

Wyoming Department of Family Services



Statewide Assessment

Child and Family Services Review Round 2

Submitted

4/14/2008

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Section I: General Information

Contact Information

Name of State Agency	
Wyoming Department of Family Services	
Period Under Review	
Onsite Review Sample Period: 4/1/07 through 9/30/07 (Foster care). 4/1/07 through 11/30/07 (In-Home) Period of AFCARS Data: 2006B through 2007A (4/1/06 through 3/31/07) Period of NCANDS Data: (4/1/06 through 3/31/07)	
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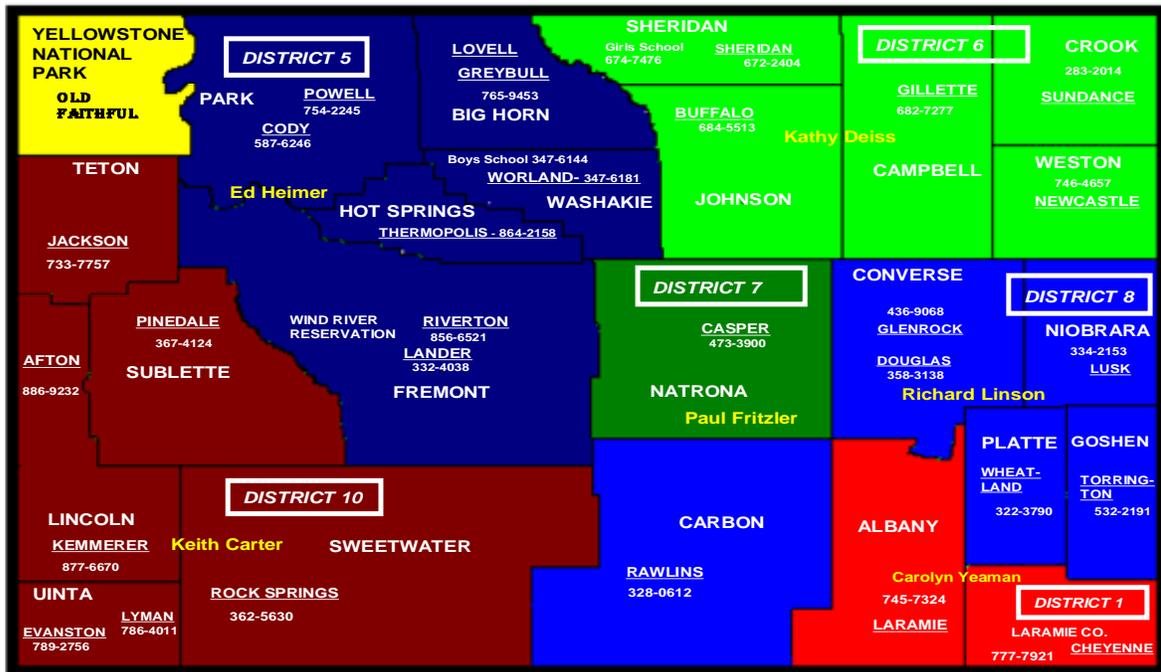
Agency Overview

The Department of Family Services (DFS) has the following divisions within the Department: Juvenile Services, Financial Services, Protective Services, Economic Assistance/Child Support Enforcement, and Administrative Services. The Division of Protective Services has been established to administer and supervise all child welfare services. The Division of Juvenile Services administers programs focusing on troubled and delinquent youth and regulatory childcare. DFS is the designated state agency to administer Title IV-B and IV-E programs, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, and the Education and Training Vouchers Program. Wyoming is a state administered Child Welfare/Juvenile Services Agency with the functions of policy development, training, strategic planning, and quality assurance centralized at the state level. Policy and practice standards are uniform across the state, and both divisions within the state utilize a centralized SACWIS system (WYCAPS) for the purposes of case management and documentation.

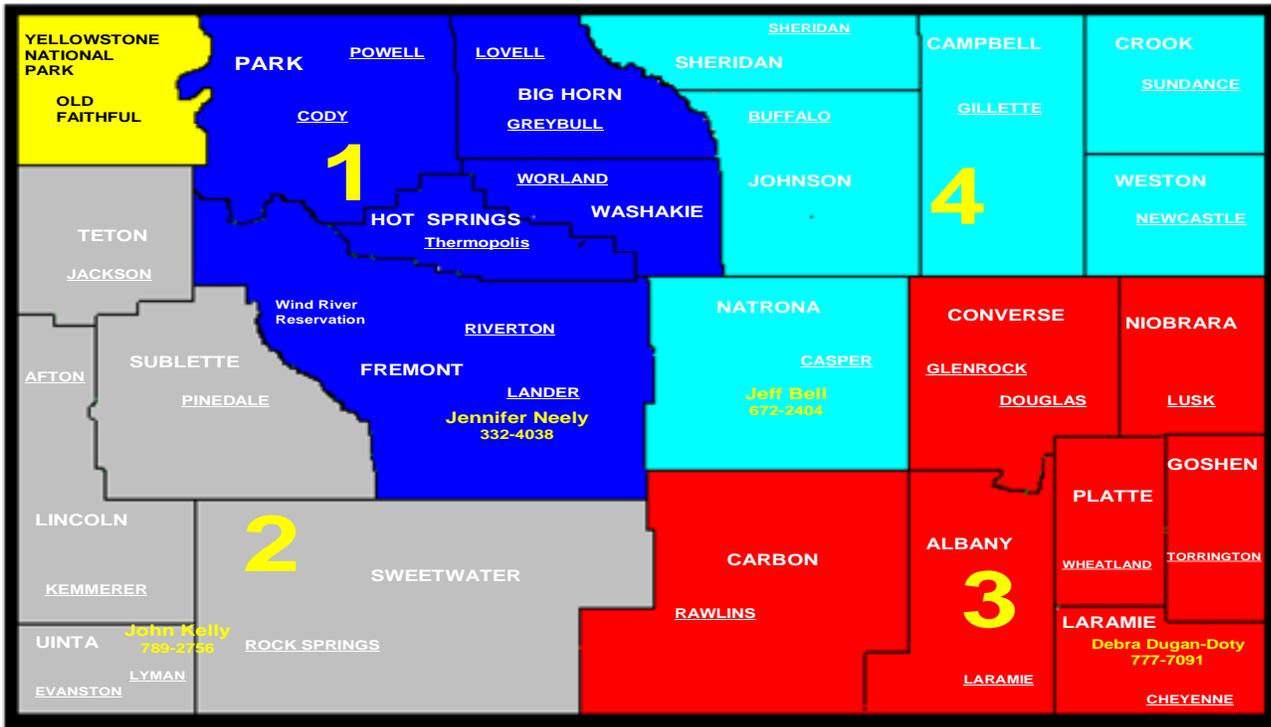
The state is comprised of 23 counties, which for the Department’s purposes are divided into six Protective Services Districts and four Juvenile Services Regions. Each of these distinct geographical areas is managed by a protective services district manager or a juvenile services regional manager. Each of these managers is responsible for the direct supervision of staff within their districts/regions and specific program areas, and is responsible for the routine management of each of the offices within their districts/regions. The district and regional managers are directly supervised by administrators at the state office. The Deputy Director of DFS has supervisory responsibility of the protective services district managers and the administrator for juvenile services is responsible for the direct supervision of the juvenile services regional managers.

Although the child welfare and juvenile services programs are state administered, the services and case management functions are managed and provided at the local office level. Case management responsibilities are provided by agency staff and services are provided directly through the agency or purchased on behalf of eligible clients under the supervision of the state office through offices in each county and the Wyoming Boys School and Wyoming Girls School. DFS does not contract for any primary casework functions and is responsible for conducting and managing intakes, investigations, assessments, and ongoing family-based and foster care services. Maps of the Protective Services Districts and Juvenile Services Regions are provided below.

WY DFS: Protective Services Districts



WY DFS: Juvenile Services Regions



REGIONS – Juvenile Probation – 2006 – Updated 01/08/08

Major Initiatives: As a result of the CFSR and PIP process, Wyoming has engaged in the development and implementation of numerous child welfare and juvenile justice systems reform efforts. Highlights of these efforts are described below.

Family Centered Service Model: A consistent finding from the 2002 Federal CFSR was that DFS focused the majority of its activities on the target child and did not provide adequate services to the child’s family. In response to the finding, DFS developed and began the implementation of a family-centered service model as the overarching strategy of its Program Improvement Plan. The result of this strategy was the incorporation of family-centered values and principles into policies and procedures. With the assistance of the CFSR National Resource Centers DFS undertook a comprehensive evaluation of its policy and practice and made necessary changes to ensure that the agencies policies and practices were in alignment with family-centered principles and values. Practice changes that resulted from the implementation of the family centered services model include a more comprehensive intake process, the creation of a family-centered assessment process, the development and implementation of a family group conference case planning model as well as the creation of a quality assurance process that measures the impact of the family-centered service model through the CFSR review process.

State CFSR Reviews: A key finding from the 2002 Federal CFSR was that DFS had not developed a comprehensive Quality Assurance process. In order to address these findings, DFS in collaboration with the Wyoming Citizen’s Review Panel (WYCRP) developed and implemented a statewide review process that replicates the Federal CFSR. The State CFSR process utilizes citizens and DFS staff as reviewers and allows Wyoming Citizens the

opportunity to participate in evaluating the performance of Child Welfare/Juvenile Services, as well as receiving realistic perspective of the functioning of the Agency. Since 2005, DFS has conducted 4 rounds of State CFSR reviews involving hundreds of Wyoming's Citizens and evaluated over 400 DFS in-home and foster care cases.

Court Specialization: DFS has had a long history of collaboration with the Wyoming Court system, specifically with the Wyoming Children's Justice Project (formerly the Court Improvement Project). Strategies related to court specialization developed as part of the state Program Improvement Plan were the development of training materials for the court system as well as DFS staff regarding termination of parental rights, concurrent planning and ASFA requirements. The Children's Justice Project (formerly the Court Improvement Project) also created hearing checklists for judges, county attorneys and guardian ad litem as well as model court orders. DFS also supported the creation of a Children's Permanency Unit within the attorney general's office designed for the specific purpose of handling termination of parental rights cases. DFS also made substantial changes to policy and training regarding the importance of establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals and establishing concurrent plans when appropriate.

Another key initiative was the ABA Permanency Barriers Project in Natrona County. The purpose of the project was to study and evaluate the potential barriers to children achieving timely permanency. Natrona County created a county-based advisory board to oversee the project. The Natrona County PBP Advisory Board met several times a year to review the progress of its goals and activities and to identify additional barriers that continue to exist in children achieving timely permanency. One of the first tasks the Natrona County PBP completed was an assessment of the processing of child abuse and neglect cases within the system. After the completion of the assessment, the Natrona County PBP Advisory Board developed a comprehensive action plan and formed workgroups to address the issues and implement the identified activities. In February 2007, the ABA issued its final report outlining the project's accomplishments and further recommendations. The initial data report in 2004 reported that on average, youth achieved permanency in 26 months. The final data report in 2006 revealed that youth achieved permanency on average in 17 months. Currently, CJP, Casey Family Programs and DFS are in the process of developing this project in Laramie County.

Description of the Collaborative Process with Wyoming Child Welfare Stakeholders

In order to ensure that a broad range of stakeholders were provided the opportunity to engage in the statewide assessment a comprehensive collaborative process was developed. This process used a two-tiered approach.

The first tier was comprised of the utilization of the states quality assurance process as it relates to the CFSR. The state of Wyoming has developed a case review process that replicates the federal Child and Family Services Review (referred to in this document as the State CFSR). Each of the DFS offices in the state is reviewed each year; to date Wyoming has completed 4 rounds of reviews and reviewed a total over 400 DFS cases.

Wyoming is unique in that it co-manages this quality assurance process with the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel (WYCRP), and it uses Wyoming citizens as well as DFS staff to conduct the case reviews and stakeholder interviews. As part of this process DFS and the WYCRP conduct stakeholder interviews with relevant stakeholders in each of the communities where the reviews are held and holds public exit conferences for each of the reviews. The WYCRP is responsible for compiling and disseminating the findings from each of the individual office reviews as well as compiling the findings and providing recommendations to DFS in an annual report following the completion of each round of State CFSR reviews.

As part of the state CFSR process DFS and the WYCRP have conducted stakeholder meetings or focus groups that include: court representatives (County Attorneys, Gal's, Parents Attorneys, District Court Judges, and CASA), Foster Parents, Youth (both foster care alumni, and children currently in out-of-home care and in-home case management), DFS staff (Managers, Supervisors, and Caseworkers), direct services providers (Community Mental Health, Residential Treatment, Substance Abuse, private mental health care providers), Education, and Law Enforcement. The stakeholder interviews utilized the structure and questions from the ACF Child and Family Services Reviews Stakeholder Interview Guide.

In addition to the stakeholder interviews and focus groups 395 DFS staff and citizens have participated in the State CFSR reviews process as reviewers. Members of DFS staff include district and region managers, supervisors, caseworkers, administrators, staff from the Wyoming Girls School and Wyoming Boys School as well as the Director and Deputy Director. Citizens with the following professional affiliations have participated in the State CFSR process as reviewers: Foster Care Alumni, RTC providers, Wyoming Legislative Services Office, Community Mental Health, University of Wyoming School of Social Work, Attorney General's Office, Casey Family Programs, CASA, Law Enforcement, Children's Health Care Providers, Child Major Injury and Fatality Review, District Attorney, Victims Services, Air Force Daycare, Governors Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, County Coroner, Local School Districts, School Social Workers, Prevent Child Abuse Wyoming, Public Defenders office, GAL, Domestic Violence, Children's Justice Project, Department of Criminal Investigation, Department of Health, Wyoming Kinship Advocacy, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Eastern Shoshone Tribal Manager, Private Mental Health Provider, Tribal Court Coordinator, Wyoming DFS Advisory Council, Northern Arapaho Tribal Manager, First United Methodist Church, Foster Parent Association, Early Childhood Center, Head Start, Public Health, Substance Abuse, State Legislator, Juvenile Drug Court, Tribal School, Hospital Administrator, Wyoming State Hospital, Administration for Children and Families Region 6, Tribal Council, Tribal Prosecutor, Tribal Drug Court, Private Attorney, Foster Parent, Iowa Department of Human Services, and a Stay at Home Mom. Information gathered from the State CFSR review process was incorporated into the statewide assessment document.

The second tier of the collaborative process involved the creation of a statewide assessment team for the purpose of soliciting input for the statewide assessment on a statewide and systemic level. The membership of the statewide assessment team is comprised of representatives from the WYCRP, Casey Family Programs, CASA, The Children's Justice Project, the Attorney General's Office, Public Health, the Governors Office, Mental Health/Substance Abuse, DFS administrators, and tribal representatives. The function of the statewide assessment team is to

analyze the results and findings of the State CFSR reviews, analyze and provide feedback on the ACF permanency data composites, CFSR safety measures and data profile and to provide input on underlying issues related to the CFSR systemic factors. In addition to the process described above, drafts of the Statewide Assessment were distributed to the WYCRP Advisory Board, and the Children's Justice Project Advisory Council for comment and feedback. The information gathered from the statewide assessment team as well as the feedback gathered from the aforementioned boards and councils were incorporated into the statewide assessment.

As part of the collaborative process described above, DFS has made specific efforts to engage and incorporate the feedback provided by the key stakeholder groups emphasized by ACF. The specific efforts are highlighted below.

Courts: The Children's Justice Project has been an active member of the CFSR/PIP process since its inception and participated in all aspects of the 2002 Federal CFSR and the development and implementation of the 2004 Program Improvement Plan. Currently representatives from the Children's Justice Project are members of the statewide assessment team and the Children's Justice Project Coordinator is responsible for coordination the Court related technical assistance provided by ACF. Children's Justice Project members will be participating in the Federal CFSR as stakeholders.

Previous collaborative activities accomplished by the Children's Justice Project (CJP) and DFS include the development of resources for the courts and other key stakeholders in the system. Specifically, CJP provided DFS the opportunity to participate as a reviewer in the development of the neglect hearing checklists, court orders, judicial benchbook, and handbook for parents. In addition, the CJP and DFS have worked together to educate the Wyoming legislature on the provisions of ASFA. In 2006, CJP spearheaded a reassessment study of the juvenile court system. DFS managers, supervisors, and caseworkers actively participated in the reassessment study throughout the state. Findings from the reassessment study are used extensively through the statewide assessment. In December 2006, the CJP and DFS formally established the Court/Agency Collaboration Committee to guide its collaborative efforts for the 2008 CFSR.

Tribes: DFS has made extensive efforts to collaborate with both the Northern Arapaho Tribe and Eastern Shoshone Tribe in regards to all aspects of the CFSR. This collaborative effort was formalized during the summer of 2005 when DFS in concert with both of the tribal programs ACF, BIA, Casey Family Programs, and consulting firm Praesidium, began working on an initial assessment of the functioning of each of the tribal child welfare and juvenile services programs. This initial phase consisted of a comprehensive assessment of the continuum of services provided by the tribal programs and included interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in the social service delivery system and within the community, as well as analysis of pertinent data. The initial phase resulted in the production of separate reports for each tribal agency that presented the key findings of the first phase of the assessment as well as recommendations based upon the findings (Wyoming Department of Family Services & Praesidium, Inc, 2006, 2006a). In order to address the recommendations contained within the initial assessments, DFS allocated two state administrative staff to work with the tribal representatives on developing training, clarifying policy, budgeting, supervision/administrative functions, and improving practice and access to resources.

The collaborative effort culminated with the completion of a State CFSR review for each of the tribal programs conducted during the spring of 2007. The findings from these reviews were prepared by the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel (2007, 2007a) and presented in individualized reports for each tribal program. In response to these reports, each tribal program prepared a Program Improvement Plan which continues to be updated and monitored. DFS and the tribal programs have mutually agreed to continue this review process and incorporate tribal reviews into the WYCRP and DFS quality assurance process. In addition to engaging in ongoing systems improvement efforts, tribal representative are members of the statewide assessment team and it is anticipated that tribal representatives will participate in the 2008 Federal CFSR Reviews and Program Improvement Plan process.

Youth: Focus groups including youth that are currently in out of home placement as well as foster care alumni have been conducted as part of the State CFSR process. Information gathered from these focus groups is included throughout the statewide assessment. In order to solicit additional information regarding the experiences of youth in the juvenile justice system, four focus groups were held with youth currently being served in the community as well as out of home placement, the findings from these additional focus groups are also incorporated throughout the statewide assessment.

In addition to participating in the statewide assessment through the State CFSR process, Wyoming Youth in foster care have become much more active in presenting their views to DFS administration. In the spring of 2005 the Wyoming Advocates for Youth (WAY), an organization made up of foster care Alumni, had their first retreat and elected their leadership team. In 2006, foster care alumni served on the planning team for the Governor's Roundtable to discuss foster care. Youth are also active on several state review boards including the Substance Abuse Task Force, the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel, the Sage Initiative, the Governor's Inter-agency Collaborative, the Substance Abuse Advisory Board and the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board. On a national level, Wyoming alumni have served as Fellows for the National Coalition on Adoption, and CWLA's Foster Care Advisory Committee.

DFS believes that its collaboration with the WYCRP in the development and management of the State CFSR review and the inclusion of citizens and stakeholders in this quality assurance process provides a subjective and transparent evaluation of the functioning of the Child Welfare/Juvenile Services system, and provides the opportunity for a wide range of citizens and stakeholders to contribute information to the statewide assessment that is specific to the CFSR items, outcomes and systemic factors. In addition, the information gathered from the statewide assessment team process provides a state-level interpretation of the results from the State CFSR process and the data available in the ACF data profile. DFS believes that the combination of these multiple sources of information provided by a diverse representation of stakeholders from both the local and state level has resulted in a rich source of information used to compile the statewide assessment and therefore meets the Federal expectations of collaboration during the statewide assessment process.

