 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. This approach is consistent with the goal of the CFSR 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 or the national standards for the six data indicators by the end of their Program Improvement Plan implementations. The Children’s Bureau recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often take time to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with the Children’s Bureau to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their Program Improvement Plans. That is, for each outcome that is not in substantial conformity or item that is rated as an Area Needing Improvement, each State (working in conjunction with the Children’s Bureau) specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the Areas Needing Improvement and (2) 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 Program Improvement Plan and still not perform at the 95-percent (for outcomes) or the 90-percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

The second round of the CFSRs assesses a State’s current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued Program Improvement Plans addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior Program Improvement Plan goals may have been achieved. The purpose is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the completion of a Program Improvement Plan.

The following sections provide information on how Wisconsin performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR as well as the current CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time and the strategies implemented in the Program Improvement Plan to address those concerns are discussed.

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State’s performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to 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 case review process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to enhance consistency and ensure an assessment of critical areas such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents in planning for their children

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 Wisconsin’s status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State’s first CFSR review, which was held in fiscal year 2003, 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 presented in the tables. 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.

## I. SAFETY

### Safety Outcome 1

<b>Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	3	4	12	19	<b>65.5</b>
Partially Achieved	1	1	0	2	<b>6.9</b>
Not Achieved	1	0	7	8	<b>27.6</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	11	12	13	36	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>63%</b>		

<b>Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards</b>			
<b>National Data Indicators</b>	<b>National Standard (%)</b>	<b>State's Percentage</b>	<b>Meets Standards?</b>
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6 +	94.3	No
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68 +	99.75	Yes

### **Status of Safety Outcome 1**

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 65.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Wisconsin did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence. The State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not meet the national standards for (1) the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period, or (2) the percentage of children maltreated by foster parents or facility staff.
- The State was not consistent in responding to maltreatment reports and establishing face-to-face contact with children in accordance with the required timeframes established by agency policy.
- Maltreatment allegations received on ongoing cases were not reported routinely for a formal investigation.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed and provided training on the Child Protective Services (CPS) Access Standard for Receipt and Analysis of Report Information
- Developed and provided training on the CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards
- Developed and provided training on the CPS Safety Intervention Standards

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of the Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

### Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 29 (45 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports 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.

State policy requires local child welfare agencies to assess reports of alleged maltreatment and decide whether or not to accept (screen) the report for investigation within 24 hours from receipt of the report. The following is State policy regarding the investigations of screened-in reports of child abuse or neglect:

- Present Danger: the caseworker must initiate an investigation with face-to-face contact with a subject of the report immediately or the same day the screening decision is made.
- Possible Impending Danger: the caseworker must initiate an investigation with face-to-face contact with a subject of the report within 24-48 hours of the time the screening decision is made.
- No Danger Indicated: the caseworker must initiate an investigation with face-to-face contact with a subject of the report within 5 business days of the time the screening decision is made.

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

Item 1 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	3	4	12	19	66
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	7	10	34
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	
Not Applicable	11	12	13	36	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>63%</b>		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 19 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. Item 1 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when the investigation was not

initiated within the required timeframes. Case reviewers noted that nine of the cases rated as Areas Needing Improvement involved reports requiring investigation within 5 days and one case involved two reports requiring investigation within 24-48 hours.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 66 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 1 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards provide practice requirements from access through investigation and initial assessment. CPS has the authority to respond to reports of child maltreatment regardless of whether the alleged maltreater is in a caregiver role. If the alleged maltreater is in a parental role or has lived in the child's home, a Primary Assessment must be conducted.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that after an assessment of present danger, an independent agency must conduct an initial assessment of reports of alleged child maltreatment in foster homes within 3 days of the time the report is received and that a full assessment must be completed within 60 days.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports the following data for July 2009:

- 63 percent of all investigations were conducted in a timely manner.
- 79 percent of same-day investigations were conducted in a timely manner.
- 53 percent of 24-hour investigations were conducted in a timely manner.
- 73 percent of 48-hour investigations were conducted in a timely manner.
- 60 percent of 5-day investigations were conducted in a timely manner.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the quality of screening decisions varies among county agencies, and some agencies assign an incorrect response priority time when safety threats are not correctly identified at the time the report is received.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that some reports of child abuse and neglect are not responded to in a timely manner because screening decisions are not made or transmitted in a timely manner, particularly for reports received in the evenings or on weekends. In addition, a few Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to reach the agency to make a report in the evenings and on weekends. Some stakeholders indicated that the State is not consistent in making screening decisions when reports of abuse and neglect are received and that some reports are inappropriately screened out. In addition, a few stakeholders indicated that there are delays in conducting investigations of non-emergency reports. However, other stakeholders indicated that screening decisions are made in a timely manner.

## Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 9 (14 percent) of the 65 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 if 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 the assessment of item 2 are presented in the table below.

Item 2 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	2	2	5	9	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	
Not Applicable	14	15	27	56	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in all nine applicable cases when there was one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family, and there was no other substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period.

In addition to the recurrence of substantiated maltreatment reports, reviewers reported the following findings with regard to the number of maltreatment reports on the family during the life of the case (“life of the case” refers to the time from the date of the first allegation of abuse or neglect to the time of the Onsite Review):

- In 25 cases, there were three or fewer reports.
- In 26 cases, there were between 4 and 10 reports.
- In 14 cases, there were 11 or more maltreatment reports. In one of these cases there were 37 reports.

### Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of a Strength. In 100 percent of the applicable cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute and policy changed over the past 4 years to provide specific guidance for substantiating incidents of maltreatment and, therefore, the measure of maltreatment recurrence is now more accurate. The Statewide

Assessment notes that maltreatment recurrence has declined due in part to the general decline of the substantiation rate from 18.1 percent in 2006 to 14.9 percent in 2008.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following data for the period 2005-2008:

- Neglect recurred as a form of maltreatment in 71 percent of the cases of maltreatment recurrence.
- For children ages 0-4, neglect recurred most often.
- 31 percent of maltreatment recurrences were substantiated within 30 days of the initial substantiation.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that reports of abuse or neglect in foster homes are referred for investigation by another county.

**Safety Outcome 2**

<b>Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	4	12	25	41	<b>63.1</b>
Partially Achieved	3	1	1	5	<b>7.7</b>
Not Achieved	9	4	6	19	<b>29.2</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>78%</b>		

**Status of Safety Outcome 2**

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 63.1 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to maintain children safely in their homes.
- In some cases, children were not being removed from home when risk of harm was present.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed and provided training on CPS Safety Intervention Standards
- Developed and provided training on CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards
- Developed and provided training on Criteria for Assessing the Safety of a Foster Home or Relative Placement policy

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

#### Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or reentry into foster care

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable for 41 (63 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded 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 applicable cases, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety. The results of the assessment of item 3 are presented in the table below.

Item 3 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	4	10	15	29	71
Area Needing Improvement	7	2	3	12	29
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>41</b>	
Not Applicable	5	5	14	24	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>83%</b>		

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

- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (five cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (21 cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent reentry (three cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. This included, but was not limited to, the following: substance abuse assessment and treatment, parenting skills classes and parent aide visits, home visits, post-reunification home visits, residential treatment, anger management, medication management, mental health assessment, group and individual counseling/therapy, family counseling/therapy, child care, respite care, community resource referral, and domestic violence education.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were not provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (two cases).
- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family (five cases).
- No services were provided to prevent the children's removal from the home, although the removal was not immediately necessary to ensure the children's safety (three cases).
- No services were provided at the time of reunification, and the children were at risk in the home (two cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 71 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 3 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, CPS Safety Intervention Standards, CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards, and CPS Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines provide for the comprehensive assessment of the strengths and needs of the family situation. The Statewide Assessment notes that family preservation services are offered through both county and private agencies and include respite care, intensive in-home therapy, supervised home visits, school-home liaison services, mental health services, parent training and mentoring, support groups, economic resources, employment training, child care, and resource referrals.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Quality Service Reviews (QSRs) were held in counties across the State during the period 2005-2009 involving 595 observations. Data from the QSRs show that item 3 was rated as a Strength in 86 percent of the cases.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the following promising approaches enhance the effectiveness of prevention programs:

- The Trauma Informed Interventions Program is being piloted across the State, including Milwaukee, Sauk, and La Crosse counties, to integrate services for families with caregivers affected by substance abuse.
- The Coordinated Services Team (CST) is a joint initiative in some parts of the State between DCF and the Department of Health Services (DHS) to provide appropriate services to keep children in the home or support their return home for families involved in the child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse systems.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is variability among counties as to which types of cases are eligible for in-home services and that there is inconsistent practice across the State with regard to in-home service delivery.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally provides preventive services to families. Some Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that the Safety Services program in that county provides effective preventive services to families.

**Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The results of the assessment of item 4 are presented in the table below.

Item 4 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	5	12	25	42	65
Area Needing Improvement	11	5	7	23	35
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>78%</b>		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 42 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through the following: (1) conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children’s home or in the children’s foster home and (2) addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment.

Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 23 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial safety or risk assessment (five cases).
- There was no ongoing safety and risk assessment in the child’s home during the period under review (18 cases).
- There was no ongoing safety and risk assessment in the foster home during the period under review (five cases).
- There were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency, and the children were at risk in the home (16 cases).
- The case was closed without any safety and risk assessment (three cases).

### Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 65 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 4 was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following standards are in place to address safety and risk:

- CPS Safety Intervention Standards specify criteria for assessing threats to child safety in the home and in out-of-home care, a specific process for analyzing those threats, and a process for developing a plan for controlling the threats.
- CPS Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines provide requirements for the continuing evaluation of child safety.
- CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards include an assessment of the family's capacity to ensure safety of the children.
- The Criteria for Assessing the Safety of a Foster Home or Relative Placement was developed to address the safety of children in out-of-home care.
- There is a requirement in Milwaukee County to assess safety in unlicensed relative placements.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR during the period 2005-2009 show that item 4 was rated as a Strength in 86 percent of the cases reviewed.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State provides assessment tools for the identification of risk and safety. Several stakeholders indicated that safety is assessed every time a caseworker meets with a family. A few Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers have a focus on safety; however, a few stakeholders also said that the concept of assessing risk is not well understood.