Section II: Wyoming Child and Family Services Review Data Profile: January 18, 2008

CHILD SAFETY PROFILE	Fiscal Year 2005ab						Fiscal Year 2006ab						12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007					
	Reports	%	Duplic. Childn. ²	%	Unique Childn. ²	%	Reports	%	Duplic. Childn. ²	%	Unique Childn. ²	%	Reports	%	Duplic. Childn. ²	%	Unique Childn. ²	%
I. Total CA/N Reports Disposed¹	2,020		3,936		3,435		2,437 ^A		4,819		4,104		2,350		4,686		4,074	
II. Disposition of CA/N Reports³																		
Substantiated & Indicated	526	26	853	21.7	802	23.3	484	19.9	786	16.3	750	18.3	469	20	739	15.8	715	17.6
Unsubstantiated	478	23.7	704	17.9	637	18.5	599	24.6	841	17.5	756	18.4	566	24.1	832	17.8	764	18.8
Other	1,016	50.3	2,379	60.4	1,996	58.1	1,354	55.6	3,192	66.2	2,598	63.3	1,315	56	3,115	66.5	2,595	63.7
III. Child Victim Cases Opened for Post-Investigation Services⁴			591	69.3	566	70.6			499	63.5	496	66.1			471	63.7	470	65.7
IV. Child Victims Entering Care Based on CA/N Report⁵			409	47.9	399	49.8			329	41.9	327	43.6			324	43.8	324	45.3
V. Child Fatalities Resulting from Maltreatment⁶					2	0.2					1	0.1					2	0.3
STATEWIDE AGGREGATE DATA USED TO DETERMINE SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY																		
VI. Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence⁷ [Standard: 94.6% or more]					402 of 421	95.5					348 of 362	96.1					370 of 385	96.1
VII. Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care⁸ (12 months) [standard 99.68% or more]					B						2,342 of 2,346	99.83					2,321 of 2,331	99.57

Additional Safety Measures For Information Only (no standards are associated with these):																			
	Fiscal Year 2005ab						Fiscal Year 2006ab						12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007						
	Hours				Unique Childn. ²	%	Hours				Unique Childn. ²	%	Hours				Unique Childn. ²	%	
VIII. Median Time to Investigation in Hours (Child File) ⁹	<24						<24						<24						
IX. Mean Time to Investigation in Hours (Child File) ¹⁰	23.9						13.8						21.1						
X. Mean Time to Investigation in Hours (Agency File) ¹¹	29						15 ^c						n/a						
XI. Children Maltreated by Parents While in Foster Care. ¹²					B							9 of 2,346	0.38					10 of 2,331	0.43

CFSR Round One Safety Measures to Determine Substantial Conformity (Used primarily by States completing Round One Program Improvement Plans, but States may also review them to compare to prior performance)

	Fiscal Year 2005ab						Fiscal Year 2006ab						12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007					
	Reports	%	Duplic. Childn. ²	%	Unique Childn. ²	%	Reports	%	Duplic. Childn. ²	%	Unique Childn. ²	%	Reports	%	Duplic. Childn. ²	%	Unique Childn. ²	%
XII. Recurrence of Maltreatment ¹³					19 of						14 of						15 of	
[Standard: 6.1% or less]					421	4.5					362	3.9					385	3.9
XIII. Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care ¹⁴ (9 months)					B						4 of	0.19					8 of	0.38
[standard 0.57% or less]											2,111						2,078	

NCANDS data completeness information for the CFRS			
Description of Data Tests	Fiscal Year 2005ab	Fiscal Year 2006ab	12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007
Percent of duplicate victims in the submission [At least 1% of victims should be associated with multiple reports (same CHID). If not, the State would appear to have frequently entered different IDs for the same victim. This affects maltreatment recurrence]	5.50	4.30	2.90
Percent of victims with perpetrator reported [File must have at least 75% to reasonably calculate maltreatment in foster care]*	31.90	99.90	100
Percent of perpetrators with relationship to victim reported [File must have at least 75%]*	100	99.50	99.80
Percent of records with investigation start date reported [Needed to compute mean and median time to investigation]	98	98.50	96.90
Average time to investigation in the Agency file [PART measure]	Reported	Reported	N/A
Percent of records with AFCARS ID reported in the Child File [Needed to calculate maltreatment in foster care by the parents; also. All Child File records should now have an AFCARS ID to allow ACF to link the NCANDS data with AFCARS. This is now an all-purpose unique child identifier and a child does not have to be in foster care to have this ID]	100	100	100

*States should strive to reach 100% in order to have confidence in the absence of maltreatment in foster care measure.

FOOTNOTES TO DATA ELEMENTS IN CHILD SAFETY PROFILE

Each maltreatment allegation reported to NCANDS is associated with a disposition or finding that is used to derive the counts provided in this safety profile. The safety profile uses three categories. The various terms that are used in NCANDS reporting have been collapsed into these three groups.

Disposition Category	Safety Profile Disposition	NCANDS Maltreatment Level Codes Included
A	Substantiated or Indicated (Maltreatment Victim)	“Substantiated,” “Indicated,” and “Alternative Response Disposition Victim”
B	Unsubstantiated	“Unsubstantiated” and “Unsubstantiated Due to Intentionally False Reporting”
C	Other	“Closed-No Finding,” “Alternative Response Disposition – Not a Victim,” “Other,” “No Alleged Maltreatment,” and “Unknown or Missing”

Alternative Response was added starting with the 2000 data year. The two categories of Unsubstantiated were added starting with the 2000 data year. In earlier years there was only the category of Unsubstantiated. The disposition of “No alleged maltreatment” was added for FYY 2003. It primarily refers to children who receive an investigation or assessment because there is an allegation concerning a sibling or other child in the household, but not themselves, AND whom are not found to be a victim of maltreatment. It applies as a Maltreatment Disposition Level but not as a Report Disposition code because the Report Disposition cannot have this value (there must have been a child who was found to be one of the other values.) Starting with FFY 2003, the data year is the fiscal year.

Starting with FFY2004, the maltreatment levels for each child are used consistently to categorize children. While report dispositions are based on the field of report disposition in NCANDS, the dispositions for duplicate children and unique children are based on the maltreatment levels associated with each child. A child victim has at least one maltreatment level that is coded “substantiated,” “indicated,” or “alternative response victim.” A child classified as unsubstantiated has no maltreatment levels that are considered to be victim levels and at least one maltreatment level that is coded “unsubstantiated” or “unsubstantiated due to intentionally false reporting.” A child classified as “other” has no maltreatment levels that are considered to be victim levels and none that are considered to be unsubstantiated levels. If a child has no maltreatments in the record, and report has a victim disposition, the child is assigned to “other” disposition. If a child has no maltreatments in the record and the report has either an unsubstantiated disposition or an “other” disposition, the child is counted as having the same disposition as the report disposition.

1. The data element, “Total CA/N Reports Disposed,” is based on the reports received in the State that received a disposition in the reporting period under review. The number shown may include reports received during a previous year that received a disposition in the reporting year. Counts based on “reports,” “duplicated counts of children,” and “unique counts of children” are provided.
2. The duplicated count of children (report-child pairs) counts a child each time that (s)he was reported. The unique count of children counts a child only once during the reporting period, regardless of how many times the child was reported.
3. For the column labeled “Reports,” the data element, “Disposition of CA/N Reports,” is based on upon the highest disposition of any child who was the subject of an investigation in a particular report. For example, if a report investigated two children, and one child is found to be neglected and the other child found not to be maltreated, the report disposition will be substantiated (Group A). The disposition for each child is based on the specific finding related to the maltreatment(s). In other words, of the two children above, one is a victim and is counted under “substantiated” (Group A) and the other is not a victim and is counted under “unsubstantiated” (Group B). In determining the unique counts of children, the highest finding is given priority. If a child is found to be a victim in one report (Group A), but not a victim in a second report (Group B), the unique count of children includes the child only as a victim (Group A). The category of “other” (Group C) includes children whose report may have been “closed without a finding,” children for whom the allegation disposition is “unknown,” and other dispositions that a State is unable to code as substantiated, indicated, alternative response victim, or unsubstantiated.
4. The data element, “Child Cases Opened for Services,” is based on the number of victims (Group A) during the reporting period under review. “Opened for Services” refers to post-investigative services. The duplicated number counts each time a victim’s report is linked to on-going services; the unique number counts a victim only once regardless of the number of times services are linked to reports of substantiated maltreatment.

5. The data element, “Children Entering Care Based on CA/N Report,” is based on the number of victims (Group A) during the reporting period under review. The duplicated number counts each time a victim’s report is linked to a foster care removal date. The unique number counts a victim only once regardless of the number of removals that may be reported.
6. The data element “Child Fatalities” counts the number of children reported to NCANDS as having died as a result of child abuse and/or neglect. Depending upon State practice, this number may count only those children for whom a case record has been opened either prior to or after the death, or may include a number of children whose deaths have been investigated as possibly related to child maltreatment. For example, some States include neglected-related deaths such as those caused by motor vehicle or boating accidents, house fires or access to firearms, under certain circumstances. The percentage is based on a count of unique victims of maltreatment for the reporting period.
7. The data element “Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment” is defined as follows: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percent were not victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation within a 6-month period. This data element is used to determine the State’s substantial conformity with CFSR Safety Outcome #1 (“Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect”).
8. The data element “Absence of Child Abuse/or Neglect in Foster Care” is defined as follows: Of all children in foster care during the reporting period, what percent were not victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by foster parent or facility staff member. This data element is used to determine the State’s substantial conformity with CFSR Safety Outcome #1 (“Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect”). A child is counted as not having been maltreated in foster care if the perpetrator of the maltreatment was not identified as a foster parent or residential facility staff. Counts of children not maltreated in foster care are derived by subtracting NCANDS count of children maltreated by foster care providers from AFCARS count of children placed in foster care. The observation period for this measure is 12 months. The number of children not found to be maltreated in foster care and the percentage of all children in foster care are provided.
9. Median Time to Investigation in hours is computed from the Child File records using the Report Date and the Investigation Start Date (currently reported in the Child File in mmddyyyy format). The result is converted to hours by multiplying by 24.
10. Mean Time to investigation in hours is computed from the Child File records using the Report Date and the Investigation Start Date (currently reported in the Child File in mmddyyyy format). The result is converted to hours by multiplying by 24. Zero days difference (both dates are on the same day) is reported as “under 24 hours”, one day difference (investigation date is the next day after report date) is reported as “at least 24 hours, but less than 48 hours”, two days difference is reported as “at least 48 hours, but less than 72 hours”, etc.
11. Average response time in hours between maltreatment report and investigation is available through State NCANDS Agency or SDC File aggregate data. "Response time" is defined as the time from the receipt of a report to the time of the initial investigation or assessment. Note that many States calculate the initial investigation date as the first date of contact with the alleged victim, when this is appropriate, or with another person who can provide information essential to the disposition of the investigation or assessment.

12. The data element, “Children Maltreated by Parents while in Foster Care” is defined as follows: Of all children placed in foster care during the reporting period, what percent were victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by parent. This data element requires matching NCANDS and AFCARS records by AFCARS IDs. Only unique NCANDS children with substantiated or indicated maltreatments and perpetrator relationship “Parent” are selected for this match. NCANDS report date must fall within the removal period found in the matching AFCARS record.
13. The data element, “Recurrence of Maltreatment,” is defined as follows: Of all children associated with a “substantiated” or “indicated” finding of maltreatment during the first six months of the reporting period, what percentage had another “substantiated” or “indicated” finding of maltreatment within a 6-month period. The number of victims during the first six-month period and the number of these victims who were recurrent victims within six months are provided. This data element was used to determine the State’s substantial conformity with Safety Outcome #1 for CFSR Round One.
14. The data element, “Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care,” is defined as follows: Of all children who were served in foster care during the reporting period, what percentage were found to be victims of “substantiated” or “indicated” maltreatment. A child is counted as having been maltreated in foster care if the perpetrator of the maltreatment was identified as a foster parent or residential facility staff. Counts of children maltreated in foster care are derived from NCANDS, while counts of children placed in foster care are derived from AFCARS. The observation period for these measures is January-September because this is the reporting period that was jointly addressed by both NCANDS and AFCARS at the time when NCANDS reporting period was a calendar year. The number of children found to be maltreated in foster care and the percentage of all children in foster care are provided. This data element was used to determine the State’s substantial conformity with Safety Outcome #2 for CFSR Round One.

Additional Footnotes

- A. Wyoming has seen an increase in child protection reports and investigations because our community has become more aware of the issues in Wyoming and child protection needs. This also shows an increase in alternative responses by the Department because some of the CPS allegations don’t rise to the level of an investigation per Wyoming statutes and Department of Family Services Child Protection Rules and policies. The Prevention and Assessment Track responses offer services for the family but not to a victim or perpetrator because the allegations do not have a finding or rise to a level of a finding.
- B. In FFY2005, data on perpetrators were incomplete.
- C. In FFY2006 Agency File, “Each Intake within the reporting period where both Time Intake Received and Time Investigation Initiated are populated and counted. The average of these times is reported according to an Immediate Investigation Identifier.”

POINT-IN-TIME PERMANENCY PROFILE	Federal FY 2005ab		Federal FY 2006ab		12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007	
	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children
I. Foster Care Population Flow						
Children in foster care on first day of year ¹	1,108		1,162		1,197	
Admissions during year	1,209		1,184		1,134	
Discharges during year	1,022		1,011		1,017	
Children discharging from FC in 7 days or less (These cases are excluded from length of stay calculations in the composite measures)	165	16.1% of the discharges	116	11.5% of the discharges	110	10.8% of the discharges
Children in care on last day of year	1,295		1,335		1,314	
Net change during year	187		173		117	
II. Placement Types for Children in Care						
Pre-Adoptive Homes	26	2.0	20	1.5	14	1.1
Foster Family Homes (Relative)	244	18.8	244	18.3	234	17.8
Foster Family Homes (Non-Relative)	476	36.8	449	33.6	445	33.9
Group Homes	122	9.4	105	7.9	117	8.9
Institutions	342	26.4	347	26.0	372	28.3
Supervised Independent Living	9	0.7	12	0.9	8	0.6
Runaway	4	0.3	3	0.2	5	0.4
Trial Home Visit	72	5.6	155	11.6	119	9.1
Missing Placement Information	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not Applicable (Placement in subsequent year)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
III. Permanency Goals for Children in Care						
Reunification	868	67.0	944	70.7	931	70.9
Live with Other Relatives	20	1.5	15	1.1	21	1.6
Adoption	169	13.1	176	13.2	158	12.0
Long Term Foster Care	46	3.6	45	3.4	45	3.4
Emancipation	76	5.9	59	4.4	57	4.3
Guardianship	57	4.4	60	4.5	52	4.0
Case Plan Goal Not Established	54	4.2	32	2.4	46	3.5
Missing Goal Information	5	0.4	4	0.3	4	0.3

POINT-IN-TIME PERMANENCY PROFILE	Federal FY 2005ab		Federal FY 2006ab		12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007	
	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children
IV. Number of Placement Settings in Current Episode						
One	533	41.2	528	39.6	530	40.3
Two	340	26.3	357	26.7	337	25.6
Three	191	14.7	178	13.3	189	14.4
Four	89	6.9	82	6.1	75	5.7
Five	52	4.0	57	4.3	60	4.6
Six or more	76	5.9	105	7.9	103	7.8
Missing placement settings	14	1.1	28	2.1	20	1.5
V. Number of Removal Episodes						
One	918	70.9	978	73.3	944	71.8
Two	267	20.6	239	17.9	255	19.4
Three	72	5.6	74	5.5	75	5.7
Four	22	1.7	27	2.0	29	2.2
Five	10	0.8	11	0.8	7	0.5
Six or more	6	0.5	6	0.4	4	0.3
Missing removal episodes	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
VI. Number of children in care 17 of the most recent 22 months² (percent based on cases with sufficient information for computation)	221	27.3	254	28.1	296	31.5
VII. Median Length of Stay in Foster Care (of children in care on last day of FY)	8.8		9.8		10.3	
VIII. Length of Time to Achieve Perm. Goal	# of Children Discharged	Median Months to Discharge	# of Children Discharged	Median Months to Discharge	# of Children Discharged	Median Months to Discharge
Reunification	802	5.8	805	6.2	819	6.5
Adoption	60	30.2	53	30.7	63	26.2
Guardianship	64	17.9	65	14.3	59	15.0
Other	71	19.6	72	11.6	65	11.6
Missing Discharge Reason (footnote 3, page 16)	6	6.3	0	--	0	--
Total discharges (excluding those w/ problematic dates)	1,003	7.6	995	7.9	1,006	8.2
Dates are problematic (footnote 4, page 16)	19	N/A	16	N/A	11	N/A

Statewide Aggregate Data Used in Determining Substantial Conformity: Composites 1 through 4

	Federal FY 2005ab	Federal FY 2006ab	12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007
IX. Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification [standard: 122.6 or higher]. Scaled Scores for this composite incorporate two components	State Score = 110.5	State Score = 114.5	State Score = 117.2
National Ranking of State Composite Scores (see footnote A on page 12 for details)	30 of 47	22 of 47	19 of 47
Component A: Timeliness of Reunification The timeliness component is composed of three timeliness individual measures.			
Measure C1 - 1: Exits to reunification in less than 12 months: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the year shown, who had been in foster care for 8 days or longer, what percent was reunified in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) [national median = 69.9%, 75th percentile = 75.2%]	69.3%	72.6%	73.6%
Measure C1 - 2: Exits to reunification, median stay: Of all children discharged from foster care (FC) to reunification in the year shown, who had been in FC for 8 days or longer, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of the latest removal from home until the date of discharge to reunification? (This includes trial home visit adjustment) [national median = 6.5 months, 25th Percentile = 5.4 months (lower score is preferable in this measure^B)]	Median = 7.0 months	Median = 6.8 months	Median = 6.4 months
Measure C1 - 3: Entry cohort reunification in < 12 months: Of all children entering foster care (FC) for the first time in the 6 month period just prior to the year shown, and who remained in FC for 8 days or longer, what percent was discharged from FC to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) [national median = 39.4%, 75th Percentile = 48.4%]	60.6%	51.5%	55.4%
Component B: Permanency of Reunification The permanency component has one measure.			
Measure C1 - 4: Re-entries to foster care in less than 12 months: Of all children discharged from foster care (FC) to reunification in the 12-month period prior to the year shown, what percent re-entered FC in less than 12 months from the date of discharge? [national median = 15.0%, 25th Percentile = 9.9% (lower score is preferable in this measure)]	19.7%	17.9%	17.6%

	Federal FY 2005ab	Federal FY 2006ab	12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007
X. Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of Adoptions [standard: 106.4 or higher]. Scaled Scores for this composite incorporate three components.	State Score = 121.5	State Score = 121.5	State Score = 134.4
National Ranking of State Composite Scores (see footnote A on page 12 for details)	6 of 47	6 of 47	2 of 47
Component A: Timeliness of Adoptions of Children Discharged From Foster Care. There are two individual measures of this component. See below.			
Measure C2 - 1: Exits to adoption in less than 24 months: Of all children who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in the year shown, what percent was discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home? [national median = 26.8%, 75th Percentile = 36.6%]	33.3%	32.1%	41.3%
Measure C2 - 2: Exits to adoption, median length of stay: Of all children who were discharged from foster care (FC) to a finalized adoption in the year shown, what was the median length of stay in FC (in months) from the date of latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption? [national median = 32.4 months, 25th Percentile = 27.3 months(lower score is preferable in this measure)]	Median = 30.2 months	Median = 30.7 months	Median = 26.2 months
Component B: Progress Toward Adoption for Children in Foster Care for 17 Months or Longer. There are two individual measures. See below.			
Measure C2 - 3: Children in care 17+ months, adopted by the end of the year: Of all children in foster care (FC) on the first day of the year shown who were in FC for 17 continuous months or longer (and who, by the last day of the year shown, were not discharged from FC with a discharge reason of live with relative, reunify, or guardianship), what percent was discharged from FC to a finalized adoption by the last day of the year shown? [national median = 20.2%, 75th Percentile = 22.7%]	17.5%	15.3%	15.2%
Measure C2 - 4: Children in care 17+ months achieving legal freedom within 6 months: Of all children in foster care (FC) on the first day of the year shown who were in FC for 17 continuous months or longer, and were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, what percent became legally free for adoption during the first 6 months of the year shown? Legally free means that there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father. This calculation excludes children who, by the end of the first 6 months of the year shown had discharged from FC to "reunification," "live with relative," or "guardianship." [national median = 8.8%, 75th Percentile = 10.9%]	9.3%	10.6%	10.9%
Component C: Progress Toward Adoption of Children Who Are Legally Free for Adoption. There is one measure for this component. See below.			
Measure C2 - 5: Legally free children adopted in less than 12 months: Of all children who became legally free for adoption in the 12 month period prior to the year shown (i.e., there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father), what percent was discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months of becoming legally free? [national median = 45.8%, 75th Percentile = 53.7%]	72.0%	75.4%	78.3%

	Federal FY 2005ab	Federal FY 2006ab	12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007
XI. Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for Children and Youth in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time [standard: 121.7 or higher]. Scaled Scores for this composite incorporate two components	State Score = 150.7	State Score = 151.4	State Score = 145.3
National Ranking of State Composite Scores (see footnote A on page 12 for details)	1 of 51	1 of 51	2 of 51
Component A: Achieving permanency for Children in Foster Care for Long Periods of Time. This component has two measures.			
Measure C3 - 1: Exits to permanency prior to 18th birthday for children in care for 24 + months. Of all children in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the year shown, what percent was discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday and by the end of the fiscal year? A permanent home is defined as having a discharge reason of adoption, guardianship, or reunification (including living with relative). [national median 25.0%, 75 th Percentile = 29.1%]	31.6%	29.6%	26.1%
Measure C3 - 2: Exits to permanency for children with TPR: Of all children who were discharged from foster care in the year shown, and who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge (i.e., there was a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father), what percent was discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday? A permanent home is defined as having a discharge reason of adoption, guardianship, or reunification (including living with relative) [national median 96.8%, 75 th Percentile = 98.0%]	100.0%	96.4%	100.0%
Component B: Growing up in foster care. This component has one measure.			
Measure C3 - 3: Children Emancipated Who Were in Foster Care for 3 Years or More. Of all children who, during the year shown, either (1) were discharged from foster care prior to age 18 with a discharge reason of emancipation, or (2) reached their 18 th birthday while in foster care, what percent were in foster care for 3 years or longer? [national median 47.8%, 25 th Percentile = 37.5% (lower score is preferable)]	22.7%	14.0%	17.7%

	Federal FY 2005ab	Federal FY 2006ab	12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007
XII. Permanency Composite 4: Placement Stability [national standard: 101.5 or higher]. Scaled score for this composite incorporates no components but three individual measures (below)	State Score = 96.0	State Score = 95.6	State Score = 96.2
National Ranking of State Composite Scores (see footnote A on page 12 for details)	22 of 51	22 of 51	22 of 51
Measure C4 - 1) Two or fewer placement settings for children in care for less than 12 months. Of all children served in foster care (FC) during the 12 month target period who were in FC for at least 8 days but less than 12 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings? [national median = 83.3%, 75th Percentile = 86.0%]	85.1%	84.6%	84.6%
Measure C4 - 2) Two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 12 to 24 months. Of all children served in foster care (FC) during the 12 month target period who were in FC for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings? [national median = 59.9%, 75th Percentile = 65.4%]	61.9%	58.8%	61.2%
Measure C4 - 3) Two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 24+ months. Of all children served in foster care (FC) during the 12 month target period who were in FC for at least 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings? [national median = 33.9%, 75th Percentile = 41.8%]	31.9%	38.6%	39.2%

Special Footnotes for Composite Measures:

- A. These National Rankings show your State's performance on the Composites compared to the performance of all the other States that were included in the 2004 data. The 2004 data were used for establishing the rankings because that is the year used in calculating the National Standards. The order of ranking goes from 1 to 47 or 51, depending on the measure. For example, "1 of 47" would indicate this State performed higher than all the States in 2004.
- B. In most cases, a high score is preferable on the individual measures. In these cases, you will see the 75th percentile listed to indicate that this would be considered a good score. However, in a few instances, a low score is good (shows desirable performance), such as re-entry to foster care. In these cases, the 25th percentile is displayed because that is the target direction for which States will want to strive. Of course, in actual calculation of the total composite scores, these "lower are preferable" scores on the individual measures are reversed so that they can be combined with all the individual scores that are scored in a positive direction, where higher scores are preferable.

PERMANENCY PROFILE FIRST-TIME ENTRY COHORT GROUP	Federal FY 2005ab		Federal FY 2006ab		12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007	
	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children
I. Number of children entering care for the first time in cohort group (% = 1 st time entry of all entering within first 6 months)	427	75.2	411	73.1	472	79.3
II. Most Recent Placement Types						
Pre-Adoptive Homes	3	0.7	2	0.5	0	0.0
Foster Family Homes (Relative)	65	15.2	74	18.0	72	15.3
Foster Family Homes (Non-Relative)	198	46.4	130	31.6	174	36.9
Group Homes	47	11.0	34	8.3	54	11.4
Institutions	82	19.2	96	23.4	79	16.7
Supervised Independent Living	2	0.5	3	0.7	1	0.2
Runaway	2	0.5	1	0.2	0	0.0
Trial Home Visit	28	6.6	71	17.3	92	19.5
Missing Placement Information	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not Applicable (Placement in subsequent yr)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
III. Most Recent Permanency Goal						
Reunification	299	70.0	313	76.2	349	73.9
Live with Other Relatives	6	1.4	1	0.2	2	0.4
Adoption	27	6.3	13	3.2	7	1.5
Long-Term Foster Care	2	0.5	2	0.5	4	0.8
Emancipation	9	2.1	9	2.2	5	1.1
Guardianship	13	3.0	13	3.2	16	3.4
Case Plan Goal Not Established	71	16.6	60	14.6	88	18.6
Missing Goal Information	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
IV. Number of Placement Settings in Current Episode						
One	257	60.2	247	60.1	279	59.1
Two	96	22.5	90	21.9	118	25.0
Three	43	10.1	41	10.0	45	9.5
Four	23	5.4	15	3.6	9	1.9
Five	4	0.9	6	1.5	2	0.4
Six or more	3	0.7	5	1.2	5	1.1
Missing placement settings	1	0.2	7	1.7	14	3.0

PERMANENCY PROFILE FIRST-TIME ENTRY COHORT GROUP (continued)	Federal FY 2005ab		Federal FY 2006ab		12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007	
	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children
V. Reason for Discharge						
Reunification/Relative Placement	200	93.9	182	91.5	241	96.0
Adoption	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Guardianship	4	1.9	10	5.0	5	2.0
Other	6	2.8	7	3.5	5	2.0
Unknown (missing discharge reason or N/A)	2	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Number of Months		Number of Months		Number of Months	
VI. Median Length of Stay in Foster Care	8.5		6.0		8.8	

AFCARS Data Completeness and Quality Information (2% or more is a warning sign):						
	Federal FY 2005ab		Federal FY 2006ab		12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007	
	N	As a % of Exits Reported	N	As a % of Exits Reported	N	As a % of Exits Reported
File contains children who appear to have been in care less than 24 hours	19	1.9 %	16	1.6 %	11	1.1 %
File contains children who appear to have exited before they entered	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Missing dates of latest removal	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
File contains "Dropped Cases" between report periods with no indication as to discharge	3	0.3 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Missing discharge reasons	6	0.6 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
	N	As a % of adoption exits	N	As a % of adoption exits	N	As a % of adoption exits
File submitted lacks data on Termination of Parental Rights for finalized adoptions	5	8.3 %	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Foster Care file has different count than Adoption File of (public agency) adoptions (N= adoption count disparity).	0	No discrepancy between foster care and adoption files.	4	7.5% fewer in unofficial adoption file*	0	No discrepancy between foster care and adoption files.
	N	Percent of cases in file	N	Percent of cases in file	N	Percent of cases in file
File submitted lacks count of number of placement settings in episode for each child	14	1.1 %	28	2.1 %	20	1.5 %

* The adoption data comparison was made using the discharge reason of "adoption" from the AFCARS foster care file and an *unofficial* count of adoptions finalized during the period of interest that were "placed by public agency" reported in the AFCARS Adoption files. This *unofficial* count of adoptions is only used for CFSR data quality purposes because adoption counts used for other purposes (e.g. Adoption Incentives awards, Outcomes Report) only cover the federal fiscal year, and include a broader definition of adoption and a different de-duplication methodology.

Note: These are CFSR Round One permanency measures. They are intended to be used primarily by States completing Round One Program Improvement Plans, but could also be useful to States in CFSR Round Two in comparing their current performance to that of prior years:

	Federal FY 2005ab		Federal FY 2006ab		12-Month Period Ending 03/31/2007	
	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children	# of Children	% of Children
IX. Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, what percentage was reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home? (4.1) [Standard: 76.2% or more]	589	72.2	593	72.5	599	72.4
X. Of all children who exited care to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home? (5.1) [Standard: 32.0% or more]	20	33.3	17	32.1	26	41.3
XI. Of all children served who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, what percentage have had no more than two placement settings? (6.1) [Standard: 86.7% or more]	1,214	85.7	1,172	82.9	1,142	83.4
XII. Of all children who entered care during the year, what percentage re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode? (4.2) [Standard: 8.6% or less]	168	13.9 (75.4% new entry)	151	12.8 (75.8% new entry)	137	12.1 (77.5% new entry)

FOOTNOTES TO DATA ELEMENTS IN THE PERMANENCY PROFILE

¹The FY 05, FY 06 , and 06B07A counts of children in care at the start of the year exclude 39, 32, and 41 children, respectively. They were excluded to avoid counting them twice. That is, although they were actually in care on the first day, they also qualify as new entries because they left and re-entered again at some point during the same reporting period. To avoid counting them as both "in care on the first day" and "entries," the Children's Bureau selects only the most recent record. That means they get counted as "entries," not "in care on the first day."

²We designated the indicator, *17 of the most recent 22 months*, rather than the statutory time frame for initiating termination of parental rights proceedings at *15 of the most 22 months*, since the AFCARS system cannot determine the *date the child is considered to have entered foster care* as defined in the regulation. We used the outside date for determining the *date the child is considered to have entered foster care*, which is 60 days from the actual removal date.

³This count only includes case records missing a discharge reason, but which have calculable lengths of stay. Records missing a discharge reason and with non-calculable lengths of stay are included in the cell "Dates are Problematic".

⁴The dates of removal and exit needed to calculate length of stay are problematic. Such problems include: 1) missing data, 2) faulty data (chronologically impossible), 3) a child was in care less than 1 day (length of stay = 0) so the child should not have been reported in foster care file, or 4) child's length of stay would equal 21 years or more. These cases are marked N/A = Not Applicable because no length of stay can legitimately be calculated.

⁵This First-Time Entry Cohort median length of stay was 8.5 in FY 05. This includes 19 children who entered and exited on the same day (who had a zero length of stay). If 19 were excluded from the calculation, the median length of stay would be slightly higher at 8.7.

⁶This First-Time Entry Cohort median length of stay was 6.0 in FY 06. This includes 16 children who entered and exited on the same day (who had a zero length of stay). If 16 were excluded from the calculation, the median length of stay would be slightly higher at 6.2.

⁷This First-Time Entry Cohort median length of stay is 8.8 for 06B07A. This includes 11 children who entered and exited on the same day (they had a zero length of stay). If 11 were excluded from the calculation, the median length of stay would be slightly higher at 9.0.

Section III: Narrative Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes

Overview: A key source of data presented in this section is derived from the State CFSR Review process and is presented in the tables labeled *Percent Cases Rated as Substantially Achieved* (for each CFSR outcome area) and *Percent Cases Rated as Strength* for each CFSR item. The column labeled *2002 Federal CFSR* is the score obtained by Wyoming during the Round 1 2002 Federal CFSR. The columns labeled *State CFSR* (round 1 through 4) are the scores obtained during each of the rounds of the State CFSR reviews. The column labeled *State CFSR combined* is the combined score across all 4 rounds of the State CFSR Reviews and does not include the scores for the 2002 Federal CFSR review. The row labeled *percent* is the percentage of cases rated as strength or substantially achieved for the applicable cases reviewed for the specific CFSR item or outcome area. The row labeled *number applicable* is the count of the number of applicable cases that were reviewed for each item for each specified review.

The State CFSR Review is a quality assurance process that closely replicates the Federal CFSR review and incorporates all of the key components of the Federal CFSR process including interviews with the family, the child, the caseworker and stakeholders, case debriefings, two levels of quality assurance, and exit conferences that include an aggregate report of the scored results of the review and a summary of the stakeholder comments. The State CFSR review uses the Federal CFSR Onsite Instrument to derive the ratings for the CFSR items and outcomes. No significant modifications have been made to the Onsite Review Instrument used for the State CFSR process. The changes made to the Onsite CFSR instrument for round 2 of the Federal CFSR reviews were incorporated into round 4 of the State CFSR reviews.

The DFS staff person responsible for administering the reviews in the field offices is a Federal Consultant CFSR Reviewer and a Federal CFSR Consultant Co-Local Site Leader and has participated as a reviewer in numerous Federal CFSR reviews. The WYCRP staff person responsible for administering the State CFSR reviews in the field offices is a Federal CFSR Cross-State participant and has also been a reviewer in numerous Federal CFSR reviews. During the 3rd round of State CFSR reviews ACF regional staff participated as reviewers and provided consultation and feedback on the State CFSR review process.

CFSR reviewers (both DFS staff and Citizens) are required to participate in a one day reviewer training prior to completing a State CFSR case review. The training is based on the Federal CFSR reviewer training and includes information on the conceptual background of the CFSR, relevant DFS policy and practice standards, the definition and criteria of the CFSR items and outcomes, as well as hands on experience with using the CFSR onsite review instrument.

The sampling and case selection process is also similar to the process used to sample and select cases for the Federal CFSR review. In-home services cases are randomly sampled from SACWIS data and foster care cases are randomly selected from a specified AFCARS submission for each office using the sampling parameters described in the CFSR procedures manual. During round 4 of the State CFSR reviews DFS altered its sampling process to further replicate the Federal CFSR and included a stratified foster care sample based on the federally defined criteria, as well as a case selection process that selected similar proportions of in-home and foster care cases to those proportions found in the Federal CFSR review.

Due to the factors described above, DFS and the WYCRP are confident that the State CFSR process and the Federal CFSR process share enough commonality that the scores obtained from the State CFSR process should be a reliable indicator of performance on the CFSR outcomes and items, and in conjunction with the ACF data profile serve as the primary source of quantitative data for the statewide assessment. Additional data sources, such as SACWIS data or external reports or analysis are documented in the footnotes throughout the Statewide Assessment. The timeframes and number of cases reviewed in each round are listed in table 2. The information in the stakeholder comments section is derived from the stakeholder interviews, debriefings, youth focus groups, statewide assessment team meetings, and exit conferences that were conducted during round 4 of the State CFSR reviews.

Table 1: Number of Cases Reviewed: State CFSR

Round	Timeframe	Number of Cases Reviewed
1	January 2005 through June 2005	95
2	September 2005 through January 2006	99
3	September 2006 through January 2007	103
4	September 2007 through December 2007	67

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

Table 2: Percent Cases Rated as Substantially Achieved. CFSR Safety Outcome 1

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Sub Achieved	88.2%	95.5%	98.4%	89.2%	93.3%	94%
# Applicable	50	67	62	74	15	218

Status of Safety Outcome 1: DFS was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 during the 2002 Federal CFSR (see table 2). DFS was not in substantial conformity with the data indicator measuring repeat maltreatment and reported an incidence of repeat maltreatment of 6.29%, which was above the national standard of 6.1%. Since the 2002 Federal CFSR review DFS has seen improvement on the ratings for Safety Outcome 1 as measured by the State CFSR. DFS has obtained a combined score of 94% of the cases receiving a rating of Substantially Achieved for this outcome area. DFS has also been in substantial conformity with Safety Data Measure VI (repeat maltreatment) for the last 2 consecutive federal fiscal years and for the current CFSR rolling year, and reports an incidence of the absence of maltreatment for the CFSR data review period of 96.1%, which is higher than the national standard of 94.6%.

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

Policy: Reports of abuse and neglect are received at the field office level and the determination regarding accepting or rejecting the intake and track assignment is required to be made within 24 hours of completion of the intake. DFS receives and responds to reports of abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through local on-call procedures, and does not have a centralized intake process. Wyoming does not use private providers to conduct child protection intakes, investigations or assessments.

Within twenty-four (24) hours of an accepted report of abuse or neglect, Wyoming requires the initiation of an investigation or assessment. Initiation activities include: assignment of response priority, attempting contact with the victim and the alleged perpetrator, interviewing the reporter, and conducting criminal and child abuse/neglect background checks. Investigations are required when allegations suggest possible criminal charges, children are in imminent danger, and/or it is indicated that removal of the child from the home will be necessary. There are two (2) priority levels: Immediate Response, and Twenty-Four Hour Response.

For the priority level of Immediate Response, DFS policy requires that immediate face to face contact must be attempted and face to face contact must be made with the alleged victim and or family within 24 hours from the time of the accepted report. Immediate response is mandatory for major injuries, children under age 6, acute untreated medical conditions, bizarre parental behavior, parents under the influence of drugs or alcohol, bizarre punishment or torture, child is suicidal, child is abandoned, complaint from a physician or emergency room, self reporting by parents concerned about hurting their children, or if families are likely to flee the area. Caseworkers are required to conduct interviews with the alleged victim and perpetrator, conduct a safety assessment, and develop a safety plan during the initial contact with the family.

For the priority level of Twenty-Four Hour Response DFS policy requires that face to face contact be made with the alleged victim within 7 calendar days from the time of the accepted report. Investigations are assigned to Twenty-Four Hour Response when they do not fall within the requirements for Immediate Response. Response priority levels are exclusive to cases assigned to the investigation track; policy requirements regarding Assessment and Prevention reports are discussed below. Caseworkers are required to conduct interviews with the alleged victim and perpetrator, conduct a safety assessment, and develop a safety plan during the initial contact with the family.

Investigations are coordinated with law enforcement in which imminent danger, sexual abuse, or major injury to the child is suspected or if the report suggests situations necessitating the removal of the child from the home. In accordance with Wyoming statute, law enforcement personnel or medical personnel are the only state entities with the authority to take immediate protective custody of a child, which necessitates the inclusion of law enforcement personnel during the aforementioned investigations. DFS policy requires that the department immediately contact the appropriate law enforcement agency if the investigation involves criminal activity in order to coordinate criminal and child abuse investigations. Wyoming policy requires a new investigation on any new allegations of abuse or neglect discovered in the course of an investigation or assessment.