## II. PERMANENCY

### Permanency Outcome 1

<b>Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	3	5	5	13	32.5
Partially Achieved	7	5	11	23	57.5
Not Achieved	0	0	4	4	10.0
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>25%</b>		

<b>Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards</b>			
<b>National Data Indicators</b>	<b>National Standard (Scaled Score)</b>	<b>State Score (Scaled Score)</b>	<b>Meets Standards?</b>
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +	97.4	No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +	116.9	Yes
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +	117.7	No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +	98.1	No

### **Status of Permanency Outcome 1**

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 32.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Wisconsin met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to timeliness of adoptions but did not meet the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and placement stability.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children who
  - Reentered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode
  - Were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care
  - Were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care
- The State was not consistently effective with regard to establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The State was not consistently effective with regard to reunifying children in a timely manner or achieving finalized adoptions in a timely manner.
- The State did not consistently file for termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with Federal requirements.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Conducted an analysis of targeted case reviews in counties demonstrating high reentry rates and frequent placement changes to better understand the factors influencing State performance
- Developed the Trial Reunification for Children in Out-of-Home Care policy for trial home visits

- Developed the Support Service for Foster Families policy
- Implemented a statewide permanency plan review report template to ensure that all permanency plan reviews include all appropriate determinations and recommendations to the court required by State and Federal law
- Developed and facilitated training for judges, county human/social service agency directors, and legal staff involved in the children’s court process on critical child welfare issues and their effects on the court system, including actions that impact reasonable efforts and permanency planning
- Issued guidance regarding data entry associated with the use of shelter and detention facilities for use in juvenile justice cases
- Developed the Continuous Permanency Planning Timeline policy regarding concurrent planning

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

#### Item 5. Foster care reentries

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 12 (30 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable 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 the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

Item 5 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	2	3	7	12	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	7	13	28	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in all 12 applicable cases because 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.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Performance on the Composite 1 Measure Relevant to the Permanency of Reunification**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about foster care reentry. There is no national standard for the measure of foster care reentry. National standards with regard to permanency have been established only for the scaled composite scores. The measure of foster care reentry is part of Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification. The State's performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

Wisconsin's performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: In the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, 22.6 percent of children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is greater than the national median of 15.0 percent. (For this measure, lower percentages reflect higher levels of performance.)

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, local child welfare agencies work with local courts to reunify children when safety of the child or community can be managed in the family home. However, when circumstances change so that safety can no longer be managed in the home, children may need to reenter foster care. The Statewide Assessment notes that DSP policy provides for trial reunification as a strategy to stabilize reunification. Trial reunification requires court authorization for such placements. However, the Statewide Assessment reports that, of the 3,636 reunifications that occurred in 2008, only 1 percent appear to have used a trial reunification.

The Statewide Assessment reports that for the period 2005-2009, the reentry rate declined steadily for children ages 12-15 and 16-18 from 34 percent to 24 percent and 40 percent to 31 percent, respectively. The Statewide Assessment also reports that for 2008, the statewide reentry rate was 22 percent.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the State struggles with reentry rates due in part to the following issues:

- There is significant variation in how placements are used to meet the needs of juveniles or youth experiencing mental health or behavioral problems.
- There is a lack of a standardized permanency planning process for reunifying children and youth.
- There is a lack of standardized provision of after-care services for children and youth who have been reunified.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that juvenile justice cases account for a significant percentage of reentry cases. A few stakeholders in Columbia, Sauk, and La Crosse counties indicated that, to prevent reentry, child welfare agencies ensure that the home is stable and safe prior to reunification. However, Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that there is a need for stronger community support and post-reunification services to prevent reentries.

### Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. 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 most recent placement setting. The results of the assessment of item 6 are presented in the table below.

Item 6 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	9	8	11	28	70
Area Needing Improvement	1	2	9	12	30
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>55%</b>		

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

- The child’s current placement was stable and the child did not have a placement change during the period under review (21 cases).
- The child’s current placement was stable and the placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests (i.e., they were intended to further achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child) (seven cases).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 12 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to attain the child’s permanency goal (11 cases).
- The child’s placement setting at the time of the onsite CFSR was not stable (seven 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 13 cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in 6 cases experienced between three and five placements during the period under review.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 4: Placement stability**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about placement stability. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 4 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Wisconsin's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability was as follows:

- C4.1: 84.0 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 83.3 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- C4.2: 62.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 59.9 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- C4.3: 39.7 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national median of 33.9 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 41.8 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment and supplemental information amending the Statewide Assessment, the Levels of Care initiative was implemented in January 2010 and supports stability for children by providing increased resources for caregivers, rate regulation and specialized training for foster parents, and a standardized tool to assess the needs of children. The Statewide Assessment notes that DSP is required to notify adult relatives of children in out-of-home care within 30 days of a child's removal from home to ensure that the child has the opportunity to be placed in a stable home as quickly as possible. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DSP implemented the Mobile Urgent Treatment Team to provide immediate crisis intervention services to out-of-home care providers in Milwaukee.

The Statewide Assessment notes that children in juvenile justice cases are more likely to have multiple placements. The Statewide Assessment reports the following data for the period 2005-2009:

- Children ages 0-4 appear to have the highest placement stability—90 percent of children in foster care for less than 12 months have two or fewer placements.

- Emotionally disturbed children appear to have the lowest placement stability—77 percent of children in foster care for less than 12 months have two or fewer placements.
- Children whose most recent placement setting is a relative foster home or pre-adoptive home have the most stability for all lengths of stay in out-of-home care.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the State struggles with placement stability due in part to the following issues:

- The State does not use a standardized tool to assess the needs of children in out-of-home care.
- The State does not use a standardized tool to assess the competence of the potential provider.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in matching the needs of the child to the appropriate out-of-home care placement. A few stakeholders indicated that there are crisis intervention support services available to stabilize placements. However, a few stakeholders indicated that there are challenges in finding appropriate homes to meet the needs of children who enter foster care on an emergency basis and that these children may be required to move subsequent to their initial placement.

### Item 7. Permanency goal for child

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 7. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had established a permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and whether the most current permanency goal was appropriate. Reviewers also were to determine whether the agency had sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). The results of the assessment of item 7 are presented in the table below.

Item 7 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	7	6	11	24	60
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	9	16	40
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>55%</b>		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 24 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 16 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s permanency goal at the time of the onsite CFSR was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (seven cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (12 cases).
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, and there were no compelling reasons for not filing for TPR specified in the case file (seven cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 71 percent (17 cases) of 24 applicable cases.

The following case goals were identified for the 40 foster care cases:

- Adoption only (10 cases)
- Reunification only (five cases)
- Guardianship only (three cases)
- Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) only (seven cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and reunification with relatives (one case)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and reunification with parents (four cases)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and OPPLA (three cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and OPPLA (seven cases)

### **Rating Determination**

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 60 percent of the cases reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements when relevant. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 7 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards were established only for the scaled composite score. The State’s performance on Composite 3 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Wisconsin’s performance on the individual measures included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods was the following:

- C3.1: 24.6 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is less than the national median of 25.0 percent.

- C3.2: 97.0 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is greater than the national median of 96.8 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 98.0 percent.
- C3.3: 46.7 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is less than the national median of 47.8 percent but greater than the national 25th percentile of 37.5 percent. (For this measure, lower percentages reflect higher levels of performance.)

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, a permanency plan must be developed within 60 days of initial removal from the home. Plans are reviewed every 6 months by either a judicial review or an administrative review panel. The Statewide Assessment notes that concurrent planning is available to caseworkers and that the concurrent plan can become the primary goal at any time in the case. The Statewide Assessment also notes that it is expected that caseworkers will make a referral to a State permanency consultant at the 12th month of placement for support in developing a permanent plan and in determining the applicability of ASFA requirements for TPR.

The Statewide Assessment reports that permanency goals include reunification with a parent or permanent placement with a fit and willing relative, adoption, guardianship, or other planned permanent living arrangements.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 7 was rated as a Strength in 65 percent of the cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment also reports that data from the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWiSACWIS) show that 81 percent of children in care as of October 31, 2009, had a permanency plan documented and, for children in foster care 13 months or longer, 54 percent had a documented concurrent goal.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is inconsistent practice across the State with regard to permanency planning and the use of concurrent goals.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The key concern addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR was concurrent planning. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that concurrent planning is used for developing goals for children in foster care. In addition, several stakeholders indicated that permanency consultants are utilized to explore and develop a permanent plan if reunification appears to be unlikely. However, several stakeholders indicated that plans are pursued sequentially rather than concurrently.

A few stakeholders in Columbia, Sauk, and La Crosse counties indicated that, for some children, a determination is made that they are “unadoptable” and that only permanency goals other than adoption are considered for these children.

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

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 8 was applicable for 19 (47.5 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, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 8 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	3	4	2	9	<b>47</b>
Area Needing Improvement	2	3	5	10	<b>53</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	3	13	21	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>29%</b>		

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in nine cases when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner.

**Rating Determination**

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 47 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

**Performance on the Individual Measures Pertaining to Timeliness Included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of reunification. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State’s performance on Composite 1 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Wisconsin's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification is presented below for the measures pertaining to timeliness:

- C1.1: 69.7 percent of the reunifications occurred in more than 8 days but less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 69.9 percent.
- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification after being in foster care for at least 8 days was 6.8 months. This length of stay is longer than the national median of 6.5 months. (For this measure, a lower number reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C1.3: 48.0 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in more than 7 days but less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national median of 39.4 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 48.4 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DSP considers reunification before other goals and, if a child is removed from home, State statute requires local child welfare agencies to consider placement with a fit and willing relative first, when such relatives are available. The Statewide Assessment notes that Milwaukee County has the authority to administer a subsidized guardianship program for relative caregivers under a title IV-E waiver. However, the subsidized guardianship program operating in Milwaukee has not been implemented statewide, limiting the opportunities for some children to formalize permanent living arrangements with relatives.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the following policies and practices support reunification:

- DSP policy requires at least weekly interaction between parents and children in foster care.
- DSP policy requires agencies to make diligent efforts to locate and engage noncustodial parents and other relatives as possible placement resources. Agencies are required to provide notice to all adult relatives within 30 days of the child's removal from home.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 8 was rated as a Strength in 41 percent of the cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment also reports the following data for the period 2005-2008:

- 69 percent of children were reunified within 12 months.
- Children in juvenile justice cases are more likely than children in CPS cases to reunify within 12 months.
- African-American children were least likely to exit to reunification within 12 months (60 percent).
- If a child was removed due to "caregiver's inability to cope" or "child's disability," the child was least likely to exit to reunification within 12 months (61 percent).

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that State policy does not provide consistent guidance or training with regard to permanency planning and services such as after-care. In addition, there is inconsistent practice across the State with regard to permanency planning and the use of concurrent goals. Supplemental information amending the Statewide Assessment notes that, although the CPS

Intervention Standards provide direction and guidance with regard to in-home safety planning, this policy is not applied consistently throughout the State.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there is a need to expand the Milwaukee County Subsidized Guardianship program to other areas of the State. However, a few Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that there are delays in achieving guardianships for children.