Multiple Response: Wyoming has a multiple response system consisting of three separate tracks: investigation, assessment, and prevention. Reports are assigned to the investigation track when criminal charges appear likely; children appear to be in imminent danger; and/or it is likely children will need to be removed from their home. In addition, reports alleging a child fatality, major injury or sexual abuse are assigned to the investigation track.

Reports are assigned to the assessment track when criminal charges appear unlikely; children do not appear to be in imminent danger; and it appears unlikely that children will have to be removed from the home. Unlike the investigation track, assessment cases do not contain a

finding related to abuse/neglect. The allegations contained in the report serve only as a reference point to assist the family in identifying problems that may be hampering family functioning and do not need to be proven or disproved. DFS policy requires that face to face contact be made with the alleged victim within 7 calendar days from the time of the accepted report.

A family is eligible for preventive services when a report has been received where there are no allegations of abuse or neglect, but there are identified risk factors that might indicate the need for services. Prevention services are voluntary and as with assessment cases, there is no formal finding of abuse or neglect. DFS policy requires that the caseworker should attempt to make contact with the family within 7 calendar days of receiving the accepted report, but this is not a policy requirement.

DFS policy allows the transfer of cases from assessment to investigation or from investigation to assessment. If during the course of the assessment it appears that the incident meets the criteria for the investigation track or if the results of the safety assessment indicate the child is unsafe then the case must be moved from the assessment track to the investigative track. If during an investigation it is determined that a case would be appropriate for assignment to the assessment track, this transfer must be approved by a supervisor, and the case must not contain any of the elements described above in regards to the investigative track.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS did not always initiate reports of abuse and neglect or make face to face contact with alleged victims and perpetrators within its own policy timeframes. DFS received an overall rating of 84% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 3). In response to these findings, the state developed a standardized report using SACWIS data to determine the length of time between intake and initiation for incidents involving investigation. This item is also reviewed as part of the State CFSR process which monitors both the time to initiation and time to face to face contact in accordance with state policy. The increased focus on timeliness on initiating investigations and making face to face contact has led to improved data entry and improved performance on this item across the state.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Performance has improved on this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR review as measured by the State CFSR. The increased focus on timeliness has led to improved data entry and improved performance on this item across the state. The state has achieved a combined score of 95.2% across the 4 rounds of State CFSR reviews (see table 3).

Table 3: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 1

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
% Strength	84%	93.3%	100%	96%	93.3%	95.2%
# Applicable	19	15	8	25	15	63

Factors affecting substantiation rates and disposition: Due to the development and implementation of a multiple response referral system in August of 2001, Wyoming has seen changes in the proportion of cases assigned to investigation and the proportion of allegations that are substantiated. Since the implementation of multiple response, there has been a substantial decrease in the proportion of child protection cases that result in an investigation (see table 4).

Within the incidents that are investigated, there has been an increase in the proportion of allegations that are substantiated (see table 5). Due to the inclusion of assessment cases in the state NCANDS reporting, the implementation of a multiple response is also responsible for the increase in the number and proportion of accepted reports that are disposed within the category of other as reported in Safety Element II in the ACF Data Profile.

Table 4: Incidents with Allegations: CY 1999-2007. Source: WYCAPS

		No Allegation		Allegation	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
CY	1999	911	27.8%	2362	72.2%
	2000	920	25.5%	2681	74.5%
	2001	1614	43.0%	2141	57.0%
	2002	3014	69.8%	1307	30.2%
	2003	3834	76.9%	1152	23.1%
	2004	4159	80.6%	999	19.4%
	2005	3963	79.2%	1041	20.8%
	2006	3694	77.7%	1061	22.3%
	2007	3671	79.3%	958	20.7%

Table 5: Allegations by Finding: CY 1999-2007. Source WYCAPS

		Substantiated		Unsubstantiated	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
CY	1999	1338	35.7%	2413	64.3%
	2000	1602	34.8%	2998	65.2%
	2001	1174	29.4%	2820	70.6%
	2002	902	37.9%	1476	62.1%
	2003	1042	44.6%	1293	55.4%
	2004	946	48.8%	993	51.2%
	2005	1158	54.0%	986	46.0%
	2006	1046	49.4%	1073	50.6%
	2007	1054	49.3%	1086	50.7%

DFS believes that these changes in the proportion of cases assigned to investigation and changes in rates of substantiated allegations are the result of the implementation of the multiple response system. Prior to the availability of multiple response the majority of child protection cases were assigned to investigation because there was no other option for responding to allegations of abuse or neglect. After the implementation of multiple response lower risk reports were assigned to either the assessment or prevention track therefore reducing the total number of investigations. Although the number of investigations that DFS conducts each year has decreased over the last 9 years, the proportion of investigations that are substantiated has increased. DFS believes this is also a result of the implementation of a multiple response system and believes that the increase in the proportion of substantiations within cases that are investigated is due to the fact that this population represents cases with more severe allegations and therefore an increased level of substantiation.

Screening CPS Reports and CPS Track Assignment: DFS has conducted analysis to determine the appropriateness of track assignment and to determine the appropriateness of accepting and rejecting reports of abuse and neglect. In an initial analysis, 50 cases identified as prevention were randomly selected and reviewed and it was determined that 90% of these cases were appropriately assigned to prevention. In response, training and policy clarification was provided to supervisors and managers regarding track assignments. In a follow-up study that re-examined track assignment 50 additional randomly selected incidents assigned to prevention from a later time period were reviewed, and it was determined that 90% of those cases were properly assigned to prevention. Although this analysis focused specifically on screening for prevention it does indicate that DFS has a relatively high rate of appropriately assigning cases to its multiple track system. Even though the process of screening and assigning incidents appears to be functioning appropriately, a more recent preliminary analysis of the effectiveness of the prevention track indicated a decline in the use of prevention since its inception and an increase in the utilization of the assessment track. The analysis also suggested some issues related to a lack of documentation regarding assessments and case planning for cases assigned to the prevention and assessment track.

Impact of Multiple Response: The total number of child protection reports has increased over the last 9 years (see Table 6), the proportion of accepted reports also increased slightly during the years following the implementation of multiple responses (multiple response was implemented during August 2001). DFS believes that the increase in the total number of reports is attributable to the implementation of multiple response, which means that a significant number of families that would have previously been “screened out” and not offered services are now being served through the assessment and prevention track. Overall, DFS believes that the implementation of a multiple response system has increased the number of families that it serves as well as enables the ability to serve families in a model that is more strengths-based and family centered.

Table 6: Proportion of CPS rejected and accepted reports CY 1999-2007. Source WYCAPS

		Decision					
		Rejected		Accepted		Total	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
CY	1999	1996	37.8%	3289	62.2%	5285	100.0%
	2000	1944	35.0%	3606	65.0%	5550	100.0%
	2001	2255	37.5%	3756	62.5%	6011	100.0%
	2002	2509	36.7%	4329	63.3%	6838	100.0%
	2003	2440	32.8%	4991	67.2%	7431	100.0%
	2004	2499	32.6%	5168	67.4%	7667	100.0%
	2005	2568	33.9%	5012	66.1%	7580	100.0%
	2006	2522	34.7%	4756	65.3%	7278	100.0%
	2007	2741	37.1%	4655	62.9%	7396	100.0%
	Total	21474	35.2%	39562	64.8%	61036	100.0%

Factors that are affecting the State’s performance on safety data profile elements VIII and IX: In the states NCANDS submission, the Investigation Start Date reports the time the investigation was initiated, which does not always equate to the time between the acceptance of the report and face to face contact with the child. The ACF data profile for safety elements VIII

and IX report that both the median and mean time to initiation of the investigation is less than 24 hours. The measures in the data profile combined with the cumulative scores of 95% for item 1 from the State CFSR review, which does include the assessment of timeliness of face to face contact, indicates that Wyoming has improved performance this item in relation to initiating and making face to face contact with alleged victims of child abuse and neglect.

Stakeholder feedback: Stakeholders stated that they believed that investigations are conducted in a timely manner and that the intake and screening process is effective. Stakeholders also stated that strong relationships with law enforcement in most communities improved the efficiency of investigations and that overall the after hours on call process was effective. Both internal and external stakeholders stated that the agency has a strong focus on ensuring the safety of children and in their experience the agency responded quickly to reports of abuse and neglect.

Summary: Overall DFS considers their ability to respond to reports of abuse and neglect in a timely manner as an area of strength. This is supported by initial scores in the 2002 CFSR and the overall increase in performance assessed through the State CFSR reviews as well as the data reported in the ACF data profile for elements VIII and IX. The stakeholder comments were also supportive of this viewpoint.

Item 2: Repeat maltreatment

Policy: Wyoming has a multiple response system allowing assignment of reports of abuse or neglect to investigation, assessment, or prevention based on specific criteria. Safety and risk assessments are mandatory for both the investigation and assessment track. The safety assessment must be completed within seven (7) days of the accepted report. Risk assessments must be completed no later than 30 calendar days from the start of the investigation.

DFS uses the standard or credible evidence to make determinations regarding an allegation of abuse or neglect. Credible evidence is defined in DFS policy and rule as the available facts when viewed in light of surrounding circumstances would cause a reasonable person to believe a child was abused or neglected. DFS policy requires that allegations must be determined to be substantiated or unsubstantiated based on the standard of credible evidence defined above and does not have an “indicated” category. In accordance with state law, DFS maintains a Central Registry of child maltreatment in the form of a statewide electronic record of persons who have been the subject of a substantiated maltreatment allegation or for whom a complaint is under investigation. The record contains the findings of the child protection investigation. Entries on the Central Registry can be expunged when good cause is shown.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: During the 2002 Federal CFSR, 94% of the applicable cases were rated as a strength for item 2. The incidence of repeat maltreatment for FY 2000 was 6.29% which was slightly higher than the national standard of 6.1%. A key finding from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that maltreatment reports involving children in open child protective services cases usually are not treated as new reports and, therefore, are not subjected to an investigation. In response to this finding DFS modified existing policy and provided training to field staff to ensure that that all new reports are investigated in accordance with policy. DFS also utilized technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child

Maltreatment and conducted a full review of its policy and safety and risk assessment process and implemented the recommendations made by the NRCCM.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: The state has maintained a score above 90% of applicable cases rated as a strength on this item across the 4 rounds of the State CFSR review and has a combined State CFSR score of 95.3% for this item (see table 7). Increased performance can be attributed to policy and training improvements regarding safety assessments and safety planning as well as monitoring this process through the State CFSR reviews.

Table 7: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 2

	2002 CFSR	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Combined
%Strength	94%	96.9%	98.4%	90.4%	100%	95.3%
# Applicable	31	65	62	73	11	211

Factors that are affecting the State’s performance on safety data profile elements VI and XI:

As reported in the ACF data profile, DFS has been in substantial conformity with safety element VI Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence for the last 2 consecutive federal fiscal years. For the current CFSR rolling year the ACF data profile reports a percentage of 96.1% for Safety Elements VI, which surpasses the standard of 94.6%. The data reported in the ACF data profile correlates with the findings from the State CFSR review. There are a relatively low percentage of children reported as being maltreated by parents while in care (.45%), which would indicate that overall Wyoming is doing an adequate job supervising visits and assessing risk during visitation.

Stakeholder Feedback: Overall stakeholders commented that the department is effective at preventing repeat maltreatment. Caseworkers and supervisors stated that the formalized risk and safety assessments in WYCAPS do not always reflect the ongoing informal safety and risk assessments that occur as part of routine casework practice. Caseworkers and supervisors reported using the safety and risk assessment tools that are required by policy and felt that they were helpful, but that the informal assessment of child safety was more important in regards to making determinations about the risk of future abuse. Stakeholders also commented that the relationships with law enforcement vary across communities and because law enforcement and not DFS has the responsibility to make the decision to remove children who are at risk, DFS does not always have the opportunity to prevent repeat maltreatment.

Summary: The previous high percentage of cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR combined with the measures within substantial conformity for Safety Element VI and the high percentage of applicable cases rated as a strength during the 4 rounds of the State CFSR review indicates that Wyoming is performing well on item 2. The comments made by stakeholders in regards to item 2 support this assumption.

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

Status of Safety Outcome 2: Wyoming was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 during the 2002 Federal CFSR and received a rating of 69.7% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved (see table 8). Key findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that

DFS was not consistent in its efforts to maintain children safely in their homes and reduce the risk of harm to children and that DFS tends to conduct safety and risk assessments that focus only on the target child rather than conducting comprehensive assessments of the family. In order to address these concerns DFS developed a family-centered service model as part of its Program Improvement Plan that resulted in a restructuring of the assessment process, caseplanning process, training curriculum and numerous modifications of policy and procedure. Based on the scores obtained from the State CFSR review, DFS has seen an increase in the percentage of applicable cases rated as a substantially achieved for this outcome area and has obtained a combined score of 89.1% for cases that have been reviewed during the State CFSR (table 8). DFS believes that the aforementioned PIP strategies have impacted the performance on this item, and due to the development of a family-centered approach to serving families, DFS is now providing services to prevent removal to the entire family, and is assessing risk and safety concerns for all children for the majority of cases.

Table 8: Percent Cases Rated as Substantially Achieved. CFSR Safety Outcome 2

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Sub Achieve	69.7%	90.9%	95.9%	90.4%	81.5%	89.1%
# Applicable	50	55	49	52	65	221

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

Policy: DFS policy emphasizes the importance of maintaining children in their home when possible. Family preservation funds are available for the purchase of services designed to prevent the removal of children from the home. Individualized services are identified through a formal case planning process (family services plan). All cases opened for services are required to have a family services plan. The goals described in the family services plan are developed with the family and incorporate information gathered during intake, assessment, and investigation. The opportunity to participate in a family partnership is offered to all families prior to engaging in the case planning process. Services are provided based on the specified needs identified through the aforementioned process.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 82% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 9). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS was primarily focused on the target child and did not adequately assess or provide services to the entire family and that DFS did not consistently make diligent efforts to provide services to ensure children’s safety while preventing their placement in foster care. In response to these findings DFS, in collaboration with the National Resource Center on Family Centered Practice, undertook a comprehensive review of policy and procedure in order to develop a service delivery system that was family centered and inclusive of all family members. Existing policies were revised and training was provided to staff regarding the importance of family centered practice. New family based assessment tools were implemented and a family group decision making process (family partnerships) was developed, trained and implemented across the state. DFS also created a strategy to develop a system where flexible funding could be easily approved in order to provide immediate and individualized services to families at risk of having a child removed from the home.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has seen an increase in performance on the combined State CFSR score for item 3, with 88.2% of applicable cases rated as a strength (see table 9). DFS believes that this increase in performance is related to the implementation of a family assessment process and policy and training modifications that emphasize the necessity to provide services to the entire family for the purpose of preventing removal from the home or re-entry into foster care.

Table 9: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 3

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	82%	83.3%	100%	82.4%	91.2%	88.2%
# Applicable	22	24	18	34	34	110

Factors that are affecting the State’s performance on safety data profile elements III and IV:

As reported in the ACF data profile the percentage of child victims that enter placement is 45.3% for the current CFSR rolling year, which is substantially higher than the national average of 21.7% reported by ACF in the 2005 Child Maltreatment Report (ACF 2005). There has also been an increase in the proportion of child victims that enter placement as reported in the ACF Child Maltreatment Reports since 2002 for the state of Wyoming (ACF 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). External analysis also suggests that Wyoming has a relatively high placement rate (NCCPR 2007, Praesidium 2002) when compared to other states and national averages. Although these statistical trends are not conclusive, they do indicate that Wyoming potentially has a higher rate of removal than other states, and a higher rate of removal than the national average.

DFS believes that one of the primary contributing factors to the removal of children from the home is due to the increased risk factors associated with the use and manufacturing of methamphetamine. The proliferation of the use, manufacturing, and distribution of methamphetamine has had a significant impact on the service delivery system for children and families across Wyoming. The state has seen an increase in methamphetamine related arrests since 2002 and has a higher than national average for methamphetamine usage among its youth population (Reyes, Maki & Grandpre, 2005). The increased risk and safety issues associated with the use and manufacturing of methamphetamine has decreased the ability of DFS to provide services to prevent removal.

During an initial analysis of methamphetamine involvement, DFS determined that approximately 36% of a sample of cases with a substantiation of abuse or neglect had some type of meth involvement, and in approximately 24% of these cases methamphetamine involvement was the primary contributing factor that led to the substantiated allegation.¹ Of the cases that had confirmed methamphetamine involvement, 93% of those cases had children that experienced placement as compared to 59% of those cases where methamphetamine was not involved. These higher rates of placement for cases involving methamphetamine support the hypothesis that methamphetamine is a contributing factor to the increase in the rate of removal.

Other contributing factors that would reduce the agencies ability to provide services to prevent removal would be the availability of services and the agencies ability to provide these services in

¹ This analysis was based on a random sample of cases (n=120) drawn from the population of cases with an associated substantiation on 8/1/04. A survey of DFS supervisors was conducted on the sample to determine methamphetamine involvement using pre-defined criteria.

a timely manner. DFS does not have any quantitative data on the sufficiency of services within each community, but stakeholder comments during the State CFSR Stakeholder interviews suggest that there is a lack of availability of services in some communities, and the lack of ability to provide services immediately in some cases (see stakeholder comments below).

Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders commented that more resources are needed to increase contact between the agency and children being served in the home and that there is limited funding available for contracting for preventative services within communities. Stakeholders also commented that flexible funding is limited for the purpose of providing immediate services to families at risk and stated that there should be more staff available for monitoring in-home services cases and for contracting for parent mentors for families. Stakeholders in rural communities commented that geographic barriers exist for DFS to provide services in outlying and often remote areas and there is a shortage of in-patient and out-patient substance abuse services in remote communities which requires families to travel for treatment and substance abuse assessments.

Summary: Based on the scores obtained from the State CFSR review process, there has been minimal positive change on this item since the 2002 federal review. Explanations for the lack of improvement are the increased risk associated with methamphetamine related allegations of abuse and neglect, and difficulties associated with providing and accessing services across a vast and predominately rural landscape, as well as issue related to accessing immediate flexible funds in order to provide services to families during crisis. Another concern for the state is the evidence that suggests that Wyoming may have a higher than average rate of removal for children that enter care as a result of abuse or neglect. DFS anticipates that these issues will be further examined as part of the upcoming Federal CFSR review and subsequently addressed in the states Program Improvement Plan.

Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management

Policy: DFS policy requires both a risk and safety assessment to be completed at initial contact with the family and throughout the life of the case. The safety assessment is completed by the assigned caseworker for all accepted CPS reports, which includes cases assigned to the investigations and assessment track, and is to be completed within 7 calendar days of receipt of the report. The safety assessment is comprised of an assessment containing 14 questions that assess for immediate danger to the children, a safety plan that identifies resources and interventions designed to ensure the safety of the child, and a safety decision that rates the child as being safe, conditionally safe or unsafe. The risk assessment is required for all cases assigned to the investigation and assessment track and is to be completed within 30 calendar days from the initiation of the investigation or assessment. The risk assessment is comprised of 2 scales. The neglect scale is composed of 10 questions that assess potential risk for the occurrence of neglect, and the abuse scale contains 10 questions for the purpose of assessing the potential risk of abuse. Both tools are required to be completed on the entire family and both tools are automated and required to be entered into the states SACWIS system. A risk re-assessment is required on regular intervals throughout the life of the case and is required to be completed at a minimum of every six months or when factors or events in the case would create a potential for increased risk,

such as case closure, change in family composition, reunification, or any other event that may increase the risk to the children within the family.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 72% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 10). The findings from the Federal 2002 CFSR stated that DFS did not always monitor safety and risk appropriately, especially for in-home services cases, and did not always re-evaluate risk and safety during key events that occurred during the case. In response to the findings of the 2002 Federal CFSR, DFS developed policy to address safety issues regarding placement changes, after reunification and during visitation. DFS also described that risk of harm will be reduced through a family-centered safety assessment and ongoing risk assessments, particularly at times when there are changes in the child’s environment or routine and that the agency would then provide individualized services based on the assessments. Policy regarding completing an investigation on every new report of maltreatment that was made during an ongoing cases was also developed and training was provided to field staff on this issue. DFS also utilized technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment and conducted a full review of its policy and safety and risk assessment process and implemented the recommendations made by the NRCCM.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Based on the scores derived from the State CFSR review, DFS has made progress on item 4 and has obtained a combined score of 90.5% of cases rated as a strength (see table 10). The drop in performance on this item for round 4 of the State CFSR reviews is related to changes in the review instrument that require ongoing risk and safety assessment as well as more specific criteria regarding the risk and safety assessment process. DFS continues to struggle with developing an effective process for formally assessing and documenting risk and safety issues for children involved in the juvenile services system. DFS is currently developing an assessment tool for the juvenile services division that will incorporate an assessment of the child’s safety, which should improve performance on this item for juvenile services cases. Currently Juvenile Services assesses for previous child protection involvement as part of the intake process.

Table 10: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 4

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	72%	92.5%	95.7%	94.4%	81.8%	90.5%
# Applicable	32	53	47	54	66	220

Factors that are affecting the State’s performance on safety data profile elements VII, XI, and XIII: The agency was not in substantial conformity with element VII (abuse and neglect in foster care) for the current CFSR rolling year and attained a score of 99.57% absence of abuse/neglect in foster care. In order to understand the issues related to the states failure to attain substantial conformity for this safety data measure a case file review of all children with a substantiated allegation while in foster care during the period was conducted. It was determined that a substantial proportion of these allegations were related to multiple children being substantiated at facilities for a single perpetrator, as well as several children with substantiations entered during the period for allegations that occurred several years prior. DFS recognizes that it must improve monitoring of safety within facilities and for children in foster care in order to achieve substantial conformity for this item. There are a relatively low percentage of children reported as being maltreated by parents

while in care (.45%), which would indicate that overall Wyoming is doing an adequate job supervising visits and assessing risk during visitation, but must improve this process in order to reduce the potential for children to be abused by parents while in care. The safety of children in out of home care is monitored through the foster parent certification and facility licensure processes. Both the foster care certification and facility licensure process require that foster parents and facilities meet safety standards and receive specific training regarding safety issues. The ongoing safety of children in placement is monitored through face to face contact with the DFS caseworker, in which safety concerns are identified and addressed as part of the visitation requirements.

Stakeholder Feedback: Generally DFS staff felt that the risk and safety assessment tools were adequate to assess risk and safety and were used appropriately in the field. DFS staff commented that risk and safety assessment is an integral part of effective casework and is continually occurring through the life of the case but is difficult to formally document in the case file. The courts commented that resources for home supervised visits are not readily available in some communities and providers stated that there is limited funding available for supervised visitation. Most communities reported strong relationships with law enforcement and a need for increased funding for preventative services.

Summary: Overall DFS believes that it has improved its ability to assess, monitor and document safety and risk factors associated with allegations of abuse and neglect, this is evidenced by the improvement in performance as measured by the State CFSR review process, but DFS also feels that any score below the national standard for this item is unacceptable. DFS is particularly concerned with its inability to ensure the safety of children while in its care and anticipates addressing this item, as well as the failure to achieve substantial conformity with data element VII in its upcoming Program Improvement Plan.

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

Status of Permanency Outcome 1: Wyoming was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 during the 2002 Federal CFSR and received a rating of 71% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved (see table 11). DFS was in substantial conformity with the data indicators measuring Foster Care Re-entry, Length of Time to Achieve Reunification, and Stability of Foster Care Placement, but was not in substantial conformity with the data indicator measuring Length of Time to Achieve Adoption. Key findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review questioned the willingness of DFS to pursue adoption as a goal for children and to file for termination of parental rights (TPR) to facilitate this process. DFS has seen a decrease in performance on this outcome area as measured by the State CFSR review, reporting a combined score of 64.3% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved for this Outcome area (see table 11). The decrease in performance on this item is attributable to the decrease in performance on items 7, 8, and 9, discussed below.

Table 11: Percent Cases Rated as Substantially Achieved. CFSR Permanency Outcome 1

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Sub Achieve	71%	61.1%	67.5%	71.8%	50%	64.3%
# Applicable	31	72	77	78	42	269

Item 5: Foster care re-entries

Policy: DFS has a policy framework that requires that services be provided for the purpose of preventing placements and that after care services are provided to children when they return home through reunification or attain permanency through achieving other permanency goals. Specifically, the policy requires that DFS make reasonable efforts to prevent removal, and that DFS identify and address risk, safety, and community protection issues. DFS policy also requires that risk and safety assessments are conducted when a child returns to their home or attains another permanency option and that services are provided until any identified risk, safety or community issues are resolved.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 86% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 12). A key finding identified in the stakeholder comments from Federal CFSR round 1 stated that re-entry into foster care is an infrequent occurrence for young children, but occurs with some frequency for adolescents, particularly those involved in the juvenile justice system. This item was affected by the overall policy changes that were implemented as part of the development of a family centered service model. Specific strategies include: revisions and improvements to risk and safety assessments, the development of family partnerships and improved policy and procedures related to case planning and concurrent planning.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Overall, DFS has shown negligible improvement on this item throughout the 4 rounds of State CFSR reviews. Although there has been substantial variation in scores across the 4 rounds of reviews, the combined score as well as round 3, which had the largest number of applicable cases reviewed, shows little variation from the score obtained during the 2002 Federal CFSR review, and reports a score of 86.4% of applicable cases rated as a strength for the combined scores across all 4 rounds of State CFSR reviews (see table 12).

Table 12: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 5

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	86%	94.1%	66.7%	85.3%	100%	86.4%
# Applicable	14	17	18	34	19	88

Factors that are affecting the State’s performance on permanency data profile element IX: Wyoming is not in substantial conformity with permanency composite 1 and scored in the 75th percentile on Measure C1-4 that measures re-entry into care within 12 months, with a reported re-entry rate of 17.6% for the CFSR rolling year. The scores for the previous years reported (FFY2005 and FFY2006) are equally as high, indicating that the score obtained for the CFSR measurement period is consistent with historical performance on this item. The high rate of re-entry is the primary cause for the state not being in substantial conformity on the overall composite rating for permanency composite 1.

In an internal analysis of re-entry rates it appears that re-entry rates have decreased over the last 8 calendar years (see table 13).² By analyzing child protection cases³ and juvenile services children’s

² Source: WYCAPS. The methodology for calculating these measures differs from the federal methodology in that it uses gaps between placements to identify episode begin and end dates and includes all previous discharge reasons

re-entry rates separately it appears that there has been a substantial reduction in the re-entry rate for child protection children, while re-entry rates for juvenile services children has remained consistently high (see table 14).

Table 13: Re-entry Rates State: Calendar Years 2000-2007

		No-Reentry		Re-entry	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
CY	2000	854	74.5%	293	25.5%
	2001	875	75.8%	279	24.2%
	2002	911	78.2%	254	21.8%
	2003	1037	82.5%	220	17.5%
	2004	1048	82.7%	219	17.3%
	2005	1099	80.9%	259	19.1%
	2006	1069	82.9%	221	17.1%
	2007	896	81.4%	205	18.6%

When comparing the combined scores from the State CFSR reviews there is a significant difference in performance between the protective services cases and juvenile services cases, with protective services cases rated as a strength in 93.5% of the 46 applicable cases and juvenile services cases rated as a strength in 78.6% of the 42 applicable cases. These case file review findings correlate with the data reported in table 14, providing strong indication that juvenile services has a historically high rate of re-entry when compared to child protection cases. These findings are also supported by the stakeholder comments from Round 1 of the Federal CFSR for item 5, which suggested that re-entry into care was a more common occurrence for children involved in the juvenile services system.

and all placement types. In addition it uses an entry cohort and identifies lengths between the greatest previous exit date. Based on comparisons with other internal methodology and with federal scores, this methodology appears to adequately approximate the federal measure.

³ Includes CPS, YFS and CHINS children in placement.

Table 14: Re-entry rates by Division: Calendar Years 2000-2007

		No-Reentry		Re-entry	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Juvenile Services	2000	265	69.0%	119	31.0%
	2001	282	69.8%	122	30.2%
	2002	287	69.2%	128	30.8%
	2003	362	76.2%	113	23.8%
	2004	354	69.5%	155	30.5%
	2005	346	68.8%	157	31.2%
	2006	379	71.5%	151	28.5%
	2007	316	68.0%	149	32.0%
Protective Services	2000	589	77.2%	174	22.8%
	2001	593	79.1%	157	20.9%
	2002	624	83.2%	126	16.8%
	2003	675	86.3%	107	13.7%
	2004	694	91.6%	64	8.4%
	2005	753	88.1%	102	11.9%
	2006	690	90.8%	70	9.2%
	2007	580	91.2%	56	8.8%

Data Quality issues: Wyoming made substantial corrections and enhancements to its AFCARS extraction routine in the months prior to the creation of the data profile used in the statewide assessment. There were significant issues related to accurately reporting episode begin and end dates as well as capturing accurate data for children in juvenile services in the AFCARS files that were previously submitted. These factors impacted the re-entry rates, and once these issues were corrected the re-entry rates increased.

Stakeholder Feedback: Overall stakeholders stated that DFS and the community does a good job of providing services to prevent removal as well as providing services during reunification. Stakeholders did state that more resources should be allocated for preventative services and resources should be shifted to provide more up-front services prior to removal.

Summary: Based on the scores from the State CFSR reviews and the rating of non-conformity for Permanency composite 1, DFS anticipates addressing re-entry rates in its upcoming PIP. Since the data indicates that children involved in the juvenile services system have significantly higher re-entry rates than children involved in the child welfare system, DFS anticipates developing strategies specific to this population.

Item 6: Stability of foster care placement

Policy: DFS has a policy framework that requires oversight of decisions regarding changes in placements. A court order is required for changes to a placement setting that is more restrictive, which would include moving a child from a family foster care setting to a congregate care setting, such as from non-relative foster care to a group home or residential treatment facility. A move to a less restrictive or similar setting is initiated with a ten day written notice to the child, parents, county attorney, GAL and out-of-home care provider. The notice may be delivered

personally or by certified mail. The appropriateness of the placement setting is reviewed during each of the 3 month, 6 month and 12 month permanency reviews/hearings. DFS also has specific policy that describes the agencies goal of reducing the need for unnecessary placement disruption in order to create consistency in the lives of children who experience out of home placement.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 84% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR review (See table 15). Key findings identified during the 2002 Federal CFSR review were that DFS did not consistently ensure children’s placement stability while in foster care and that children were moved to different levels of care without adequate preparation. Another key issue identified during the 2002 Federal CFSR review was that children were sometimes placed in facilities that did not meet their needs because more appropriate placements or support services were not available. In order to address these issues DFS improved the monitoring and reporting from facilities and foster parents in order to attain more timely and relevant information regarding the status of children in placement. DFS also increased recruiting efforts for foster parents and improved foster care training and certification procedures. DFS also created 4 regional foster care coordinator positions that are dedicated to recruiting, training, certifying and addressing the needs of foster care providers.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Wyoming has demonstrated continued improvement on this item as demonstrated by the State CFSR review and has obtained a combined score of 92.2% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item (see table 15). DFS has seen an increase in the number of certified foster homes over the last 2 years, which has improved the ability of caseworkers to effectively match children with foster parents. DFS has also developed standardized reports for foster care coordinators that reports proportions or children in out-of home care by age, race, and placement categories as well as reporting the number of foster care providers by race. These reports enable foster care coordinators to develop annual recruitment plans based on the racial compatibility needs of foster children and providers. DFS believes that having more accurate information from providers regarding the status of children in out-of-home placement has reduced the occurrence of emergency moves because DFS is now able to react to any reported issues prior to the occurrence of a crisis that may require moving a child. DFS also believes that the creation of the foster care coordinator positions has enabled the agency to better recruit, train, and meet the specific needs of foster care providers. The increased amount of communication between the foster care coordinators and the foster care providers also provides valuable information regarding issues within the foster care environment that could potentially create a placement disruption, and allows the agency to provide intervention prior to the occurrence of a crisis.

Table 15: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 6

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	84%	88.9%	94.8%	93.6%	90.2%	92.2%
# Applicable	31	72	77	78	41	268

Factors affecting the State’s performance on permanency data profile element XII and data profile element IV: DFS is not in substantial compliance with Permanency composite 4 (placement stability), and falls below the 75th percentile for all of the individual measures within the composite.

DFS was below the 75th percentile for measure C4-1, which measures whether a child has had 2 or fewer placements for children in care less than 12 months, with a reported percentage of 84.6% for the CFSR rolling year. DFS was below the 75th percentile for measure C4-2, which measures whether a child had two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 12 to 24 months with a reported percentage of 61.2% for the CFSR rolling year, and was also below the 75th percentile for measure C4-3, which measures whether a child had two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 24 months or more with a reported percentage of 39.2% for the CFSR rolling year. The percentages for all of the individual measures within composite 4 are also below the 75th percentile for FFY 2005 and FFY 2006, which would indicate that this is a historical trend and not a limited occurrence.

Stakeholder Comments: There is considerable variation among DFS offices with regards to stakeholder's perceptions of the agencies efforts and abilities to maintain the stability of foster care placements. Many foster parents felt supported and stated that there was good communication between DFS and foster parents and foster children and that DFS did a good job of placing children in terms of matching the child's needs with the family. Other foster parents stated that they did not feel supported and that they had limited contact with the agency, these comments most often came from areas with high caseloads where foster parents had limited access to their regional foster care coordinator.

Summary: Based on the data available through the data profile and the State CFSR review DFS has demonstrated some improvement on this item. Based on the stakeholder comments and the policy review, DFS realizes that it must work to improve services and contacts with foster parents, especially in remote areas and areas where high caseloads create difficulties in contacting DFS staff. Due to the fact that DFS is not in substantial conformity with permanency composite 4, DFS anticipates developing strategies specific to reducing placement disruption, especially for children in care for longer periods of time.

Item 7: Permanency goal for child

Policy: DFS policy requires that permanency goals are established for every child that enters out of home care and that the goal is established within 60 days of placement. DFS policy requires that a permanent home be found for each child in out of home placement and describes reunification with the biological family as the preferred outcome. When reunification is not possible, DFS policy requires that another permanent home be found for the child. DFS policy emphasizes the importance of placement with relatives and developing potential adoption or guardianship resources for children that cannot be reunified. DFS policy requires that the aforementioned permanency options must be explored prior to establishing a permanency goal of long-term foster care. DFS policy requires that the permanency goal for each child be reviewed quarterly and updated in the caseplan based on the specific requirements of the case. Permanency goals are established by the court based on recommendations from the multi-disciplinary team and are documented in the court order. DFS policy requires that the agency monitor compliance with ASFA requirements regarding 15/22 regulations and file a petition to seek termination of parental rights unless there is a valid exception to the requirements. DFS policy requires that each placement case be assessed for the appropriateness of developing a concurrent plan within 60 days of the placement. Concurrent plans are to be developed as part of the caseplan and their

progress is to be monitored during the permanency reviews and case planning meetings. DFS requires that if a concurrent plan is established it must be simultaneously pursued along with the primary permanency goal.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 84% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 16). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that there often are court-related problems with regard to establishing permanency in a timely manner, including crowded court dockets and/or judges who are not knowledgeable about child welfare cases. There was little evidence of concurrent planning in the cases reviewed during the Federal CFSR and there was reluctance on the part of some District Attorneys, some DFS offices and some courts to seek TPR unless an adoptive family had already been identified for the child. In response to these findings, DFS in collaboration with the Children's Justice Project developed training materials for the court system as well as DFS staff regarding termination of parental rights, concurrent planning and ASFA requirements. The Children's Justice Project also created hearing checklists for judges, county attorneys and guardian ad litem as well as model court orders. DFS also supported the creation of a Children's Permanency Unit within the Attorney General's office designed for the specific purpose of handling termination of parental rights cases. DFS also made substantial changes to policy and training regarding the importance of establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals and establishing concurrent plans when appropriate.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS received an overall rating of 84% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 16). Based on the scores reported by the state CFSR, DFS has made little progress in determining the appropriate permanency goal for children in out of home care since the 2002 Federal review. The reasons for this lack of improvement is due in part to continued lack of active concurrent planning and lack of adequate and early diligent searches for appropriate relatives. Other issues that negatively impact this item are the establishment of unrealistic goals of reunification for incarcerated parents or parents with severe and long terms treatment needs as well as difficulties associated with establishing appropriate permanency goals for delinquent children and children with serious and persistent mental health and behavioral issues.

Although the agency has made substantial efforts to provide training regarding the process and requirement for the termination of parental rights and ASFA provisions, DFS still has ongoing issues regarding the timely filing of petitions for termination of parental rights as well as the documentation and definition of compelling reasons. A point in time measure⁴ of children in out of home placement revealed that of the 1243 children in care, 503 of these children (40%) had been in care at least 15 of the last 22 months and of these children, 176 (35%) did not have a valid ASFA exception documented in WYCAPS. Although part of this percentage is due to data entry error and lack of documentation, this still suggests that the agency has continuing issues regarding compliance with ASFA provisions. This is also evidenced by the decrease in the scores for round 4 of the state CFSR in which the updated CFSR instrument contains specific criteria for the timeliness of the establishment of permanency goals and compliance with ASFA provisions. Observations from the State CFSR review suggest that the decrease in performance during round 4 of the State CFSR is a combination of lack of compliance with ASFA provisions

⁴ Point in Time measure taken 10/22/07. Source: WYCAPS

as well as a smaller percentage of cases that did not have permanency goals established within 60 days. These findings correlate with the findings from the National Center for State Courts Reassessment of Wyoming’s Juvenile Court System (2006) which cited difficulties associated with the timely filing petitions for termination of parental rights.

Table 16: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 7

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	84%	81.9%	80.5%	82.1%	57.1%	77.7%
# Applicable	31	72	77	78	42	269

Factors affecting data profile element III: 70.9% of children in the point it time permanency profile have the permanency goal of reunification. This is influenced in part by presence of juvenile delinquents in the placement population who have a significantly higher rate of reunification than child welfare cases.

Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholder feedback regarding the appropriateness of permanency goals has been varied across stakeholder groups and communities. Foster parents and some providers questioned the reason why DFS places such a high emphasis on reunification with families that had abused or neglected their children, and felt that children were often returned to homes that could not adequately meet all of the needs of the children. Some representatives from the court system stated that the timelines specified in ASFA were too stringent in terms of pursuing termination of parental rights. Both DFS staff and representatives from the court system cited over-crowded dockets and scheduling issues as barriers to establishing permanency goals in a timely manner. A few County Attorney’s and Judges stated that they felt that DFS staff should receive more detailed training regarding the process for termination of parental rights and legal aspects of child welfare in general. Overall DFS caseworkers and administrators stated that they were doing well at establishing the appropriate permanency goals, but felt that they were not always consistent in terms of developing and formally documenting concurrent plans.

Summary: Based on the scores from the State CFSR and the feedback gathered through stakeholder interviews DFS acknowledges that it needs to address this item more fully and anticipates little change in performance on this item in the upcoming Federal CFSR review. Specific issues that the agency will need to address are: training and policy and monitoring of concurrent plans; clarification regarding the appropriate use of long-term foster care and guardianship, timely completion of permanency plans, and improved adherence to ASFA provisions.