**Item 9. Adoption**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 9 was applicable for 17 (42.5 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 a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results of the assessment of item 9 are presented in the table below.

Item 9 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	0	2	4	6	35
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	7	11	65
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	7	9	23	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>36%</b>		

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in six cases 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 11 cases when reviewers identified one or more of the following:

- Delays in filing for TPR (four cases)
- Delays in the TPR process (after filing) (three cases)
- Delays in completing or approving home studies (two cases)
- Delays in identifying an appropriate adoptive resource (six cases)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 17 children with a goal of adoption, 2 achieved the goal during the period under review. One adoption was finalized within 24 months of the child’s entry into foster care.

- Of the 15 children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, 5 had been in foster care for less than 24 months at the time of the Onsite Review; 2 had been in foster care for at least 24 months but less than 36 months; 2 had been in foster care for at least 36 months but less than 48 months; and 6 had been in foster care for at least 48 months. One of these children had been in foster care with the goal of adoption for 124 months.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 35 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 9 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Performance on the Individual Measures Included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions**

The data below are presented to provide additional information about the timeliness of adoptions. There are no national standards for performance on these measures individually. National standards have been established only for the scaled composite score. The State's performance on Composite 2 is shown in the table for Permanency Outcome 1.

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Wisconsin's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions is presented below:

- C2.1: 35.9 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national median of 26.8 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 30.1 months. This median length of stay is shorter than the national median of 32.4 months but greater than the national 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (For this measure, a lower number reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 15.7 percent of children who were 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 is less than the national median of 20.2 percent.
- C2.4: 8.3 percent of children who were 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.
- C2.5: 73.5 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 53.7 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, supervision of foster care cases remains with the county until TPR, after which, custody is transferred to the State. The Statewide Assessment notes that the State permanency consultants assist in developing a permanent plan and in preparing the case for TPR. The Statewide Assessment notes that SNAP is a State-administered program and that cases are referred to SNAP upon TPR. SNAP matches children with adoptive parents and provides adoption assistance payments to persons who adopt children with special needs.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 9 was rated as a Strength in 54 percent of the cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that adoption is sometimes delayed for children due in part to the following issues:

- There is inconsistent practice across the State with regard to permanency planning and the use of concurrent goals.
- Certain child welfare agencies and courts may wait to finalize TPR until an adoptive resource is found.
- Some judicial and legal representatives are reluctant to pursue TPR for children in out-of-home care.
- TPR appeals delay adoption finalization.
- There are inconsistencies across the State in the accuracy of data entered into eWiSACWIS, especially with regard to the date of adoption finalization.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there are significant delays in finalizing adoptions due in part to delays in filing TPR petitions, holding TPR hearings, and in TPR appeals.

### Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 17 (42.5 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 of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

Item 10 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	3	4	2	9	53
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	4	8	47
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	4	14	23	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>33%</b>		

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in nine cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and/or to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in eight cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- Concerted efforts were not made to provide the child with Independent Living (IL) services (four cases).
- Concerted efforts were not made to ensure that the child was placed in a permanent living arrangement (seven cases).

The following provides information about the age of the child at the time the goal of OPPLA was established:

- Five children were age 12 or younger
- Six children were older than age 12 but younger than age 16
- Six children were age 16 or older

### **Rating Determination**

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 53 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 required for a rating of Strength. Item 10 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, permanency goals associated with OPPLA include the following:

- Alternate Permanent Plan: Sustaining Care (Post-TPR). The child welfare agency is required to sign an agreement with the court regarding care of the child to the age of majority.
- Alternate Permanent Plan: Long-Term Foster Care
- Alternate Permanent Plan: Independent Living

The Statewide Assessment notes that Wisconsin's IL program is designed to help children who are 15-21 years of age, both in juvenile justice cases and child welfare cases, make the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. IL services are incorporated into case planning and include transition planning, daily living skills instruction, employment services, housing services, and education services. The Statewide Assessment notes that IL services are provided through foster parents, caseworkers, or IL coordinators.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 10 was rated as a Strength in 49 percent of the cases reviewed. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that Wisconsin participates in the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth. An analysis of survey data collected revealed the following information:

- 19 percent of former foster youth had been homeless at least once.
- Over 50 percent of former foster youth participated in health education services.
- At 21 years of age, former foster youth reported feeling most prepared to meet their health needs and least prepared to achieve their educational goals or manage their budget and finances.
- At 21 years of age, 70 percent of former foster youth were enrolled in post-secondary education.

Supplemental information amending the Statewide Assessment notes that statute requires that during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date on which a child is expected to age out of placement, the child welfare agency must provide the child with assistance and support in developing a transition plan for making the transition to independent living. The transition plan must be personalized at the direction of the child, shall be as detailed as the child directs, must include specific options for obtaining housing, health care,

education, mentoring, and continuing support services, work force support, employment services, and continuing necessary supportive services after leaving out-of-home care.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are inconsistencies across the State in how effectively IL services are delivered to youth and that there is a lack of transitional housing for youth.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that IL services are provided to youth in foster care. Several stakeholders indicated that foster parents provide IL services. A few stakeholders noted that scholarships are available to youth pursuing higher education. However, other stakeholders indicated that there are insufficient independent living resources.

### Permanency Outcome 2

<b>Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	7	9	6	22	<b>55.0</b>
Partially Achieved	2	1	12	15	<b>37.5</b>
Not Achieved	1	0	2	3	<b>7.5</b>
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>30%</b>		

### Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 55.0 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to place siblings together and ensure frequent visitation between children and parents and between children and their siblings in foster care.
- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to maintain children's connections, seek relatives as placement resources, and promote the bond between parents and children while the children are in foster care.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed a policy: Placement of a Child with a Foster Parent, Adoptive Parent or Proposed Adoptive Parent of the Child's Sibling
- Developed and provided technical assistance and training on the policy regarding visitation: Family Interaction for Child Protective Services Cases When a Child is in Out-of-Home Care

- Developed a policy, Locating and Involving Non-Custodial Parents, Alleged Fathers and Other Relatives, with a related Resource Guide to support caseworkers in their practice
- Hired an Indian child welfare consultant to work with Tribal, State, county, and private agency staff on Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) issues, incorporated ICWA into QSRs, and developed new SACWIS templates to support consistent statewide implementation of ICWA notification requirements

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the 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 32 (80 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if: TPR was 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 near the child’s parents or close relatives. The results of the assessment of item 11 are presented in the table below.

Item 11 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	6	9	16	31	97
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	3
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	1	4	8	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 31 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed in the same community or county as the parents or in close proximity (21 cases).
- Even though the child was placed out of his or her community or county, the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the permanency goal (10 cases).

Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the child was not placed in close proximity to the child’s parents.

### Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 11 also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, local child welfare agencies are required to make efforts to place children within 60 miles of their home. If such a placement is not possible or appropriate, the child's permanency plan must contain an explanation.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 11 was rated as a Strength in 69 percent of the cases reviewed and 50 percent of the children who were not placed in their home county were involved with the juvenile justice system.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item during the onsite CFSR.

### Item 12. Placement with siblings

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 16 (40 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 currently, or had been, placed together, and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of the assessment of item 12 are presented in the table below.

Item 12 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	4	3	3	10	62.5
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	6	6	37.5
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	7	11	24	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33%</b>		

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was placed with siblings (three cases).
- The separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child's best interest (seven cases).

Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in six cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. One of the cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement involved a sibling group of two; three cases involved sibling groups of three; one case involved a sibling group of five; and one case involved a sibling group of six.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 62.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 12 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, local child welfare agencies are required to consider sibling relationships when a child is removed from the home. If placement with a sibling is not safe or appropriate, the child's permanency plan must contain an explanation. The Statewide Assessment notes that licensing rules for general foster homes allow for homes to exceed the capacity of four children up to six children in order to accommodate sibling groups (treatment foster homes have a fixed maximum capacity of four placements). In addition, the Levels of Care initiative provides for the placement of a child in a home at or below the home's level of certification in order to accommodate a sibling group.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 12 was rated as a Strength in 82 percent of the cases reviewed.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in placing siblings together in foster care when it is in the best interests of each child.

### **Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 13 was applicable for 33 (82.5 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: TPR was established

prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child’s life or were deceased, or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care, and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The results of the assessment of item 13 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 13 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	4	10	5	19	<b>58</b>
Area Needing Improvement	3	0	11	14	<b>42</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>33</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	0	4	7	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>31%</b>		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 19 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with the mother (seven cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with the father (nine cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure sufficient visitation with siblings in foster care (nine cases).

Additional information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below.

<b>Typical Frequency of Child’s Visits During the Period Under Review</b>	<b>With Mother</b>	<b>With Father</b>	<b>With Siblings in Foster Care</b>
Visits occurred at least once a week	14 (45%)	6 (33%)	4 (31%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	6 (19%)	1 (6%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	3 (10%)	2 (11%)	1 (8%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (23%)	2 (11%)	5 (38%)
There were no visits during the period under review	1 (3%)	7 (39%)	3 (23%)
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>

The data indicate that children visited at least once per month with their mothers in 74 percent of the applicable cases, with their fathers in 50 percent of the applicable cases, and with their siblings in foster care in 38 percent of the applicable cases.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 58 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 is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, local child welfare agencies are required to create a family interaction plan within 60 days of removal from the home for children in out-of-home care. This requirement does not pertain to children in juvenile justice cases. The Statewide Assessment notes that the family interaction plan must provide for interaction between children and their families no less than weekly. The Statewide Assessment also notes that, if siblings cannot be placed together, State policy and State law mandate that reasonable efforts must be made for frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction between the siblings, unless such visitation or interaction would be contrary to the safety or well-being of any of the children.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that agencies are required to conduct a diligent search for noncustodial parents at the following points in a case: when it is likely that a child will be placed in out-of-home care, when the child is placed in out-of-home care, when it is likely that the child's placement will change, when a concurrent permanency goal is established, when reunification is no longer the goal, and when a child is determined to be subject to the requirements of ICWA.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 13 was rated as a Strength in 62 percent of the cases reviewed.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in ensuring that children in foster care have sufficient contact with their parents. In addition, several stakeholders indicated that foster parents facilitate visits between children and their siblings in foster care if they are not placed together.

### **Item 14. Preserving connections**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 14 was applicable for all 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, faith, language, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 14 are presented in the table that follows.

<b>Item 14 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	8	9	11	28	<b>70</b>
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	9	12	<b>30</b>
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>55%</b>		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 28 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends.

Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 12 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, school, or friends (five cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her language or cultural heritage (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family (nine cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her faith (two cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections with neighborhood, community, faith, language, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 14 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the agencies are required to notify relatives within 30 days of a child’s removal from home in order to maintain connections for the child. The Statewide Assessment notes that children are to remain in their home schools if possible and that funding is available for transportation to support maintaining children in their home schools.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Wisconsin has 11 recognized Indian Tribes that work with county agencies through memoranda of understanding. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that there are inconsistencies in ICWA compliance, specifically with regard to the timeliness with which Tribes are notified of a child’s removal from home.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 14 was rated as a Strength in 96 percent of the cases reviewed.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in ensuring that children in foster care continue to attend the same school and continue to maintain contact with extended family. A few stakeholders indicated that foster parents are responsible for ensuring that children maintain important connections.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions with regard to how effectively the State maintains connections of children in foster care with their Tribe through compliance with the requirements of ICWA. Some stakeholders indicated that counties provide prompt notification to the Tribe when an Indian child enters foster care; however, other stakeholders indicated that counties do not provide prompt notification, making it difficult to maintain connections early in the case.

### Item 15. Relative placement

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 32 (80 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if 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 the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 15 are presented in the table below.

Item 15 Ratings	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	4	5	5	14	44
Area Needing Improvement	1	4	13	18	56
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	5	1	2	8	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>28%</b>		

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

- The child was placed with relatives (four cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable and appropriate (10 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 18 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives when applicable (13 cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives when applicable (16 cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 44 percent of applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Kinship Care program is funded under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to assist children who are at risk of foster care placement to remain within their extended family structure in voluntary living arrangements and court-ordered out-of-home care placements with relatives. The Statewide Assessment notes that, when a child is placed in out-of-home care, placement with a relative must be considered first. The Statewide Assessment reports that State statute requires child welfare agencies to provide notice to all adult relatives of a child who is removed from home within 30 days to establish family connections and develop potential placement resources. The Statewide Assessment notes that the diligent search requirements include the search for relatives of the noncustodial parent.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 15 was rated as a Strength in 74 percent of the cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment also reports that relative care accounted for 30 percent of total placements statewide in December 2009.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in identifying relatives of children in foster care and exploring them as possible placement resources. However, a few stakeholders indicated that relatives are not explored or identified early in the case.

### **Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 16 was applicable for 32 (80 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child, a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child's best interests throughout the period under review, or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of the assessment of item 16 are presented in the table that follows.

<b>Item 16 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	4	9	5	18	<b>56</b>
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	10	14	<b>44</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>32</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	0	5	8	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>33%</b>		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 18 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother when applicable (13 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father when applicable (11 cases).

Specific findings pertaining to this item are shown in the table below.

<b>Efforts Made</b>	<b>With Mother Number of Cases</b>	<b>With Father Number of Cases</b>
Encouraging the parent’s participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	13	6
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	11	3
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	13	4
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models	8	2
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	3	2
<b>Total Applicable Cases in Which Concerted Efforts Were Identified</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>

### **Rating Determination**

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 56 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 16 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the family interaction plan required for children in out-of-home care must include a discussion of how the child's relationship with the parent will be supported. In addition to weekly face-to-face contact, children shall have other family interactions with parents at least weekly. This requirement does not pertain to children in juvenile justice cases.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 16 was rated as a Strength in 63 percent of the cases reviewed.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item during the onsite CFSR.

## III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

### Well-Being Outcome 1

<b>Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	4	8	9	21	<b>32.3</b>
Partially Achieved	6	8	16	30	<b>46.2</b>
Not Achieved	6	1	7	14	<b>21.5</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>28%</b>		

### Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 32.3 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 40 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 20 percent of the 25 in-home services cases.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

## Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to assess needs and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents.
- The State was not consistently effective in its efforts to involve children and parents in case planning.
- The State was not consistently effective in establishing face-to-face contact with parents with sufficient frequency and of sufficient quality to ensure children's safety and/or promote attainment of case goals.
- The State did not make concerted efforts to engage fathers in case planning, assess fathers' service needs, provide services to fathers, or establish frequent contact with fathers.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- Developed and provided training on CPS Safety Intervention Standards
- Developed the Criteria for Assessing the Safety of a Foster Home or Relative Placement policy
- Established a Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to serve the needs of foster and special needs adoptive parents and to support county foster care recruitment
- Developed and provided training on the policy: Family Interaction for Child Protective Services Cases When a Child is in Out-of-Home Care
- Developed the policy: Face-to-Face Contacts with Children and Families Following the Initiation of Ongoing Services
- Developed the policy: Locating and Involving Non-Custodial Parents, Alleged Fathers and Other Relatives

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of the Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

     Strength              X   Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 65 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 education, physical health, and mental health. These areas are addressed in later items. The results of the assessment of item 17 are presented in the table that follows.

<b>Item 17 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	5	8	10	23	35
Area Needing Improvement	11	9	22	42	65
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>31%</b>		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 45 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 20 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 23 cases when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met.

Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 42 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was an inadequate assessment of children’s needs (10 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of mothers’ needs (17 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of fathers’ needs (33 cases).
- There was an inadequate assessment of the needs of foster parents (five cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address the needs of children (15 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address the needs of mothers (25 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address the needs of fathers (35 cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address the needs of foster parents (six cases).

Additional case review findings pertaining to needs assessments and service provision are shown in the table below.

<b>Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases</b>		<b>In-Home Services Cases</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable</b>
Child’s needs assessed and met	34 (85%)	40	16 (64%)	25
Mother’s needs assessed and met	15 (45%)	33	17 (71%)	24
Father’s needs assessed and met	5 (24%)	21	4 (17%)	23
Foster parents’ needs assessed and met	29 (83%)	35		

### **Rating Determination**

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 35 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 17 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, permanency plans for children must include a comprehensive description of the overall needs of the entire family and the foster family, and a description of services identified to meet those needs. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the State does not use a standardized tool to assess the needs of children in out-of-home care. The Statewide Assessment notes that the CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines and the CPS Safety Intervention Standards provide a framework to support the assessment of family strengths and needs for in-home cases and out-of-home cases.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 17 was rated as a Strength in 78 percent of the cases reviewed. For the period 2006-2009, data from the QSR show that resources were provided to support the needs of the child in 89 percent of cases reviewed, of the parents in 68 percent of cases reviewed, and of foster parents in 93 percent of cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 was collected with regard to how effectively the caseworker tracked the child's and family's progress and adjusted the plan because the strategies or services were no longer necessary or were not a good fit to reach the desired outcome. QSR results indicate that tracking was rated as a Strength in 78 percent of cases reviewed and adjustment was rated as a Strength in 65 percent of cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the CST promotes coordination of care for children and families involved in the child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse systems.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Several stakeholders commenting in this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in assessing family strengths and needs using established tools. A few stakeholders indicated that treatment foster homes, group homes, and foster families provide key services. Some stakeholders indicated that there are insufficient support services to meet the needs of families and children due in part to the agency's financial constraints.

### **Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning**

**Strength**       **Area Needing Improvement**

#### **Case Review Findings**

Item 18 was applicable for 64 (98 percent) of the 65 cases. One case was not applicable because parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and the child was too young to participate in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child's best interests. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. The results of the assessment of item 18 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 18 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	6	11	11	28	<b>44</b>
Area Needing Improvement	10	6	20	36	<b>56</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>64</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	0	0	1	1	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>35%</b>		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 56 percent of the 39 applicable foster care cases and 24 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 28 cases 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 in 36 cases 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.

Specific information about involving mothers, fathers, and children in case planning is shown in the table below.

<b>Person Involved in Case Planning</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases</b>		<b>In-Home Services Cases</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable Cases</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable Cases</b>
Mother involved in case planning	19 (58%)	33	18 (75%)	24
Father involved in case planning	9 (43%)	21	3 (14%)	22
Children involved in case planning	22 (81%)	27	7 (41%)	17

### **Rating Determination**

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 44 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 18 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CPS Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines and the CPS Safety Intervention Standards contain specific criteria for engagement of the family in the case planning process for in-home cases and out-of-home cases. According to these standards, caseworkers are expected to develop an Individual Service Plan in collaboration with the family. The Statewide Assessment notes that team approaches such as the CST and Family Group Conferencing are effective practices that support family involvement in the case planning process.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 18 was rated as a Strength with varying frequency for the following populations:

- 70 percent of the cases reviewed for engagement of the mother
- 49 percent of the cases reviewed for engagement of the father
- 89 percent of the cases reviewed for engagement of the child

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions with regard to the State’s effectiveness in involving youth and parents in case planning. Several stakeholders indicated that families are involved routinely in setting their goals and developing case plans. Stakeholders identified the following strategies for involving families in case planning: mediation, family team meetings, and the CST.

However, other stakeholders indicated that the court establishes case plans without input from children or parents or that case plans do not reflect the input of youth and parents.

**Item 19. Caseworker visits with child**

     Strength        **X**   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 19 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s safety and well-being, and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The results of the assessment of item 19 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 19 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	8	14	24	46	<b>71</b>
Area Needing Improvement	8	3	8	19	<b>29</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>75%</b>		

Item 19 was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 56 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 46 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s 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 if visits did occur, they did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (10 cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (one case).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (eight cases).

Specific information regarding the frequency of visitation is provided in the table below.

<b>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During the Period Under Review</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)</b>	<b>In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)</b>
Visits occurred at least once a week	4 (10%)	10 (40%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	7 (17.5%)	5 (20%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	24 (60%)	4 (16%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	5 (12.5%)	5 (20%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	1 (4%)
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>25</b>

The data indicate that caseworkers visited with children at least once per month in 87.5 percent of the foster care cases and 76 percent of the in-home services cases.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 71 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 19 was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DSP policies (Face-to-Face Contacts with Children and Families Following the Initiation of Ongoing Services and the Family Interaction policy) guide caseworkers in assessing the needs of children, outline the purpose of visits, and prescribe timeframes for initial and ongoing caseworker visits. These policies require caseworkers to visit children and juveniles in out-of-home care monthly.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 19 was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of the cases reviewed. However, a DSP review in 2009 of over 500 cases of children in the custody of BMCW placed in either relative or foster care homes found that the quality and content of the visits needed improvement in order to focus on a child’s safety, permanency, and well-being.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that caseworkers visit with children on at least a monthly basis.

**Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 20 was applicable for 58 (89 percent) of the 65 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 their children. All cases that were not applicable are 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 ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of the assessment of item 20 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 20 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	2	11	7	20	34
Area Needing Improvement	11	6	21	38	66
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>58</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	3	0	4	7	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>25%</b>		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 39 percent of the 33 applicable foster care cases and 28 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 20 cases 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 in 38 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency (21 cases).
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient quality (21 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency (32 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient quality (14 cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table below.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	0	0	10 (42%)	1 (5%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	2 (6%)	0	6 (25%)	1 (5%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	14 (42%)	4 (19%)	4 (17%)	1 (5%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	13 (39%)	8 (38%)	4 (17%)	8 (38%)
There were no visits during the period under review	4 (12%)	9 (43%)	0	10 (48%)
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>

The data indicate that caseworkers visited at least once per month with mothers in 48 percent of the applicable foster care cases and 83 percent of the applicable in-home services cases, and caseworkers visited at least once per month with fathers in 19 percent of the applicable foster care cases and 14 percent of the applicable in-home services cases.

### Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 34 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 required for a rating of Strength. Item 20 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DSP policies (Face-to-Face Contacts with Children and Families Following the Initiation of Ongoing Services, the Family Interaction policy, Locating and Involving Non-Custodial Parents, and the Safety Intervention Standards) guide caseworkers in locating and assessing the needs of parents, outline the purpose of visits, and prescribe timeframes for initial and ongoing caseworker visits.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 20 was rated as a Strength in 74 percent of the cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that engaging fathers is an area that needs to be improved statewide.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders regarding this item during the onsite CFSR.

## Well-Being Outcome 2

<b>Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	11	9	16	36	<b>87.8</b>
Partially Achieved	1	0	0	1	<b>2.4</b>
Not Achieved	0	0	4	4	<b>9.8</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>41</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	4	8	12	24	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80%</b>		

### Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87.8 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 94 percent of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 70 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases.

Wisconsin was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

Findings pertaining to the single item assessed under Well-Being Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

#### Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 41 (63 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age, or children in the in-home services 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 the assessment of item 21 are presented in the table that follows.

<b>Item 21 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	11	9	16	36	<b>88</b>
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	4	5	<b>12</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>41</b>	
Not Applicable	4	8	12	24	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80%</b>		

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 36 cases 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 in five cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child’s educational needs were not assessed (four cases).
- The child had identified educational needs that were not addressed (five cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 88 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 a rating of Strength. A 95-percent standard is established for this item because it is the only item assessed for this outcome. Item 21 was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are responsible for assessing and addressing the educational needs of the child and for coordinating with the child’s educational partners. CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards require that children under 3 years old who are the subject of a substantiated maltreatment report must be referred to the Birth to Three Program for screening, evaluation, and intervention services. However, the Statewide Assessment indicates that the State does not track whether these referrals are completed.

Supplemental information amending the Statewide Assessment notes that State statute requires that the development of a transition plan for making the transition to independent living must address education. In addition, State policy requires that transportation be provided for youth to attend school, that youth must have an education plan, youth are able to remain in foster care beyond the age of 18 to complete high school, and that youth must be given their education records when they leave foster care.

The Statewide Assessment notes that children are to remain in their home schools if possible and that funding is available for transportation to support maintaining children in their home schools. The Statewide Assessment notes that family preservation services are offered through both county and private agencies and include school-home liaison services. The Statewide Assessment

indicates that DSP and the Department of Public Instruction have collaborated to update a resource for educators and child welfare agency caseworkers entitled Educational Services for Children Placed in Foster Care.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is a need to improve communication and information-sharing between educational agencies and child welfare agencies.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 21 was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the cases reviewed.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

The stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in coordinating services with the schools when appropriate. A few stakeholders noted that foster parents are expected to work with schools to advocate for children’s educational needs.

**Well-Being Outcome 3**

<b>Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	10	11	18	39	<b>72.2</b>
Partially Achieved	0	1	4	5	<b>9.3</b>
Not Achieved	5	1	4	10	<b>18.5</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>54</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	1	4	6	11	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>69%</b>		

**Status of Well-Being Outcome 3**

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 72.2 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 36 percent of the 14 applicable in-home services cases.

Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

## Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in addressing children’s physical health service needs.
- The State was not consistently effective in assessing or addressing children’s mental health needs even when the nature of the maltreatment indicated that a mental health assessment was warranted.

To address the identified concerns in its Program Improvement Plan, the State developed a mental health screening tool to effectively identify children who may need mental health assessments and subsequent treatment.

The State met its goals for this outcome by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

### Item 22. Physical health of the child

     Strength              X   Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 44 (68 percent) of the 65 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 the assessment of item 22 are presented in the table below.

Item 22	Columbia/Sauk	La Crosse	Milwaukee	Total	Percent
Strength	10	9	20	39	<b>89</b>
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	3	5	<b>11</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>44</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	5	7	9	21	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>87%</b>		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 92.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 50 percent of the 4 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 39 cases when reviewers determined that children’s medical and dental needs were routinely

assessed and necessary services were provided. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in five cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child’s physical health needs were not adequately addressed (four cases).
- The child’s dental health needs were not adequately addressed (five cases).

**Rating Determination**

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 89 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children’s physical health needs. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, all children placed in out-of-home care in Milwaukee County must have a medical screening within 5 business days of entering foster care. In addition, Medicaid State policy requires that children in foster care have medical and dental examinations arranged, in accordance with the Health Check Program, within 30 days of placement and annually thereafter. The Statewide Assessment notes that parents are responsible for ensuring the provision of needed medical care for children receiving in-home child welfare services and that these services are not formally tracked by DSP.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 22 was rated as a Strength in 99 percent of the cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment notes that Milwaukee County has implemented the Mobile Dentist on a monthly basis to provide basic dental services. However, the Statewide Assessment indicates that there is a lack of providers across the State who will accept Medicaid for medical and dental services.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in ensuring that children receive appropriate medical care. However, most stakeholders indicated that dental care providers who will accept Medicaid are not widely available and that there are long waiting lists for Medicaid-reimbursed dental services.

**Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 23 was applicable for 44 (68 percent) of the 65 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 results of the assessment of item 23 are presented in the table that follows.

<b>Item 23 Ratings</b>	<b>Columbia/Sauk</b>	<b>La Crosse</b>	<b>Milwaukee</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	9	9	13	31	<b>70</b>
Area Needing Improvement	5	1	7	13	<b>30</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>44</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	2	7	12	21	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>65%</b>		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 84 percent of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 38 percent of the 13 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 31 cases 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 in 13 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- Mental health needs were not assessed (11 cases).
- Mental health needs were not addressed (13 cases).

**Rating Determination**

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, individual caseworkers are responsible for determining the needs of children and making necessary referrals for mental health and substance abuse screenings, assessments, and treatment. The Statewide Assessment and supplemental information amending the Statewide Assessment note that parents retain the right to give consent for mental health or substance abuse treatment, even for children in out-of-home care, unless a court determines otherwise.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the CST promotes systemic change in the way services are delivered to children and families involved in the child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse systems. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the Trauma Informed Interventions Program is being piloted across the State, including Milwaukee, Sauk, and La Crosse counties, to integrate services for families with caregivers affected by mental health and substance abuse.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the QSR for the period 2005-2009 show that item 23 was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the cases reviewed. For this item, the Statewide Assessment notes that the evaluation differs from the CFSR outcome in that it measures age-appropriate emotional development, adjustment, and coping skills.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is a lack of sufficient mental health and substance abuse services throughout the State and that there are long waiting lists for both mental health assessments and treatment.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that services for mental health assessment and treatment are not widely available and that there are long waiting lists. Several stakeholders noted that there are not enough child psychiatrists or therapists to meet the needs of children. A few stakeholders indicated that caseworkers are receiving training in trauma-related issues.

## 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 under each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for each systemic factor 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). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

### Rating the Systemic Factor

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

It should be noted that ratings for the items included in each systemic factor are not based on single comments from an individual stakeholder; however, these comments are included in the report when they provide important insights or clarification on the State’s performance on a particular systemic factor.

If a State is not in substantial conformity with a particular systemic factor, then that factor must be addressed in the State’s Program Improvement Plan. For each systemic factor, information is provided about the State’s performance in its first CFSR as well as in the current CFSR. If the systemic factor was part of the State’s Program Improvement Plan, the key concerns addressed in the Program Improvement Plan and the strategies for assessing those concerns are noted.

## I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

### Status of Statewide Information System

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. Wisconsin also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the item assessed under Statewide Information System are presented and discussed below.

**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**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength. The State's system, eWiSACWIS, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for every child in foster care. This item also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, eWiSACWIS supports the full range of the State's child welfare program including CPS, ongoing case management, foster care, independent living, and adoption. The Statewide Assessment notes that eWiSACWIS is used by all county child welfare agencies, BMCW, and SNAP. In addition, the following external entities have limited access to eWiSACWIS:

- 11 Tribes have read-only access.
- Private group home and residential facility agencies can enter case notes to document child contacts as authorized by local child welfare agencies.
- Contracted private providers who deliver IL services can enter case information as authorized by local child welfare agencies.

The Statewide Assessment notes that eWiSACWIS users are required to follow Wisconsin CPS practice standards for timeliness of data entry. The Statewide Assessment indicates that eWiSACWIS produces reports for managers and supervisors at State and county levels for use in performance monitoring. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the data warehouse includes data and reports related to placements, providers, and adoption that are available to State staff.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

The stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that eWiSACWIS can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child in foster care, including children in the juvenile justice system. Although several stakeholders indicated that there are delays in data entry for several fields in the system, most stakeholders agreed that placement information is entered into eWiSACWIS in a timely manner. Several stakeholders noted that data derived from eWiSACWIS that are presented on the Dashboard produce helpful reports that are used at the local level to monitor and track cases. In addition, a few stakeholders noted that eWiSACWIS generates helpful reports.

**II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM**

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

**Status of Case Review System**

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not routinely involve parents (particularly fathers) in the case planning process and in the development of the case plan.
- The TPR process was not implemented consistently in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
- The process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers about reviews and hearings was not implemented in a timely or consistent manner throughout the State.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- The State ensured that new administrative rules governing child welfare practice and policy for children in out-of-home care include requirements for family involvement in case planning.
- The State increased training, communication of legislative requirements, and analysis of TPR case processing.
- The State issued guidance on how caregivers can provide information to the court or permanency review panel and incorporated information about caregiver roles and responsibilities into existing pre-service foster parent training, child welfare training, and the *Model Wisconsin Foster Parent Handbook*.

The State met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

### **Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Case Review System are presented and discussed below.

#### **Item 25. The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions**

     Strength              X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a process to develop case plans for children, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that the State is not effective in ensuring that a case plan with a permanency goal is developed for each child in a timely manner. Information from stakeholder interviews indicates that the State does not ensure that case plans are developed jointly with the child's parents. During the onsite CFSR, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve mothers in case planning in 65 percent of the applicable cases and fathers in case planning in 28 percent of the applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCF policy requires that a permanency plan must be developed within 60 days of initial removal from the home for children in foster care. The Statewide Assessment also notes that a case plan is required for children receiving services in their homes and for children in juvenile justice cases. The Statewide Assessment notes that, for children receiving in-home or out-of-home care services, the case plan must identify specific goals and objectives, describe the services or resources needed to achieve those goals and objectives, and define family and provider responsibilities in the case planning process.

The Statewide Assessment notes that team approaches such as the CST and Family Group Conferencing are effective practices that support family involvement in the case planning process. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that emphasis is placed on the use of family-managed safety plans before consideration is given to agency-managed safety plans and then to removal of a child from home.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from eWiSACWIS (as of December 2009) show that 85 percent of nearly 6,000 children in foster care for more than 60 days had permanency plans and goals documented in their case files.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The key concerns addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether case plans are developed for children and whether parents are involved in developing the case plans.

With regard to whether case plans are developed for children, most stakeholders indicated that case plans are not developed consistently for each child in a timely manner. Various stakeholders indicated the following reasons for delays in the development of case plans:

- Cases must be transferred from the caseworker responsible for access and initial assessment to an ongoing caseworker who is then responsible for completing the case plan.
- Caseloads are too high in many counties.
- Case plans are sometimes superseded by or contingent on court orders.

With regard to whether case plans are developed with the involvement of parents, most stakeholders indicated that parents are not consistently involved in the development of the case plans. Several stakeholders indicated that the court order is the basis for the case plan. However, some stakeholders indicated that there are various processes for involving parents in case planning (e.g., family team meetings, the CST, and mediation) and that parents are involved in developing case plans in many cases.

### **Item 26. The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength. The State has a process for the periodic review of the status of each child every 6 months. This item was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that the child's permanency plan be reviewed at least every 6 months when the child is in out-of-home care. Plans are reviewed either by a judicial review or by an administrative review panel approved by

the court. The Statewide Assessment notes that, if an administrative review panel reviews the plan, a written summary must be submitted to the court within 30 days of the review.

For this item, the Statewide Assessment provides data from the Children’s Court Initiative (CCI). CCI is a collaborative project to evaluate court processes and an initiative of the Children’s Court Improvement Program, which is located in the Director of State Courts Office. The Statewide Assessment reports that results of CCI reviews indicate that the 6-month review is conducted in a timely manner in 83 percent of the applicable cases. In the cases in which an administrative review occurred, CCI results show that the written review summary was filed with the court in a timely manner in 70 percent of the cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The key concerns addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether periodic reviews are held in a timely manner and whether the periodic reviews are effective in moving the case toward the goals in the case plan.

With regard to whether periodic reviews are held in a timely manner, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that periodic reviews are held at least every 6 months either by an administrative review panel or by a court.

With regard to the effectiveness of the periodic reviews, although some stakeholders in all sites indicated that the reviews are used to monitor progress toward goals in the case plan and that all parties participate and are engaged in the review process, a few Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that the reviews are used to monitor case plan compliance rather than to ensure that there is progress being made in attaining the goals in the case plan.

**Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a process to conduct permanency hearings for children in foster care every 12 months, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that this process is not consistently implemented across the State. Data reported in the Statewide Assessment show that 86 percent of permanency hearings are conducted in a timely manner. In addition, information from stakeholder interviews indicates that the State is not consistently effective in ensuring that the reviews move the case toward permanency. This item was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires the court to review the permanency plan at the point a child has been in out-of-home care for 12 months. The Statewide Assessment notes that the court is required to address whether reasonable efforts were made to achieve the goal of the permanency plan during the permanency hearing.

The Statewide Assessment reports that results of the CCI reviews indicate that the 12-month permanency plan hearing was held in a timely manner in 86 percent of the applicable cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The key concerns addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether the 12-month permanency hearings are held in a timely manner and whether these hearings are effective in moving the case toward permanency.

With regard to whether the 12-month permanency hearings are held in a timely manner, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the hearings are held in court on an annual basis.

With regard to the effectiveness of the permanency hearings, some stakeholders suggested that the reviews are not effective in moving the case toward permanency and that the purpose of the hearings is not well understood by courts or caseworkers. However, other stakeholders indicated that the reviews are used to evaluate the goals in the case plan, develop concurrent goals, and move the case toward permanency.

### **Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a process for filing TPR petitions in accordance with the provisions of ASFA, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that this process is not implemented consistently across the State. Data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that there were notable delays in the filing of TPR petitions in 24 percent of the counties. In addition, during the Onsite Review, reviewers determined that ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 71 percent of applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that a TPR petition must be filed by the agency, district attorney, corporation counsel, or other appropriate official for a child who has been in out-of-home care for 15 of the most recent 22 months unless there are compelling reasons not to file the petition. Those reasons must be documented by the 15th month in out-of-home care. The Statewide Assessment notes that compelling reasons include the following:

- The child is being cared for by a fit and willing relative.
- The child's permanency plan indicates and provides documentation that TPR is not in the child's best interests.
- The agency has not provided the child's family the services necessary for the safe return of the child to his or her home.
- The grounds for an involuntary TPR do not exist.

The Statewide Assessment notes that State permanency consultants are available to consult with local child welfare agencies to assess the appropriateness of TPR in individual cases for children who have been in out-of-home care for 12 or more months. The Statewide Assessment indicates that concurrent planning policy supports caseworkers in meeting the ASFA requirements with regard to TPR while continuing efforts toward reunification.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the CCI reviews show that in 76 percent of counties reviewed, there were no notable delays in the filing of TPR petitions. The Statewide Assessment indicates that delays are due in part to high caseloads and insufficient staffing in the district attorney's office or corporation counsel's office. However, the Statewide Assessment indicates that eWiSACWIS produces performance monitoring reports that are used by the State to monitor compliance with the requirements of ASFA.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Although some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA and that compelling reasons not to file TPR are documented when appropriate, several stakeholders noted that TPR is not filed consistently in a timely manner. Various stakeholders indicated the following possible reasons for the delays:

- There is no permanent placement identified for the child.
- There are delays in the dispositional hearing at which the TPR petition is to be filed.
- There is a lack of attorney staff or corporation counsel staff available to file TPR petitions.
- There is a perception that the court will not grant TPR due to concerns about parents' rights; therefore, there is a reluctance to file TPR petitions.

### **Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a process to notify caregivers of hearings for children in their care, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that the process is not consistently implemented across the State and information from stakeholder interviews indicates that caregivers are not given the opportunity to be heard in hearings consistently. Data reported in the Statewide Assessment show that caregivers were routinely given notice of hearings in 76 percent of cases reviewed. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, State statute requires that the caregiver be provided notice of all hearings in Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) and TPR cases. The Statewide Assessment indicates that notice must be made by the court, or any

suitable person under the direction of the court, no less than 30 days before the hearing. In TPR cases, the petitioner is responsible to provide notice to caregivers. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the process for providing notice of hearings to caregivers varies depending on local county practice.

The Statewide Assessment reports that State statute gives caregivers the “opportunity” to be heard at hearings and administrative reviews in juvenile cases via a written or oral statement at or prior to the hearing or review. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that a new State statute that went into effect in January 2010 gives foster parents and relative caregivers a “right” to be heard at hearings and reviews. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that some foster parents are not aware that statutes provide them with an opportunity to be heard at hearings or are uncomfortable making a statement in court without first being asked to do so. Moreover, the Statewide Assessment indicates that the practice of soliciting input from caregivers varies by judicial officer and case type.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data from the CCI reviews show that caregivers were routinely given notice in 76 percent of 460 applicable cases. In addition, the CCI reviews indicate that judges allowed caregivers to make statements in court.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that DSP issued the *Model Wisconsin Foster Parent Handbook* and *Guide for Foster Parents and Other Physical Custodians to Provide Information at Court Proceedings*, both of which include information about caregiver participation in hearings.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The key concerns addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether notice is provided to caregivers and whether caregivers have an opportunity to be heard in hearings.

With regard to whether notice is provided to caregivers, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that notice of hearings is provided routinely to caregivers.

With regard to whether caregivers have an opportunity to be heard in hearings, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that caregivers are given an opportunity to be heard in hearings. However, a few State-level, Columbia County, and Sauk County stakeholders indicated that caseworkers do not encourage foster parents to attend hearings, and a few Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that foster parents sometimes do not have the opportunity to be heard during the hearings.

### III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

#### Status of Quality Assurance System

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance (QA) System. Wisconsin was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

#### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 review was that the State did not have a QA system that had the capacity to evaluate the quality of services, provide relevant reports, and evaluate the implementation of program improvement measures.

To address the identified concern, in its Program Improvement Plan, the State implemented a statewide, comprehensive QA program, the QSR process.

The State met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

#### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under QA System are presented and discussed 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. The State has developed and implemented comprehensive standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services to protect their safety and health. This item also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Wisconsin has developed and implemented the following standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health:

- CPS Access and Initial Assessment Standards provide practice requirements from intake through investigation and initial assessment.
- CPS Safety Intervention Standards specify criteria for assessing threats to child safety, a specific process for analyzing those threats, and a process for developing a plan for controlling the threats.
- CPS Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines provide practice requirements from the time that a case is opened for ongoing services through service provision and case closure.
- The Level of Care initiative, effective January 2010, establishes consistent licensing standards for relative and non-relative caregivers, implements a standardized needs assessment tool for all children in out-of-home care, and formalizes expectations for higher levels of care such as treatment foster homes.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the State's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program has used the results of QSRs to identify and target professional development areas that are needed to support the requirements of program standards.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has been effective in developing and implementing practice standards for county and State child welfare agency staff.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in ensuring that high-quality services are delivered through contracts with private agencies. Several stakeholders indicated that contract service providers must meet standards of practice and are monitored regularly for compliance, and some Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that private agency service providers must meet provider accreditation standards. However, other stakeholders indicated that the monitoring is limited to process and implementation issues and does not incorporate performance measures.

**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**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength. The State is operating a QA system, the QSR, that evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs in the service delivery system, provides reports, and develops County Action Plans. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State's CQI Unit developed and implemented a QA process similar to the Federal CFSR called the QSR to evaluate practice and outcomes for cases in the ongoing phase of CPS. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the CQI Unit conducted QSR Agreement Studies to measure and improve reliability among case reviewers.