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

Policy: DFS policy requires that permanency goals are established for every child that enters out of home care and that the goal is established within 60 days of placement. DFS policy requires that a permanent home be found for each child in out of home placement and describes reunification with the biological family as the preferred outcome. When reunification is not possible, DFS policy requires that another permanent home be developed. DFS policy emphasizes the importance of placement with relatives and developing guardianships with relatives or long-term placements with relatives, if reunification is not an achievable goal. DFS

policy emphasizes the need to achieve permanency in a timely manner but does not include any specific timeframes for achieving reunification.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 82% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 17). DFS was in substantial conformity with the data indicator that measures length of time to achieve reunification within 12 months, with 81.6% of children achieving reunification within 12 months for FFY2000. Key findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that in the cases rated as area needing improvement, the agency had not made diligent efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. To address these concerns, DFS collaborated with the Children’s Justice Project to improve court processes and provide the courts and DFS staff with specific guidelines and best practices regarding the timeliness of reunification, guardianship, and permanent placement with relatives.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Based on the scores from the State CFSR, DFS has seen a decrease in performance for item 8, and has obtained a combined score of 74.7% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item. The decrease in performance is related to the large number of methamphetamine related cases that entered the system prior to and during the period that the State CFSR reviews were conducted. During an initial analysis of methamphetamine involvement, DFS determined that approximately 36% of a sample of cases with a substantiation of abuse or neglect had some type of meth involvement, and in approximately 24% of these cases methamphetamine involvement was the primary contributing factor that led to the substantiated allegation. DFS also believes that the high rate of incarceration and the extensive and prolonged treatment needs of methamphetamine involved parents have led to an increase in the lengths of stay for children in out of home care. Although multiple factors affect performance on item 8, DFS believes that the increase in meth related placements has significantly impacted performance on this item.

Table 17: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 8

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
Percent	82%	68.2%	67.3%	83.6%	80.6%	74.7%
# Applicable	22	44	52	55	31	182

Factors that are affecting the State’s performance on permanency data profile element IX: DFS was not in substantial conformity with Permanency composite 1; this rating was primarily caused by the high rate of re-entry in Composite 1 Component B, which is above the national median at 17.6% for the CFSR rolling year. The score for Measure C1-1, which measures exits to reunification in less than 12 months is just below the 75th percentile, reporting 73.6% of children reunifying in less than 12 months for the CFSR rolling year. The median length of stay is slightly below the national median at 6.4 months for the CFSR rolling year, and the entry cohort measurement for reunification in less than 12 month is above the 75th percentile at 55.4% for the CFSR rolling year.

An analysis of reunification rates between calendar years 2000 and 2007 reveals a downward trend in the proportion of children that are reunified in less than 12 months (see table 18). DFS believes that reunification rates have been impacted by the increase risk and safety issue and prolonged treatment needs as well as high rates of incarceration related to methamphetamine use. This

hypothesis is supported by the fact that the percentage of children reunified in less than 12 months has decreased significantly for children served through protective services (see table 19). It can be hypothesized further that many of these children that exited to reunification during calendar year 2006/2007 entered care during the period between 2003 and 2005, a period in which DFS believes there was a high proportion of children entering care due to methamphetamine related issues. So essentially, DFS is now experiencing the effect of a “methamphetamine cohort” in terms of children experiencing longer stays in care, and subsequent reductions in the proportion of children that are reunified in less than 12 months.

Table 18: Reunification Rates Less than 12 Months: Calendar Years 2000-2007

		Reunification >12		Reunification <12	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
CY	2000	152	25.2%	452	74.8%
	2001	146	25.5%	427	74.5%
	2002	163	27.0%	441	73.0%
	2003	177	27.0%	479	73.0%
	2004	215	29.5%	513	70.5%
	2005	211	28.5%	530	71.5%
	2006	208	25.9%	595	74.1%
	2007	238	32.4%	496	67.6%

Table 19: Reunification Rates Less than 12 Months by Division: Calendar Years 2005-2007

		Reunified >12Months		Reunified <12 Months	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Juvenile Services	2005	124	31.0%	276	69.0%
	2006	87	22.4%	301	77.6%
	2007	112	28.6%	279	71.4%
Protective Services	2005	87	25.5%	254	74.5%
	2006	121	29.2%	294	70.8%
	2007	126	36.7%	217	63.3%

Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholder feedback regarding the timeliness to achieve reunification, guardianship or permanent placement with relatives has been varied across stakeholder groups and communities. Supervisors and caseworkers stated that there are limited resources for conducting throughout diligent searches to identify potential family members, especially extended family and absent parents. Supervisors, caseworkers and court representatives also stated that the lack of availability of treatment, especially inpatient substance abuse treatment, in more rural areas is a barrier to attaining reunification in some communities. Stakeholders also commented that the lack of the availability of therapeutic foster care homes in some areas created barriers to achieving permanency in a timely manner. Overall most stakeholders commented that the extended period of time required for substance abuse treatment, specifically regarding methamphetamine affected the length of time children spend in out-of-home placement.

Summary: Based on the scores obtained through the State CFSR review DFS anticipates addressing the aforementioned issues for this item during the Program Improvement Plan process. Factors affecting the timely achievement of reunification, guardianship and permanent placement with relatives include: lack of substance abuse treatment in rural sparsely populated areas, extended treatment needs for methamphetamine treatment, as well as the court related issues described in previous items.

Item 9: Adoption

Policy: DFS has specific policy for the termination of parental rights, voluntary relinquishment, and for processing adoptions. DFS policy requires that requests for appropriate homes be made to adoption agencies and adoption exchanges for children not being adopted by relatives or foster parents. DFS policy also requires that all available information regarding the child be provided to the adoptive parents and specifically requires that DFS provides the adoptive parents with medical records, medical history, immunization records, mental health evaluations as well as treatment history prior to finalizing the adoption. DFS policy also requires that the adoptive parents be provided with a written social summary and history of the child prior to finalizing the adoption. Wyoming statute requires that a child be in a pre-adoptive placement with the prospective adoptive parents for a minimum of 6 months, and that children over the age of 14 provide written consent to the adoption. DFS requires thorough criminal background checks for all prospective adoptive parents and has the ability to contract with private child placement service agencies for the provision of pre and post placement counseling and supervision of placement of special needs children prior to and after the finalization of the adoption. DFS policy emphasizes the need to achieve permanency in a timely manner but does not include any specific timeframes for achieving adoption.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 50% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 20). DFS was not in substantial conformity with the data indicator that measures length of time to achieve adoption, with 26% of children achieving adoption in less than 24 months for FFY 2000. Key findings from the 2002 Federal review stated that in the one case that was rated as an area needing improvement, there was no TPR or compelling reasons for not pursuing TPR for a child that had been in care for 32 months. Stakeholders interviewed during the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that TPR filings are not always timely due to reluctance to pursue TPR until there is an adoptive family available. In order to address the findings of the 2002 review DFS supported the creation of a Children's Permanency Unit within the attorney generals office for the purpose of expediting termination of parental rights cases. DFS also improved its policy and protocol regarding termination of parental rights and the adoption process as well as continued its efforts with the Children's Justice Project.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Based on the scores from the State CFSR, DFS has made little progress in addressing the timeliness of achieving the permanency goal of adoption. Although the sample size remains relatively small across the reviews, the cumulative score (n=47) for the applicable cases rated as a strength is 48.9% (see table 20). In a review of the cases that were rated as an area needing improvement, cases did not meet the standard due to delays in court proceedings, timeliness issues regarding filing petitions for termination of

parental rights, inadequate permanency planning and concurrent planning, and failure to identify potential adoptive relatives.

In addition, a comprehensive re-assessment of abuse and neglect case processing conducted by the National Center for State Courts (2006) found that most court representatives and DFS representatives reported that abuse and neglect caseloads were not manageable and that concurrent planning had not been fully integrated into practice and policy, both issues that impact performance on the attainment of timely achievement of permanency goals. Overall the assessment concluded that there had been improvement in processing abuse and neglect cases, but issues still remained regarding the timeliness of hearings and filings of termination of parental rights cases.

Table 20: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 9

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	50%	50%	66.7%	16.7%	37.5%	48.9%
# Applicable	2	18	15	6	8	47

Although the number of legalized adoptions has increased over the last several years, the relative proportion of children who exit to adoption has not changed significantly in relation to other discharge reasons and remains relatively stable across the last 4 calendar years (see table 21), which would indicate that Wyoming has not significantly increased its utilization of adoption as a permanency option over the last 4 years.

Table 21: Exits by Reason: Calendar Year 2004-2007

	ADOPTION	EMANCIPATION	GUARDIANSHIP	LIVE WITH REL	REUNIFICATION	TO INDEP LIVING
2004	6.8%	2.9%	4.4%	8.1%	75.0%	2.8%
2005	5.9%	3.5%	6.8%	12.7%	69.1%	2.1%
2006	6.4%	2.7%	6.4%	8.3%	75.0%	1.2%
2007	5.4%	5.0%	3.3%	6.2%	77.9%	2.4%

Factors that are affecting the State’s performance on permanency data profile element X:

Wyoming is in substantial conformity with Permanency Composite 2. Measure C2-1 (Timeliness of Adoption of Children discharged from foster care) is well above the 75th percentile and reports that 41.3% of children with an exit reason of Adoption were discharged within 24 months of their latest removal. Measure C2-2 (Exits to Adoption, Median Length of stay) is above the 75th percentile and reports a median length of stay of 26.2 months from the date of latest removal to discharge to adoption. Measure C2-3 (Children in Care 17+ months, adopted by end of the year) was below the national median and reported 15.2% of children in care 17 months or more exiting to Adoption during the reporting period. Measure C2-4 (Children in Care 17+ months achieving legal freedom within 6 months) was at the 75th percentile and reported 10.9% of children in care 17 months or more achieving legal freedom within the first 6 months of the reporting period. Measure C2-5 (Legally free children adopted in less than 12 months) is above the 75th percentile and reports 78.3% of children that became legally free for adoption in the 12 months prior to the reporting period were adopted in less than 12 months.

One area of concern is the score below the national median for adopting children who have been in care more than 17 months, this would indicate that there are a proportion of children that have spent an excess of 17 months of care without attaining permanency. DFS believes that this measure may be impacted by the inclusion of Juvenile Services children in AFCARS reporting. For the vast majority of children served through Juvenile Services, Adoption is not an appropriate permanency goal, so children in placement more than 17 months due to Juvenile Services involvement would negatively impact this measure.

Overall, the scores on the composite measures correlate with the findings from the State CFSR review with 41.3% of children exiting to Adoption within 24 months as measured by Composite measure C2-1 and an combined score of 48.9% of case rated as a strength for item 9 in the State CFSR review. The improvement in scores over time as reported for fiscal years for measures C2-1, C2-2, C2-4, and C2-5 may be the result of the development and implementation of the Children's Permanency Unit within the Attorney General's Office, and the implementation of the Children's Justice Projects Model Court Orders; both of which were fully integrated processes prior to these time periods, and therefore should have positive impact on the percentage scores for Composite 2.

Stakeholder Feedback: Overall, representatives from the court as well as field staff were encouraged by the focus and progress made in relation to achieving adoptions in a timely manner. Most stakeholders were in favor of the role of the Children's Permanency Unit within the Attorney Generals Office and felt that it had impacted the timeliness of processing termination cases. A small number of Judges and County Attorneys commented that DFS staff needs more training regarding the legal aspects, timeframes and case file documentation issues related to termination of parental rights cases.

Summary: DFS is encouraged by the improvement in performance for the composite measure as reported in the data profile, but based upon the State CFSR scores, the agency also recognizes the fact that much more work needs to be accomplished in order to improve performance on this item. Specific issues that need to be addressed are establishment of the appropriate permanency goal and timely establishment of concurrent plans, as well as stricter enforcement and monitoring of 15/22 provisions. DFS is also encouraged by the progress reported in addressing issues in the juvenile court system and will continue to support and collaborate with the Children's Justice Project and other court related initiatives.

Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement.

Policy: DFS policy provides that independent and transitional living services are available for any child between the ages of 12 and 21 that has been in out of home placement. DFS policy also requires that any child that is in placement that is over the age of 16 must have an Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment and an independent/transitional living plan component as part of their caseplan. DFS provides independent living services through private providers and contracts throughout the state. DFS also provides independent living placements and financial assistance and transitional services for children in independent living arrangements. DFS policy also provides services and support for youth emancipating from care in accordance with the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 57% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (see table 22). The 2002 Federal CFSR final report stated that DFS did not always have clear plans documented for the provision of independent living skills training and transitional living services, and that DFS had not always explored other permanency arrangements prior to establishing a permanency goal of long term foster care or emancipation. To address these findings, DFS provided training regarding the availability of statewide independent living services and strengthened policy and training regarding the establishment of an appropriate permanency goal.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Based on the scores reported from the State CFSR reviews, Wyoming has made significant progress in term of providing services, assessments and planning for children with the permanency goal of other planned living arrangement and has obtained a combined score of 74.7% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item (see table 22). This is the result of improved training regarding independent living services as well as improved training regarding the importance of incorporating independent living plans as part of the overall caseplan for applicable children. Since the 2002 Federal CFSR review, DFS has also improved policy regarding this population, and the State CFSR has provide a standardized means to evaluate the effectiveness of its independent and transitional living programs.

Table 22: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 10

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	57%	77.8%	70%	88.2%	100%	83.3%
# Applicable	7	9	10	17	6	42

Another critical component to understanding issues related to independent living is the states usage of OPLA as a permanency option. As reported in table 23, OPLA permanency goals (emancipation, independent living, live with relatives, and long-term foster care) represent only 8.4% of the total population of children with an applicable permanency goal. This would suggest that this permanency option is potentially under-utilized in the state, which could also be contributing to the lack of progress for items 7 and 8. Although this information is speculative it would suggest that there may be reluctance for the state to utilize OPLA goals, which would also suggest that specific policy, and assessments may need to be strengthened in order to better determine the appropriate permanency goal for children in out of home placement.

Table 23: Permanency Goals: Children in Placement Point in Time 12/8/07

		Juvenile Justice		Child Protection		Total	
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Perm Goal	ADOPTION	1	.4%	120	17.0%	121	12.8%
	EMANCIPATION	0	.0%	1	.1%	1	.1%
	FAMILY REUN	200	82.6%	486	68.8%	686	72.4%
	GUARDIANSHIP	5	2.1%	40	5.7%	45	4.7%
	INDEP LIVING	13	5.4%	10	1.4%	23	2.4%
	LIVE WITH REL	6	2.5%	9	1.3%	15	1.6%
	LONG TERM FC	14	5.8%	27	3.8%	41	4.3%
	NOT ESTBLISHED	2	.8%	12	1.7%	14	1.5%
	PLCMT WITH REL	1	.4%	1	.1%	2	.2%
	Total	242	100.0%	706	100.0%	948	100.0%

Factors that are affecting the State's performance on permanency data profile element XI: Wyoming is in substantial conformity with Permanency Composite 3 and is well above the 75th percentile for measure C3-2 (exits to permanency for children with TPR and measure C3-3(Children emancipated who were in foster care for 3 years or more). Wyoming fell between the national median and the 75th percentile for measure C3-1(Exits to permanency prior to 18th birthday for children in care for 24 + months). These measures would indicate that Wyoming is effectively moving children to adoption after completing termination of parental rights, and that a relatively small percentage of children in Wyoming are “growing up” in foster care.

Stakeholder comments from the 2002 statewide assessment as well as information gathered from the State CFSR Review suggests that the preference in Wyoming is to identify an adoptive home for a child prior to termination, which would impact the timeframes to achieving permanency once the termination has been completed. Another issue that may impact measure C3-3 is the inclusion of juvenile delinquents in the out-of-home care population. Because delinquents tend to enter care at an older age, it can be assumed that a higher proportion of these children would have reached their 18th birthday, or emancipated from care while spending a relatively shorter period of time in care. Of concern is the lower percentage and decrease in percentage over time for measure C3-1, which would indicate that there are a significant number of children in the foster care population that are not achieving timely permanency. Currently approximately 26% of children in out-of-home care have been in placement in excess of 2 years⁵. DFS would like to conduct additional analysis on this specific population to determine if there are specific interventions that are required to attain permanency for this group of children.

Barriers that the State faces with regard to successfully addressing or implementing this item: It is evidenced by the improvement in scores reported by the State CFSR that the state has improved services to children with OPLA permanency goals. However, the state currently lacks the policies and procedures to ensure that children that fall within the OPLA category have formal permanency agreements with foster care providers, institutions or relatives as described by the Federal CFSR onsite review instrument.

Stakeholder Feedback: Agency staff stated that there has been considerable improvement in the agencies ability to provide independent living services to children, and that there is a greater understanding of the needs of this service population across the state. Some agency staff stated that there is a need for greater specialization regarding providing independent living services and that more staff is required with these skills. When interviewed, foster care youth and alumni stated that there had been issues regarding transitional services as well as educational services. When children in the juvenile services population who are currently in placement were interviewed, the majority stated that their educational and transitional needs had been addressed.

Summary: DFS has made considerable progress in terms of improving policy, assessments, and the provision of independent living services to children with OPLA permanency goals but will need to strengthen policy and procedure regarding the development of formal placement agreements for children that have OPLA as a goal in order to meet the standards required by the CFSR. DFS should also more fully explore utilization of OPLA as a permanency option to ensure that applicable children are being properly served to address their permanency needs.

⁵ Source: WYCAPS. Based on Point in time measure of length of placement episode for children in care 12/1/2007.

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

Status of Permanency Outcome 2: Wyoming was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 during the 2002 Federal CFSR and received a rating of 77.4% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved (see table 24). Key findings for Permanency Outcome 1 from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS is effective in placing children in foster care in close proximity to their homes and communities unless they have special treatment needs. Additional findings stated that DFS attempted to place siblings together, but lacked sufficient placement resources that could accommodate sibling groups and that a key concern identified through the case reviews pertained to an inconsistency with regard to agency efforts to seek relatives as placement resources and promote visitation of children in foster care with parents and siblings. Another concern pertained to the case review finding that although the agency notified Tribes when a Native American child with a known tribal affiliation was placed in care, the question of a child's possible Native American background was not routinely explored at entry into foster care. Based on the scores from the State CFSR reviews, DFS has seen improvement on this outcome area, obtaining a combined score of 84.3% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved for Permanency Outcome 2 (see table 24).

Table 24: Percent Cases Rated as Substantially Achieved. CFSR Permanency Outcome 2

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Sub Achieve	77.4%	79.2%	85.7%	92.3%	75%	84.3%
# Applicable	31	72	77	78	42	269

Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement

Policy: DFS policy states that local offices should not seek to place children out of county without pursuing all other alternatives to allow the child to remain in the county. DFS policy also states that when appropriate, children should be placed with non-custodial parents, and relatives. DFS policy emphasizes the necessity to make decisions regarding placement based on the specific needs of the child.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: Item 11 was rated a strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review and received an overall rating of 97% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item (See table 25). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that children were placed within their own communities when appropriate.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Wyoming continues to perform well on this item. Based on the scores from the State CFSR reviews, DFS has obtained a combined score of 96.3% of case rated as a strength for this item (see table 25). DFS does not have a automated means of tracking proximity of placement, but based on additional case review⁶ and analysis it was determined that children involved in the juvenile justice population are more likely to be placed outside of their community. The analysis also revealed the somewhat obvious negative

⁶ 1078 records were reviewed and the distance from the child's office of origin was determined using current address of provider. Source: WYCAPS. Data conducted 4/04

correlation between the distance a child is placed from the office of origin and the frequency of visitation and contact, which not only impacts permanency issues but safety and well-being issues as well.