The Statewide Assessment notes that QSRs are held in the 19 largest counties every 3 years and are to be completed for all 72 counties over a 7.5-year period. Pursuant to a Milwaukee court settlement, QSRs are required every 18 months in Milwaukee County. The Statewide Assessment also notes that as of December 2009, 54 individual counties have been reviewed using the QSR protocol. The Statewide Assessment indicates that QSRs are conducted in conjunction with CCI reviews whenever possible.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that two new protocols were developed: one to evaluate the Access and Initial Assessment phase of CPS and the second, called the Permanency Pathway protocol, to evaluate case practice and outcomes for children with a goal of adoption. These two protocols will join the QSR in June 2010.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the QSR is immediately followed by the development of an Action Plan to identify opportunities to improve outcomes in areas of practice or systemic areas. The Statewide Assessment notes that only 2 of 54 counties reviewed have declined to develop and implement a formal County Action Plan.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that the DCF Central Training Unit uses County Action Plans to identify county-specific training needs and craft an individualized curriculum.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that quantitative data from eWiSACWIS are not integrated with the qualitative results of the QSR at this time. In addition, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that most local child welfare agencies are not able to access and utilize the data warehouse or other eWiSACWIS reports for the day-to-day management of their organizations at this time.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State operates an effective QA system, the QSR, that evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs in the service delivery system, provides reports, and leads to the development of a County Action Plan. Most stakeholders noted that the QSR is useful and provides helpful information. In addition, several stakeholders noted that the QSR process includes the participation of key stakeholders, including Tribes, and is conducted jointly with the CCI in many cases. Several stakeholders indicated that the Action Plans are tied to the development and provision of specialized training for county offices.

#### IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

#### Status of Staff and Provider Training

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

#### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The training program did not ensure that newly hired caseworkers in all county child welfare offices received the initial training necessary to provide services that support the goals and objectives of CFSPs prior to the assignment of caseloads.
- The State did not have statewide requirements for staff to participate in ongoing training.
- The State did not mandate pre-placement or ongoing training for foster parents.

To address the identified concerns, the State implemented the following strategies in its Program Improvement Plan:

- The State developed and implemented minimum training requirements for initial and ongoing training for child welfare staff.
- The State developed modules for ongoing eWiSACWIS training.
- The State developed opportunities for county and Tribal staff to access child welfare training.
- The State expanded the capacity of the child welfare training system to meet minimum training requirements.

The State met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Staff and Provider Training are presented and discussed 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        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a pre-service training program in place, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State does not have a process in place to ensure that all staff who deliver services have fulfilled initial training requirements. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, all new child welfare staff and supervisors in the counties, BMCW, and SNAP are required to complete nine online pre-service training modules consisting of 40 hours prior to receiving a primary case assignment. The Statewide Assessment notes that the training modules include an overview of child welfare services, engagement of families, child safety, permanency, development and dynamics of human behavior, access (intake), court, initial assessment, and ongoing services.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that new staff are required to complete 15 days (90 hours) over the course of the first 2 years of employment (or 1 year for new supervisors) of foundation training in the following areas: child safety assessment, ICWA, skill development, the principles of engagement, assessing families, and team-based practice. New caseworkers are required to complete additional courses specific to job function such as access, initial assessment, or legal aspects of child welfare.

The Statewide Assessment notes that training participation is monitored through eWiSACWIS and Regional Training Partnerships and that quizzes throughout the modules track knowledge acquisition. However, the Statewide Assessment indicates that there are inconsistencies in tracking completion rates due to different data entered into the two tracking systems.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges the following deficiencies in the statewide training system identified through an independent assessment:

- There is a lack of accurate tracking for the completion of training.
- There is no system to identify the skills and needs of staff.
- There is a lack of research-based evaluation to measure the effectiveness of training.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The key concerns addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether the State provides initial training to staff who deliver child welfare services and whether that training is effective in preparing staff for their jobs.

With regard to whether the State provides initial training, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State requires new caseworkers to complete pre-service training prior to being assigned a caseload and foundation training over the course of the first 2 years of employment. A few stakeholders indicated that training completion is tracked in eWiSACWIS. However, a few stakeholders expressed the opinion that data regarding training completion is incomplete and unreliable.

With regard to whether pre-service and foundation training is effective in preparing staff for the duties of the job, stakeholders expressed different opinions. Several stakeholders indicated that pre-service and foundation training courses are helpful and of high quality and a few stakeholders indicated that caseworkers must pass a series of quizzes administered after each training module. However, a few Milwaukee County stakeholders expressed the opinion that pre-service and foundation training courses do not prepare caseworkers for their jobs. In addition, a few stakeholders suggested that access services caseworkers are not fully trained.

### **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        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State provides ongoing training, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State does not have a process in place to ensure that all staff, including licensed caseworkers, who deliver services have fulfilled ongoing training requirements. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, all child welfare staff and supervisors in the counties, BMCW, and SNAP are required to complete 30 hours of child welfare-related continuing education every 2 years following the completion of foundation training. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the DCF Central Training Unit uses County Action Plans developed after the QSR to identify specific training needs and craft a curriculum. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is no formalized evaluation to measure the effectiveness of ongoing training.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State requires caseworkers and supervisors to complete ongoing training in child welfare-related issues and that these requirements are set by the social work

licensing board. However, some stakeholders indicated that there is no method to track whether licensed caseworkers complete ongoing training requirements. In addition, some Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that workload pressures prevent caseworkers and supervisors from participating in ongoing training. Other stakeholders said that ongoing training is not required for supervisors, although this opinion is contrary to State policy.

Several stakeholders indicated that ongoing training is developed for counties by the Regional Partnerships based on the results of the QSRs. Most stakeholders indicated that ongoing training is provided to support new initiatives and policies and is of a high quality.

**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**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has developed a new requirement for initial and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that, at this time, the State does not provide or require training for foster and adoptive parents to address the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of children in foster care. In addition, not all counties require or provide training for foster and adoptive parents. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, training for foster and adoptive parents is currently the responsibility of county child welfare agencies. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that although over half the local child welfare agencies, including BMCW, have extensive and comprehensive foster parent training requirements, there was no statewide training mandate in place during the period under review.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that a new Administrative Rule was published in January 2010 (effective January 2011) to require agencies that receive funds through title IV-E to require successful completion of training for foster parents in care and support needs of children who are placed in foster care. The Administrative Rule also delineates the training requirements for certification for each Level of Care.

The Statewide Assessment notes that treatment foster parents currently are required to complete pre-service, initial licensing, and ongoing training primarily through private child-placing agencies. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that DSP contracts with the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center to provide some ongoing foster parent trainings that are made available, but are not required, to foster parents statewide.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that although there is no current statewide requirement for foster parent training, the counties participating in the CFSR require and provide initial pre-placement and ongoing training for foster parents. In addition, a few stakeholders indicated that the State requires and provides training for prospective adoptive parents, treatment foster homes, and staff of group homes. A few stakeholders noted that foster parent peer groups provide support and training for foster parents.

**V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

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

**Status of Service Array and Resource Development**

Wisconsin is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. Wisconsin also was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 Onsite Review:

- The State did not have in place an array of services to address the needs of children and families to enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and to help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.
- Services were not accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions.

To address the identified concerns in its Program Improvement Plan, the State conducted a comprehensive survey of services available in counties to determine where gaps and barriers exist to client access to needed services.

The State met its target goals for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

## Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Service Array and Resource Development are presented and discussed 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**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as a Strength. Although the availability of services varies by county, Wisconsin has an array of key services in place statewide to assess the strengths and address the needs of children and families with regard to safety and permanency. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, child welfare services are provided by local child welfare agencies or through contracted private providers. The Statewide Assessment notes that the statewide array of services includes prevention, early intervention, and ongoing assistance to children and families at risk or involved with the child welfare system. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the service array varies by county.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that the CPS Safety Intervention Standards, the Ongoing Services Standards, the CST, and wraparound programming facilitate the accurate assessment of strengths and needs of children and families. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that the State does not use a standardized tool to assess the needs of children in out-of-home care.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the results of a statewide service array survey conducted in 2006 identified the following services as most essential to assuring safety and permanency: parent aide, in-home therapy, reunification, supervised visitation/family interaction, and post-reunification aftercare and support. The Statewide Assessment also notes that caseworkers are required to document in the Case Progress Evaluation information pertaining to the quality of service implementation, the appropriateness of services and providers, and any barriers to service provision every 6 months for in-home cases and every 90 days for children in foster care.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State provides a comprehensive array of key services to assess the strengths and address the needs of children and families with regard to safety and permanency. Several stakeholders indicated that services are coordinated and strengthened through partnerships with community-based organizations. However, many stakeholders indicated that the service array varies by county.

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

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that there is a lack of sufficient services and resources available within the same community or county as the family or child live. In addition, there is a lack of available transportation and families are required to travel long distances and wait for long periods of time to access needed services, particularly mental health, substance abuse, parenting education, and IL services. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, service availability and accessibility varies by county and many counties lack the ability to access services within and across counties. The Statewide Assessment notes that the statewide service array survey conducted in 2006 found that the service areas needing the greatest improvement in availability and accessibility were parent aide services and parenting education. The Statewide Assessment indicates the following deficiencies in the accessibility of services:

- There are insufficient transportation services, especially in rural areas.
- There are insufficient child care services and supervised visitation services.
- There is insufficient transitional housing for youth.
- There are insufficient providers across the State who will accept Medicaid for medical and dental services.
- There are insufficient mental health and substance abuse services across the State, and there are long waiting lists for both mental health assessments and treatment.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that, due to fiscal constraints, services are sometimes rationed to families when the court orders them, and waitlists are used when there is a lack of appropriate and available service providers.

Despite these challenges, the Statewide Assessment indicates the following promising approaches to overcoming barriers to accessing services:

- Some counties join together to provide wraparound programming, foster care coordination, and out-of-home care cost-sharing.
- Some counties have acquired teleconferencing capabilities to enable families to consult with child psychiatrists or to facilitate family interaction.
- Some counties provide volunteer transportation services.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that many services are not accessible to children and families in all jurisdictions in the State, there are waitlists for services, and transportation is not consistently available to assist families and children in accessing services.