Table 25: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 11

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	97%	92.1%	98.5%	96%	100%	96.3%
# Applicable	29	63	67	75	39	244

Barriers that the State faces with regard to successfully addressing or implementing this item: Overall, the state has performed well on this item, but resource issues do create systemic issues that may limit the states ability to retain children within their communities. Although the state has seen an increase in the number of foster homes across the state, this increase has not been evenly distributed. DFS has developed specific positions for the purpose of recruiting, retaining and meeting the needs of foster parents, but due to the increase in the number of certified foster homes and the large geographic areas that these positions have to cover, they are not able to meet the needs of all foster parents or develop targeted recruiting efforts in some areas. Other resource issues that affect the ability to maintain children within their own communities is the lack of specialized treatment services in many rural communities, which necessitates the placement of a child outside of the community in order to receive specialized mental health/substance abuse treatment.

Stakeholder Feedback: Overall stakeholders stated that DFS does a good job at placing children within their communities and in close proximity to their families and DFS staff described the importance of retaining children within their communities in order to provide effective case management. Stakeholders in rural communities noted that due to a lack of availability specialized treatment and placement options that children are sometimes placed outside of the community in order to receive specialized care.

Summary: DFS anticipates performing well on this item in the upcoming CFSR Federal review, but also recognizes that it could improve the aforementioned issues related to resources and policy. Although the state would like to be able to promote and provide specialized services within all of its communities, the low population of most of the states counties makes it difficult to localize a continuum of specialized placement services.

Item 12: Placement with Siblings

Policy: DFS policy requires that sibling groups should be placed together unless it is not in the best interest of the children and that DFS should strive to find homes that can accommodate sibling groups.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 83% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 26). The findings of the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that in two of the applicable cases sibling groups were separated due to a lack of available placement resources. In order to address these

finding, DFS developed policy to allow for larger sibling groups to be placed together in family foster homes with approval from a district manager.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Wyoming has demonstrated improvement on this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a cumulative score of 97.7% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 26). The improvement is due to increased training on the necessity to place sibling groups together as well as policy that allows larger sibling groups to be placed together. Also, the creation of specific positions dedicated to serving foster parents has contributed to the agencies ability to support foster parents and prepare them for accepting sibling groups.

Table 26: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 12

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	83%	100%	96%	100%	94.7%	97.7%
# Applicable	12	19	25	23	19	86

Stakeholder Feedback: Overall stakeholders stated that DFS makes every effort to ensure that siblings are placed together when appropriate and that when siblings are separated that DFS makes concerted efforts to ensure high levels of visitation and contact between siblings in foster care. DFS staff stated that it is still difficult on occasion to find foster parents that can accept large sibling groups, but specific recruitment strategies as well as improved foster parent training and support has diminished this barrier over time.

Summary: DFS is encouraged by the improved performance on this item and anticipates performing well on this item during upcoming Federal CFSR review. Observation during the State CFSR debriefings and case reviews have shown that DFS caseworkers understand and place emphasis on the importance on placing siblings together when appropriate, which is supported by the scores on this item from the State CFSR and the overall favorable comments made by external stakeholders.

Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Policy: DFS policy requires that a written visitation plan be developed for every child in out of home care. DFS policy requires that the visitation plan be updated throughout the life of the case and that the visitation plan be developed with the family during a family partnership meeting, when appropriate. The policy recommends weekly contact and encourages contact between children, parents, siblings and extended family members. The policy states that the preferred location of visitation should be in the home of the parent, and that visits can only be denied due to identified safety risks or a court order that restricts visitation. The policy requires that visitation focus around activities that create opportunities for families to bond and have meaningful interaction and requires caseworkers to involve parents in child activities such as medical appointments and school activities and functions. The policy also requires DFS to assist with transportation issues when appropriate.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 74% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 27).

The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS had not consistently assisted parents or siblings with the transportation necessary to visit the child in placement when the placement was outside of the community and that DFS had not consistently facilitated visitation with parents or siblings and that visitation plans did not always include all relevant members. In order to address these findings, DFS improved its policy regarding visitation and required that a written visitation plan be developed as part of the case plan and documented in the case file.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made considerable improvement on this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Based on the State CFSR review DFS has obtained a combined score of 85% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 27). Reasons for not attaining standards for this item are issues related to lack of staff in some areas to supervise visits, children not being placed in close proximity to their parents, not engaging absent parents in caseplanning and visitation, as well as the relatively high percentage of children in placement that have at least one incarcerated parent.

Table 27: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 13

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	74%	81.7%	83.8%	91.8%	79.5%	85%
# Applicable	31	60	68	73	39	240

The issues related to engaging absent parents and incarcerated parents have proven to be difficult. In an analysis conducted in 2006⁷ it was determined that 11.8% of the children that were in placement had at least one parent that was incarcerated. Of these children 55% had a parent that was incarcerated due to substance abuse related issues and 95% of the incarcerated parents were imprisoned in excess of 100 miles from the child. Creating visitation plans with incarcerated parents can be difficult due to scheduling and transportation issues for families. Though the expansion of separate ratings for fathers in the round 2 onsite review instrument, it is clear that DFS has substantial problems with engaging absent parents, especially fathers, which is partially contributing to the cases rated as area needing improvement for this item in the State CFSR reviews.

Stakeholder Feedback: Some external stakeholders questioned the necessity for frequent visitation between children and the parents that had abused them. DFS staff in areas with high caseloads stated that it is often difficult to find the time to arrange, supervise and transport families for visitation and stated that it would be beneficial if the state employed additional family assistance workers for the purpose of transporting and supervising families during visitation.

Summary: Although DFS has demonstrated improvement in this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR review, it recognizes that it will need to improve its ability to engage absent parents in visitation and other case planning processes, develop procedures that ensure visitation with incarcerated parents, and address staffing issues related to transportation for and supervision of visitation.

⁷ Analysis based on 1091 responses to a survey administered for children in care Point in Time 6/16/06. Population source: WYCAPS.

Item 14: Preserving Connections

Policy: DFS policy clearly describes the necessity for children in placement to be able to meet their spiritual, cultural and emotional needs and describes the agencies requirements to ensure that these needs are met. DFS policy also includes specific guidance for foster parents and other placement providers to ensure that these needs are met for children in out of home placement. DFS policy also contains a specific section describing policy and procedural requirements for ICWA cases.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 84% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 28). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR reported that there were cases in which ICWA issues were not being adequately addressed and that children’s tribal affiliations were not being adequately explored. The CFSR final report also stated that there were shortages of African American, Native American, and Hispanic foster homes. In order to address these issues DFS developed an intake and assessment process that gathered information regarding cultural diversity issues in order to develop case plans and provide services that are culturally competent. DFS also invested resources in improving its foster care program which included recruitment efforts specific to African American, Native American, and Hispanic foster parents.

Addressing racial disproportionality: A key component to being able to provide culturally competent services is to recognize and address issues of racial disproportionality within child welfare and juvenile services. In order to address these issues DFS in partnership with Casey Family Programs has undertaken an ambitious training program for DFS staff, administrators, managers and supervisors. Beginning in 2005, DFS staff have participated in either the Undoing Racism training developed by the Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond or the Knowing Who You Are training developed by Casey Family Programs. Both training programs are designed to raise awareness regarding the influence of racial issues in decision making and service provision. DFS envisions these strategies as an initial step toward recognizing and addressing issues related to racial disproportionality within its child welfare/juvenile services system.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made improvements in performance on this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 88.8% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 28). Issues identified in the State CFSR reviews that led to cases being rated as an area needing improvement include continuing issues related to identifying Native American children and exploring tribal affiliations at the time of placement, as well as maintaining children’s connections with extended family members.

Table 28: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 14

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	84%	85.9%	86.8%	91%	92.9%	88.8%
# Applicable	31	71	76	78	42	267

Stakeholder Feedback: The Wyoming Citizen's Review Panel's 2006 Annual Report stated that it found that ICWA requirements were not being met in all of the cases that were reviewed and recommended that DFS workers receive training on ICWA and that identifying Native American Children become a routine process in every DFS case. Overall external stakeholders stated that the handling of ICWA cases was infrequent, but was properly addressed when the issue arose. DFS staff recognized that they do not always conduct thorough assessments of Native American heritage or tribal affiliation for all children. Overall stakeholders stated that DFS did a good job at maintaining important connections for children in placement, but stated that due to the transient nature of many of the states families it is often difficult to identify important connections for children.

Summary: Although DFS had demonstrated modest improvement on this item, it recognizes that it will need to strengthen monitoring of ICWA requirements as well as develop a more specific means of identifying important connections for children in care.

Item 15: Relative Placement

Policy: DFS policy requires that relative placements be given first priority when a child must be removed from the home. DFS policy also encourages the use of placement with close family friends or non-blood relatives when appropriate in order to place a child in a familiar environment. DFS policy states that biological parents should be active participants in placement decisions for their children when appropriate. DFS policy requires caseworkers to conduct an ongoing diligent search for relatives and kin for any child in DFS custody until permanency is achieved. DFS considers relative/kinship families as both temporary and permanent resources for children who are unable to live safely with a parent. DFS policy describes that DFS must make diligent efforts to identify and contact relatives within 60 days of the initial placement and to continue attempting to identify relatives throughout the placement.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 88% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 29). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review reported that DFS had not consistently made efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources, and that searches for relatives were cursory rather than exhaustive. In order to address these findings DFS incorporated identifying relative resources as part of the revised intake process as well as placing tighter time limitations on completion of diligent search, and requiring ongoing diligent search throughout the life of the placement. DFS also strengthened training and policy regarding the importance of relative placement.

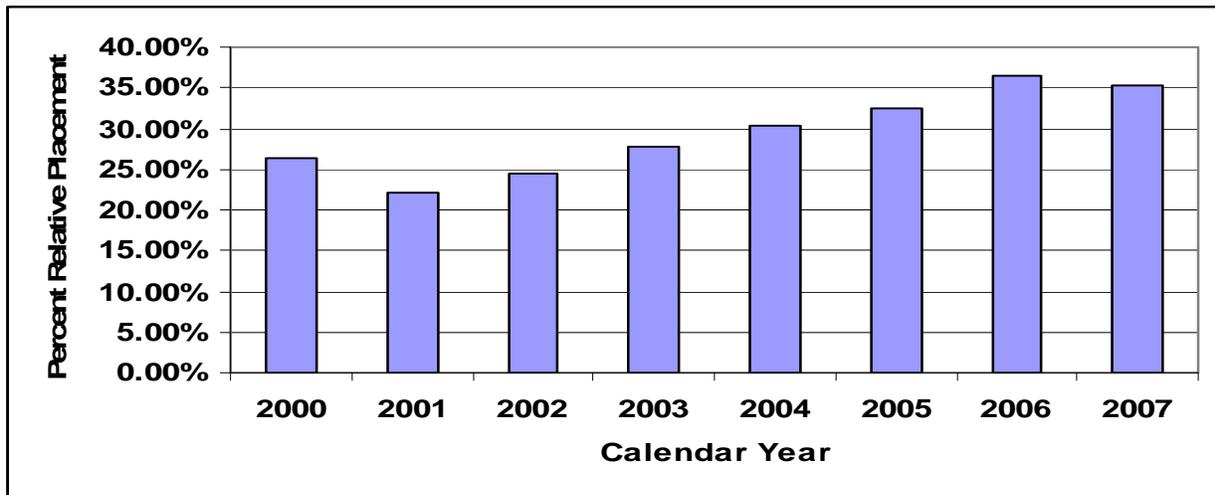
State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: There has been no significant change in the performance for this item since the 2002 Federal review. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 87.4% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 29). Reasons for this lack of progress include lack of adequate caseworker time in offices with high caseloads to conduct thorough diligent searches for relatives, and lack of diligent search for relatives for non-custodial parents, especially fathers. Observations from the State CFSR would indicate that for cases rated as an area needing improvement a diligent search was initially completed, but the attempt to find relatives was not ongoing throughout the life of the case.

Table 29: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 15

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
Percent	88%	84.2%	84.2%	93.1%	88.9%	87.4%
# Applicable	22	57	57	58	27	199

Although there has been little change in the score for item 15, DFS has increased the amount of days that children spend in relative care as compared to non-relative care (see graph 1)⁸, which would indicate that overall DFS has increased its usage of relatives as a placement option over the last 8 years.

Graph 1: Percent Relative Placement: CY2000-CY2007



Barriers that the State faces with regard to successfully addressing or implementing this item: High caseloads in many offices allow limited time to conduct thorough diligent searches for relatives. Practice issues related to engaging absent parents, especially fathers also negatively contribute to performance on this item. Another issue impacting this item is the often transient nature of Wyoming’s population, which has increased do to the impact of the mineral extraction and gas and oil exploration and development in the state. The demand for workers has created an influx of people into the state that may not have any meaningful connections with their current community and have no relatives living in the state, which makes relative placement decisions as well as permanency decisions more difficult for this population.

Stakeholder Feedback: Overall stakeholders reported that DFS does prioritize relatives as placement options when making decisions regarding placement. DFS staff stated that conducting an ongoing diligent search consumes a substantial amount of available time and is therefore often a secondary priority behind processing intakes and completing investigations, this was especially true in areas with high caseloads and high levels of worker turnover.

Summary: Based on the scores obtained through the State CFSR process, DFS has not made progress in its ability to adequately identify relative placements for children that must enter out

⁸ Source WYCAPS: calculated as the proportion of the total number of days for each category (Relative foster care and Non-Relative foster care) for each calendar year.

of home care. Information gathered from the State CFSR suggests that there is both a resource component and a practice component that is preventing the agency from improving performance on this item. DFS anticipates addressing the resource and staffing issues associated with conducting thorough and ongoing searches for relatives during its upcoming Program Improvement Plan.

Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents

Policy: DFS policy requires that staff encourage parents to participate in activities and events that are important to the child and family such as school related activities, medical appointments and counseling appointments. DFS policy requires that staff encourage parents to assume responsibility for managing these activities when appropriate. DFS policy also requires that DFS create opportunities for the parent(s) (including absent parent), siblings, and the children to bond and have meaningful interaction during visitation and that contact be maintained through letters, phone and other forms of communication with family members and other persons that are meaningful to the child. DFS policy also allows the agency to reimburse families for transportation and lodging for the purpose of facilitating contact between the child and their parents and siblings. DFS policy also describes the importance of the role of foster parents in supporting the relationship between foster children and their families as well as foster parents serving as role-models for biological parents.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 73% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 30). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS has not consistently supported the parent-child relationships of children in foster care and that DFS did not consistently assist with visitation or services to promote parent-child relationships. In order to address these findings DFS developed specific visitation policy that proscribed a process for creating an environment conducive to strengthening the relationship between the child and parents throughout the life of the case.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made progress on this item. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 81.4% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 30). Reasons for ratings of area needing improvement for this item as reported by the State CFSR reviews include not engaging and involving the absent parent, especially absent fathers, difficulties facilitating communication with parents who are incarcerated, and to a lesser extent not providing support for transportation to parents.

Table 30: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 16

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	73%	72.6%	83.6%	87.3%	81.1%	81.4%
# Applicable	22	62	67	71	37	237

Stakeholder Feedback: External stakeholders stated that there should be more funding available for more intensive visitation between children and their families and that funding should be available for mentoring programs for both children and parents. External stakeholders also commented that more flexible funding should be made available for providing transportation for

parents. Internal stakeholders commented that in some areas there were not enough family assistance workers to help provide transportation for families. Internal stakeholders also stated that it is often difficult to engage parents who are incarcerated, especially if the parent is incarcerated a long distance from the child in care.

Summary: Although DFS has made progress on this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR review the agency realizes that it will have to improve performance on this item in order impact a majority of the other permanency items. The issue of engaging and involving non-custodial parents is a consistent theme throughout the State CFSR reviews and DFS anticipates addressing this issue as a major theme of the upcoming Program Improvement Plan.

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

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1: Wyoming was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 during the 2002 Federal CFSR and received a rating of 40% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved (see table 31). A key CFSR finding from the 2002 Federal review was that DFS was not effective in meeting the assessment and service needs of parents, children, and foster parents. In addition, stakeholders commenting on this issue noted that the agency was not adequately addressing the treatment or placement needs of older children entering foster care as CHINS petitions or through juvenile justice. Information from the case reviews and stakeholders also indicated that DFS was not consistent in involving parents or children in the case planning process. Finally, in many of the cases reviewed during the 2002 Federal CFSR review, it was determined that the frequency and quality of DFS caseworker contacts with children and parents were not sufficient to ensure children’s safety or well-being or promote attainment of case goals.

In order to address the findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review, DFS made significant changes to policy, training, and assessment processes in order to create a family-centered service delivery system. Key changes include: a comprehensive intake process, the development and implementation of a standardized family assessment tool, and the development and implementation of a family group decision making process (Family Partnerships). DFS also improved policy and monitoring regarding face to face contacts with children and parents.

Table 31: Percent Cases Rated as Substantially Achieved. CFSR Well-Being Outcome 1

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Sub Achieve	40%	61.1%	81.8%	76.9%	57.4%	70.5%
# Applicable	50	95	99	104	68	366

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

Policy: The needs and services of families are assessed through both formal and informal processes. DFS utilizes a family group conferencing model (family partnerships) as a method of assessing the strengths and needs of families and identifying necessary services. Family partnerships are required to be offered to all families with an open DFS case and the information gathered through the family partnership is used to guide the goal and strategy development as well as to outline the services that are required by the family described in the family services

plan. DFS also requires that a family assessment be completed on every family with an open case within 30 days of case opening (excluding juvenile cases). The family assessment tool identifies the strengths and needs which contribute to the safety and well-being of the child and family. It explores the environmental, emotional, social, economical, and physical domains of the family's functioning. The family assessment tool specifically requests information about Substance use/abuse, meth use/abuse, household relationships, social and community support system, parenting skills, mental health/coping skills, caregiver abuse/neglect history, child characteristics, resource management/basic needs, and physical health and communication skills for each member in the family. The family assessment tool asks the family and individuals to identify their strengths and needs and to prioritize them. DFS policy also states that children, adolescents, and adults entering the DFS services system shall be screened, assessed, and evaluated for any mental health and/or substance abuse issues. The family assessment tool is used as a referral tool for further evaluation by a licensed professional if appropriate. DFS Families are assessed informally through interviews and contact with the family during the intake, investigation and caseplanning process. Case plans as well as the family assessment are required on any case opened for services including foster care and in-home services cases.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 56% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 32). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that DFS had not consistently assessed the needs of parents, especially fathers. In order to address these findings, DFS developed a more comprehensive intake procedure, developed and implemented family partnerships and developed and implemented the family assessment tool.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made progress on this item. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 73.4% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 32). The reason for the decrease in performance for round 4 of the reviews was caused by the changes in the CFSR onsite review instrument that requires individual ratings for the child, parents, and foster parents and requires that each of these sub-categories be rated as a strength in order for the overall item to be rated as a strength. The rating for the sub-categories (children 86.6%, parents 58.1%, and foster parents 96.3%) reveal that DFS has not made significant progress in relation to assessing the needs of the parents, which accounts for the decline in scores for round 4 of the review. Observations from the State CFSR review suggest that the majority of cases rated as an area needing improvement were the result of not assessing the needs of absent parents, especially fathers.

When foster care cases and in-home services cases are compared using the combined State CFSR scores, cases involving children that experience out-of-home care show higher ratings for item 17 (see table 33). This would indicate that overall families that have a child that experiences placement receive better assessments and services.