Various stakeholders identified the following services or resources that are not available in sufficient quantity in various parts of the State:

- Mental health assessment and treatment, inpatient and outpatient psychiatric services for children and adults, therapy, and counseling
- Dental and orthodontia providers who will accept Medicaid
- In-home prevention, parenting, post-reunification, post-adoption, and kinship support
- In-patient and out-patient substance abuse treatment
- Sexual abuse treatment and treatment for sexual offenders
- IL services and transition planning for youth
- Crisis response and respite care
- Family visitation centers and supervised visitation programs
- Housing assistance
- Foster homes for large sibling groups

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

     Strength              X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that, although the State has the ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families through the use of case planning tools and flexible funding mechanisms, the State does not consistently individualize service delivery to meet the needs of children and families due in part to insufficient services and resources available. For example, there are insufficient services available for non-English speakers, and there are insufficient interpretation services. This item was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following concerns were identified with regard to the effectiveness of individualizing services to meet the needs of children and families:

- Service availability and accessibility varies by county, limiting the ability of the local agency to individualize service provision.
- Case plans can contain identical requirements ordered by the court prior to the completion of an assessment of family needs.
- The quality of permanency planning for Indian children is inconsistent due to a lack of awareness of the special requirements and cultural considerations of ICWA.
- There is a lack of Spanish-speaking or other culturally competent services in most of the State.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has the ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families. Several stakeholders indicated that the county-based service delivery system provides county agencies with the ability to use funds flexibly, and many county agencies have developed creative partnerships with community organizations to tailor services to the needs of families. However, several stakeholders indicated that there are insufficient services available in languages other than English, and there are insufficient interpretation services available. In addition, some stakeholders indicated that there is a lack of culturally appropriate services for some families.

**VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY**

<b>Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity</b>				
<b>Rating</b>	<b>Not in Substantial Conformity</b>		<b>In Substantial Conformity</b>	
	1	2	3	4X

**Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community**

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Wisconsin also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Agency Responsiveness to the Community are presented and discussed 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. The State engages in ongoing consultation with key stakeholders, including Tribes, youth, court partners, statewide advisory councils, and county child welfare agency leadership in developing the goals and objectives of the CFSP. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DSP engages in consultation with local agencies, Tribes, and key stakeholders to address the full range of child welfare issues, develop policy, and implement initiatives. The Statewide Assessment notes that in May and October 2009, the Commission on Children, Families, and the courts provided feedback to DCF to support evaluation of the State child welfare system performance. In addition, the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council provides feedback to DCF regarding the State's performance on critical CFSR measures. DCF holds biannual consultation sessions with Tribal leaders regarding its programs, and the Tribal child welfare priorities are included in the CFSP. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCF convened the Secretary's Council on Child Welfare, including key stakeholders, to provide input into the CFSP and upcoming Program Improvement Plan.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that DCF makes the CFSP and annual update reports accessible to stakeholders via the DCF website.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally engages with key stakeholders, including Tribes, youth, court partners, statewide advisory councils, and county child welfare agency leadership in the development of the CFSP. Several stakeholders indicated that there is comprehensive participation by stakeholders on the Secretary's Council on Child Welfare.

### **Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports pursuant to the CFSP**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength. The State consults with stakeholders on an ongoing basis and in the development of the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). This item also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

The Statewide Assessment information with regard to both items 38 and 39 is presented above.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally engages with key stakeholders on an ongoing basis in the development of the APSR.

Various stakeholders identified the following ongoing consultation activities:

- Secretary’s Council on Child Welfare
- Commission on Children and the Courts
- Regular Tribal consultation
- Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council

**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**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength. The State coordinates child welfare services with those provided by other federally assisted programs serving the same population. This item also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCF is an umbrella agency encompassing child welfare, child support, child care, and the TANF programs. The Statewide Assessment notes that DCF works with other State agencies to address the ongoing needs of children and families. For example, the Statewide Assessment notes that the CST is a joint initiative between DCF and DHS to promote systemic change in the way services are delivered to children and families involved in the child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse systems. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCF coordinates with DHS to address the medical and dental needs of children and families.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in coordinating child welfare services with the services provided by other federally assisted programs serving the same population. Several stakeholders noted that the new State DCF brings child welfare services under the same umbrella as the TANF program. In addition, some stakeholders noted collaboration with the service delivery systems of mental health, health, child care, child support, and juvenile justice. However, a few stakeholders indicated that coordination with juvenile justice programs could be improved.

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

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

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

Wisconsin is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. Wisconsin also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention are presented and discussed 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. The State has implemented appropriate licensing standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are based on national standards. This item also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

The Wisconsin title IV-E Review, conducted in August 2008, found that there were no cases with licensing issues.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, with regard to congregate care facilities, DCF licenses child-placing agencies, group foster homes, shelter care, and residential care centers. The Statewide Assessment notes that these agencies are monitored at a minimum of twice each year for compliance with licensing rules and that licensing staff investigate all complaints. With regard to family foster homes, the Statewide Assessment notes that counties, Tribes, and private child-placing agencies license and monitor foster homes and treatment foster homes. Supplemental information amending the Statewide Assessment also notes that licenses for foster homes, treatment foster homes, residential care centers, group homes, shelter care, and child placing agencies are only valid in 2-year intervals and must be renewed at that time.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that licensing standards were developed using national standards, the Child Welfare League of America guidelines, Federal laws, State statute, and stakeholder feedback.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that prospective licensees must pass background checks, physical plant checks, and complete an assessment process. The Statewide Assessment reports that SNAP and BMCW use the Structured Analysis Family Evaluation, known in Wisconsin as the Resource Family Evaluation (RFE), to complete home studies of foster and adoptive parents. Local child welfare agencies can use the RFE on a voluntary basis. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Levels of Care initiative provides a process for licensing relatives and provides specialized requirements for higher levels of foster care.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has standards for licensing foster homes, treatment foster homes, group homes, and pre-adoptive homes. Several stakeholders indicated that licensing standards include background checks, home studies, home visits, and training requirements. In addition, several stakeholders indicated that children are not placed in homes prior to licensing. A few stakeholders indicated that licenses are renewed every 2 years and that a full background check and home study is completed at that time. Several stakeholders noted the more stringent requirements of the Levels of Care initiative, implemented in January 2010.

### **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        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that licensing standards are not applied equally statewide, and there is no process to monitor county foster care licensing processes and practices to ensure equal application of licensing standards. This item was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State does not issue probationary licenses for family foster homes or treatment foster homes. The Statewide Assessment notes that, for child-placing agencies, group homes, shelter care, and residential care providers, an initial provider license is issued for a 6-month probationary period subject to review. A second 6-month probationary license may be issued if the provider is not able to demonstrate compliance with licensing rules. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the Levels of Care initiative will equalize expectations of, and supports to, licensed relative foster care providers.

Supplemental information amending the Statewide Assessment notes that, as of January 2010, court-ordered kinship care (COKC) requires that caregivers apply for foster care licensure within four months of placement or face discontinuance of kinship care payments. Those kinship caregivers who are licensable must be licensed and transition to a foster care payment commensurate with

their level of licensure. Those kinship caregivers who are not able to be licensed must be reconsidered by the ongoing agency and the court, and if found appropriate to continue as a placement, will retain any eligibility for kinship care payments.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is no regular process to monitor county foster care licensing processes and local licensing practices to ensure that standards are applied equally. The Statewide assessment notes that DSP licensing staff conduct monitoring visits to review 10 percent of the foster care files for each private child-placing agency. The Statewide Assessment reports that the licensing staff stated that the majority of foster and treatment care files are in compliance with licensing codes. For foster parents who are not in compliance, the agency must create a plan to remedy the situation. Licenses are revoked if the provider is not in compliance with licensing rules.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that licensing standards are applied equally. However, a few La Crosse County and Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that there is variability in the application of licensing standards among caseworkers and in different locations.

Several stakeholders indicated that relative caregivers usually are not licensed and that, when relatives are licensed, agencies grant waivers or exceptions to non-safety-related licensing standards in rare instances.

### **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**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. The State conducts criminal background clearances prior to placing children in licensed and unlicensed relative, foster, and pre-adoptive homes. This item also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

The Wisconsin title IV-E Review, conducted in August 2008, found that there were no cases in which children were placed in a home in which criminal records checks were not complete.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the statewide licensing protocol includes the completion of background checks for all adults in the home and for all children in the home who are older than age 10. A foster home or treatment foster home license cannot be issued prior to the completion and receipt of the Caregiver Background Check, the Adam Walsh background check, Child Abuse and Neglect registry check, and Sex Offender Registry search. The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are concerns regarding the timeliness of receiving fingerprint-based background checks.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State conducts criminal background checks for all prospective relative, foster, and pre-adoptive caregivers and other adults in the home prior to the placement of children in that home. A few stakeholders indicated that the background checks include a review of criminal records, FBI records, sex-offender registries, child abuse and neglect registries, and fingerprinting.

A few stakeholders noted that although the majority of relatives are not licensed at this time, a home study, home visit, and background checks must be completed before or at the time a child is placed with a relative.

### **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 foster and adoptive homes are needed**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as a Strength. The State has a recruitment plan and assists counties in the identification and recruitment of families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. This item also was rated as a Strength in Wisconsin's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, local child welfare agencies and SNAP are responsible for recruiting families for the children in out-of-home care. The Statewide Assessment notes that DSP has increased resources to support the recruitment of foster and adoptive parents who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in out-of-home care. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that DSP administers a grant focused on Native American family recruitment. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center assists with recruitment statewide.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following statistics as of October 31, 2009:

- 52 percent of children in foster care were White, and 74 percent of primary foster parents were White.
- 40 percent of children in foster care were Black/African-American, and 24 percent of primary foster parents were Black/African-American.
- 4 percent of children in foster care were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 10 percent of primary foster parents were American Indian/Alaskan Native.
- 1 percent of children in foster care were Asian.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in assisting counties with the identification and recruitment of families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster

care. Several stakeholders indicated that particular efforts are made to work with Tribes and with churches and neighborhoods that are predominantly African-American to develop placement resources. A few Milwaukee County stakeholders indicated that particular efforts are made to develop neighborhood-based placement resources in targeted areas of the county.

**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. The State has a process to facilitate cross-jurisdictional adoptive and permanent placements for children. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Wisconsin’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Wisconsin participates in the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). The Statewide Assessment notes that the State supports cross-county placements and changes in venue to facilitate permanence for children in out-of-home care through the use of the Wisconsin Inter-County Agreement on Venue, Jurisdiction, Placement and Funding Responsibility in CHIPS, JIPS and Delinquency Cases. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that the Levels of Care initiative and the requirements to notify relatives immediately when a child is removed from his or her home are among the strategies that facilitate the placement of children across county and State lines.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that although there are challenges in working with the ICPC and in working with other counties to facilitate placements, the counties generally coordinate care and services to ensure that cross-jurisdictional adoptive placements are available for children who need them. Some stakeholders indicated that counties use the **AdoptUsKids** resource to find adoptive homes.