Table 32: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 17

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	56%	65.3%	85.9%	79.6%	56.7%	73.4%
# Applicable	50	95	99	104	67	364

Table 33: Foster Care Vs. In-Home Cases: Cumulative state CFSR Scores item 17

	Area Needing Improvement	Strength
Foster Care	24.4%	75.6%
In-Home	33.7%	66.3%
Total	26.8%	73.2%

Stakeholder Feedback: external stakeholders stated that overall they have seen an improvement in the way that DFS assesses the needs of families, and stated that they believe DFS uses a family-centered and strengths based approach to identifying needs and providing services to families. Stakeholders also commented that although assessments have improved, there are still gaps in the availability of services in some communities such as outpatient and inpatient substance abuse services, and that there can be waiting lists for other needed services. DFS staff stated that they believed that the ability to assess families needs have improved over time, and that DFS has become more family centered as opposed to child focused. Some DFS caseworkers felt that the family assessment tool was not effective and stated that the informal assessment of families needs provided better information for the purpose of developing realistic case plans.

Summary: DFS recognizes that it will have to address deficiencies in its assessment and service provision process in order to improve performance on this item. DFS anticipates addressing the overall issue of engaging, assessing and providing needed services to absent parents in its upcoming Program Improvement Plan.

Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning

Policy: DFS policy requires that the case plan be developed with the family and their selected support team during a family partnership meeting or prior to the multi-disciplinary team meeting. DFS policy also states that case plans should be family-centered, strengths-based, individualized, culturally competent, comprehensive, reflective of community partnerships, and outcome-based. DFS policy stresses the importance of utilizing a family partnership meeting as a key component in involving families in the development of their own case plans. Case plans are required on any case opened for services including foster care and in-home services cases. Family partnerships are required to be offered for all cases opened for services.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: : DFS received an overall rating of 62% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 34). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS did not consistently involve children or parents (especially fathers) in the case planning process. In order to address these findings DFS underwent a comprehensive review and restructuring of policy, procedure, and training for the purpose of creating a family centered service model, which resulted in a caseplanning process that is inclusive of families and the creation of family partnerships as a mean of involving families and their extended supports in caseplanning.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made progress on this item. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 70.8% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 34). The decline for the scores from round 4 result from changes in the CFSR onsite review instrument that require that the father, when applicable, be included and

involved in caseplanning in order for the item to be rated as a strength. Observations from the State CFSR review indicate that not involving absent parents in the case planning process has had a significant impact on lack of improvement in performance on this item. When foster care cases and in-home services cases are compared using the cumulative State CFSR scores, cases involving children that experience out-of-home care show higher ratings for item 18 (see table 35). This would indicate that overall families that have a child that experiences placement are more involved and engaged in the caseplanning process.

Table 34: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 18

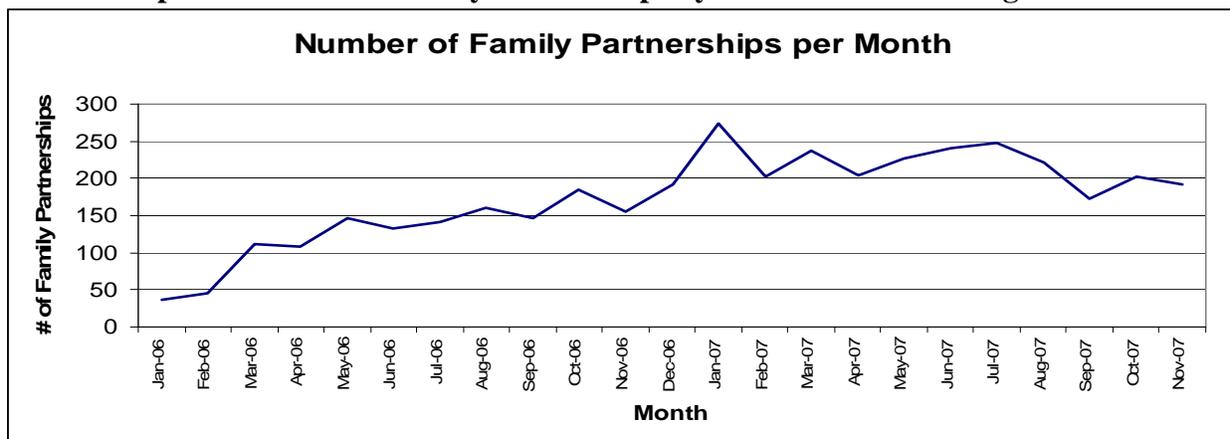
	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	62%	64.9%	82.7%	73.5%	56.9%	70.8%
# Applicable	50	94	98	102	65	359

Table 35: Foster Care Vs. In-Home Cases: Cumulative state CFSR Scores item 18

	Area Needing Improvement	Strength
Foster Care	27.9%	72.1%
In-Home	33.7%	66.3%
Total	29.4%	70.6%

Family Partnerships: Although the number of family partnerships held has increased since the beginning of 2006 (see graph 2), the number of family partnerships being help represents about 30.5% of the active caseload⁹, which would indicate issues with engaging parents in the family partnership process. Also, there are wide geographical variations in the usage of family partnerships, which would suggest differences in interpretation of current policy and requirements. Offices with the highest number of family partnerships are offices that have integrated these meetings into existing meetings such as MDT's or caseplanning meetings. Because family partnerships are such an integral part of the case planning process as well as a major component of the states Program Improvement Plan, DFS has encouraged other offices to attempt to consolidate caseplanning meetings and incorporate family partnerships in the process.

Graph 2: Number of Family Partnerships by Month: Jan 06 through Nov 07



⁹ This percent was obtained by analyzing all current applicable cases (1/7/08) that had been open for >60 days and that had opened >=1/1/2007 (n=1164) and determining whether these cases had at least 1 family partnership documented in WYCAPS.

Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders stated that overall the caseplanning process is efficient and that families participate in the caseplanning process. External stakeholders in most communities stated that family partnerships, when used, are an effective means of engaging families in the case planning process, but not all communities felt that family partnerships and MDT's are compatible. DFS staff stated that they have improved their ability to engage families in case planning, and that juvenile services has greatly improved its engagement of families. DFS staff stated that family partnership meetings are an effective means of engaging families, but are resource intensive and often times duplicative if not integrated into other existing processes.

Summary: DFS recognizes that it will have to improve its ability to engage parents, especially absent parents in the case planning process in order to improve performance on this item. DFS also recognizes that it needs to develop an effective solution to integrate the family partnership model across the state and address resource issues related to implementing family partnerships in all communities.

Item 19: Caseworker visits with child

Policy: DFS policy states that a caseworker shall visit all children who have an open case with DFS at least monthly, in the residence of the child. The caseworker shall address issues pertaining to safety, permanency and the well-being of the children, as well as case planning, service delivery and goal achievement for the family/parents. DFS policy allows for alternate workers to visit children in out of community placements, but requires the primary caseworker to maintain monthly phone contact with the child. DFS policy also allows face to face contact to occur by video conference if the conference occurs at a DFS video conferencing site. DFS policy also requires that the caseworker and the child meet privately in order to address the child's safety and address any other needs. The policy specifically requires the caseworker to address safety, physical health, mental health, relationship issues, education, caseplanning, and court related issues. Additional contacts are encouraged for both placement and in-home services cases.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 54% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 36). Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that face to face contact was not always of sufficient frequency and quality to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of children. In order to address these issues DFS developed specific policy describing the requirements for frequency and quality of contact. DFS also developed monthly reports using WYCAPS designed to monitor face to face contact with children in placement and implemented the State CFSR review process in order to monitor the quality as well as the frequency of face to face contact.

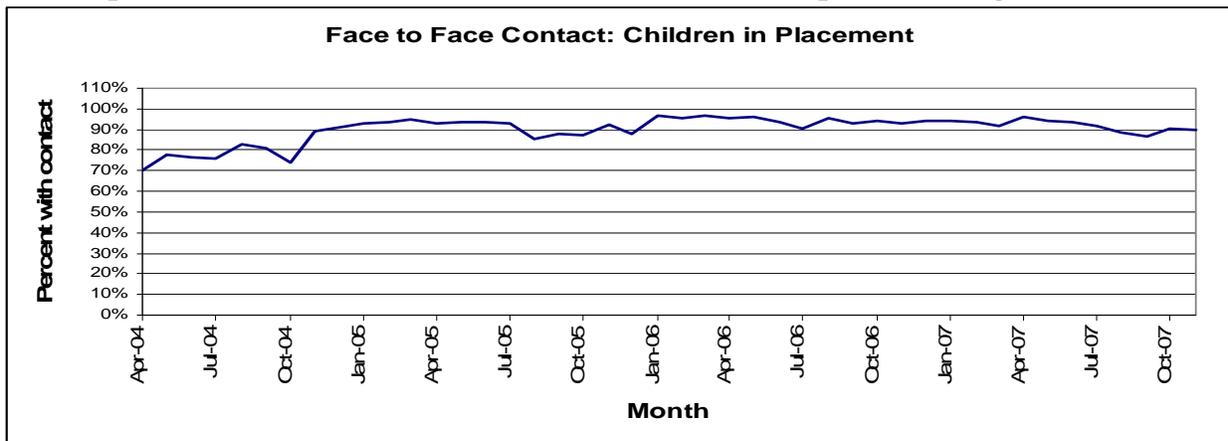
State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made significant progress in its ability to make quality face to face contacts with children. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 87.4% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 36). This improvement can be attributed to new policy requirements, routine monitoring, as well as increases in staff. DFS has also seen dramatic improvements in the frequency of visitation with children in care since it began monitoring this item using available WYCAPS data (see graph 3) and has attained an average rate of face to face contact of 90% .

Table 36: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 19

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	54%	82.1%	88.8%	92.3%	85.1%	87.4%
# Applicable	50	95	98	104	67	364

Although the frequency of monthly visitation has improved for children in care, the rate of children visited each and every month that they were in care for Federal fiscal Year 2007 was 72.26% and only 41.76% of these children were visited in their residence,¹⁰ which indicates that DFS still has work to do in terms of consistently meeting federal and state requirements for face to face contact.

Graph 3: Face to Face contact Children in Placement: April 04 through October 07



Of equal importance is monitoring face to face contact with children being served in the home. Due to database design issues, it is not possible to accurately monitor face to face contact with the in-home services population using WYCAPS data, but by analyzing the State CFSR scores and comparing foster care cases with in-home services cases it appears that children in placement have a significantly higher frequency and quality of visitation than children who are being served in the home. This discrepancy in scores for these populations is concerning due to the potentially higher rate safety risks associated with serving children in the home.

Table 37: Foster Care Vs. In-Home Cases: Cumulative state CFSR Scores item 19

	Area Needing Improvement	Strength
Foster Care	8.9%	91.1%
In-Home	23.4%	76.6%
Total	12.7%	87.3%

Stakeholder Feedback: External stakeholders stated that the frequency of face to face contact was adequate in most cases. Stakeholders in Cheyenne stated that the felt there needed to be more intensive visitation for child protection cases, especially in-home services cases. DFS staff stated that the focus on face to face contacts has been positive, however the resources involved in

¹⁰ Data reported in the states Child and Family Services Plan (Five Year Plan) 2007FFY Annual Service and Progress Report, Source: WYCAPS.

maintaining high levels of visitation, especially for out of county placements has limited the time that is available for other tasks such as conducting diligent searches and organizing and conducting family partnerships.

Summary: DFS has made substantial progress in improving its frequency and quality of visitation, especially with children in placement. DFS recognizes that it must implement its current policy more consistently in order to meet CFSR and the newly developed CFSP goals; specifically DFS needs to ensure that the majority of face to face contacts are being made in the residence of the child and with the primary caseworker. DFS anticipates creating a methodology for monitoring in-home services contacts as part of its next Program Improvement Plan.

Item 20: Worker visits with parents

Policy: DFS policy states that the designated caseworker shall have a minimum monthly face-to-face visit with the biological parent(s) of the child in the family home to address issues pertaining to safety, permanency and the well-being of the child as well as case planning, service delivery and goal achievement for the family/parents. If monthly face-to-face contact is not possible due to unusual circumstances, monthly telephone contact shall be made and those circumstances must be documented in the case file. If the worker is unable to locate a biological parent or the parent refuses contact with the worker the circumstances must be documented in the case file. Face to face contact requirements apply to any case open for services and therefore include both foster care and in-home services cases.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 56% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 38). Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that face to face contact with parents was not always of sufficient frequency and quality in order to address caseplanning issues. In order to address these issues DFS developed specific policy describing the requirements for frequency and quality of contact. DFS also implemented the State CFSR review process in order to monitor the quality as well as the frequency of face to face contact with parents.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made significant progress in its ability to make quality face to face contacts with parents. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 79.3% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 38). This improvement can be attributed to new policy requirements, monitoring through the State CFSR process, as well as increases in staff. The decrease in performance for round 4 of the reviews reflects changes in the CFSR onsite review instrument that has more specific criteria for visitation with both parents. Observations from the State CFSR suggest that the majority of cases that were rated and an area needing improvement for this item during round 4 were caused by failure to visit non-custodial parents and fathers.

Table 38: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 19

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	56%	75%	85.6%	88%	61.9%	79.3%
# Applicable	50	92	97	100	63	352

The rating comparisons between cases involving foster care and cases being served in the home are similar to that of the comparisons for face to face contact with children, with contact for foster cases rating significantly higher than the in-home services population (see table 39).

Table 39: Foster Care Vs. In-Home Cases: Cumulative state CFSR Scores item 20

	Area Needing Improvement	Strength
Foster Care	16.7%	83.3%
In-Home	31.9%	68.1%
Total	20.7%	79.3%

Stakeholder Feedback: External stakeholders stated that DFS makes continual efforts to contact parents and that in most cases the level of contact was adequate to address case plan goals. Stakeholders in Cheyenne stated that they felt there needed to be more intensive visitation for child protection cases, especially in-home services cases. DFS staff stated that overall the contact with parents has increased and that the quality of contact has improved, however they did comment on difficulties associated with contacting and involving absent parents due to the additional resources required to make separate visits for each parent as well as face to face contact with the children when the children are in placement.

Summary: DFS has made substantial progress in improving its frequency and quality of visitation with parents. DFS recognizes that it must implement its current policy more consistently in order to meet CFSR standards. DFS anticipates altering its face to face policy to include clearer standards for in-home services cases, and creating a system for monitoring in-home services contacts as part of its next Program Improvement Plan.

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

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2: Wyoming was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 during the 2002 Federal CFSR and received a rating of 82% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved (see table 40). Because Well-Being Outcome 2 contains a single item, specifics regarding key findings and strategies are described in item 21 below.

Item 21: Educational needs of the child

Policy: Educational needs are identified for children through the assessment process and educational services are specified in the case plan. DFS does not have a separate or specific policy that describes procedures related to educational needs, but is incorporated in the overall assessment of family strengths and needs and is addressed during the creation of the case plan. Training is provided regarding the importance of addressing educational needs during initial worker training. The assessment of educational needs and provision of services to address educational needs are required for both foster care and in-home services cases.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 82% of applicable cases rated as strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 40).

The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that DFS did not consistently assess the educational needs of children and that DFS did not consistently provide services to meet the identified educational needs of children in care. To address these findings DFS developed an educational assessment and integrated the assessment into WYCAPS. DFS also stated that it would develop a policy requiring an “Exit and Re-Entry Meeting” be held whenever a child, who has spent time away from his/her original school district returns to the school of initial enrollment. The purpose of the meeting was to assist the child and school personnel with integrating the child back into the school setting.

How the policy requirements described above are reflected in practice: The educational assessment that was developed as a result of the states PIP was discontinued based on feedback from field staff that the assessment was inefficient and duplicative. There are no current plans to develop another formal educational assessment process. Based on observations from the State CFSR it does not appear that formal “exit and re-entry meetings” routinely occur between DFS and school personnel, but educational issues are addressed through the MDT process or through routine case management. Specific case management activities related to education would be participating in IEP meetings, monitoring school performance, and monitoring attendance and truancy, as well as communicating with schools regarding behavioral issues.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: Wyoming has made consistent improvement on identifying educational needs and providing educational services. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 91.3% of cases rated as strength for this item (see table 40). This improvement can be attributed to increased focus on educational needs due to monitoring through the state CFSR as well as improved documentation of educational needs and services in the case file. When foster care cases and in-home services cases are compared using the cumulative State CFSR scores, cases involving children that experience out-of-home care show higher ratings for item 21 (see table 40). This would indicate that overall children that experiences placement receive more educational services. This discrepancy in services between populations could be attributed to the educational services that are routinely provided to children while in Residential Treatment programs. Due to the inclusion of juvenile services children, who have a relatively high rate of RTC placement, this item could be impacted by a relatively large number of RTC placement children reviewed through the State CFSR process.

Table 40: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 21

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	82%	86.2%	93.6%	93.5%	91.7%	91.3%
# Applicable	39	87	94	92	60	331

Table 41: Foster Care Vs. In-Home Cases: Cumulative state CFSR Scores item 21

	Area Needing Improvement	Strength
Foster Care	6.9%	93.1%
In-Home	14.9%	85.1%
Total	8.7%	91.3%

Stakeholder Feedback: The majority of stakeholders stated that educational needs are addressed and that relationships between the school system and DFS are effective. External stakeholders also believed that education was addressed during caseplanning and through

MDT's. A limited number of DFS staff stated that communication issues between the school system and DFS existed. Specific issues described were not receiving children's educational records in a timely manner, and not always being informed of meetings, such as IEP's. Overall DFS staff stated that relationships with school and positive and that educational need for children are addressed and educational services are provided.

Summary: Although DFS has discontinued its formal educational assessment process, it appears, based on the State CFSR scores that DFS is adequately meeting the educational needs of children through informal assessments and through the case planning process. DFS anticipates creating clearer and more specific policy regarding the need to assess for educational needs prior to, or as part of the states upcoming Program Improvement Plan.

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

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3: Wyoming was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3 during the 2002 Federal CFSR and received a rating of 63.8% of applicable cases rated as substantially achieved (see table 42). Key findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that DFS did not consistently and effectively meet children's physical or mental health needs. A key concern identified with respect to physical health services was that some children in foster care were not receiving health screenings on a routine basis. Reviewers and stakeholders also expressed concern about the scarcity of mental health and substance abuse services for children, and the fact that some children were not receiving needed mental health assessments. In order to address these findings DFS made changes to its policy regarding routine and emergency physical health care, and made significant changes to its mental health screening and referral process.

Table 42: Percent Cases Rated as Substantially Achieved. CFSR Well-Being Outcome 3

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Sub Achieve	63.8%	73.9%	81.4%	84%	86.7%	81%
# Applicable	47	92	97	94	60	343

Item 22: Physical health of the child

Policy: When a child has been taken into protective custody by either law enforcement or medical personnel DFS is responsible for assessing the child's physical health needs and for providing for the child's ordinary and emergency medical care. Specifically DFS policy requires the completion of an EPSDT within 30 days of placement unless there is documentation that a EPSDT has been completed within the previous 12 months. DFS policy requires that a routine dental exam be conducted at least every 6 months, eye examinations as frequently as needed and routine medical care as frequently as needed. DFS policy requires that caseworkers notify parents as to the medical needs and services of their children and parents and that caseworkers obtain consent for medical care from parents. If the parents cannot be located or refuse to consent and the County or District Attorney is not available or refuses to provide assistance, and law enforcement refuses to consent, the caseworker should, with the attending physician, contact a district court judge or district court commissioner to request an emergency order.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 72% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 43). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS has not consistently addressed the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. It also states that few medical providers in the State accept Wyoming Medicaid and this can make it difficult to access physical health services. In order to address these issues DFS improved policy regarding the expectations for addressing the physical health needs of children served through the department. DFS also developed a standardized process for monitoring the health needs of children in out of home care.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made significant progress in its ability to assess the physical health needs of children and provide services based on those needs. Based on the State CFSR reviews DFS has obtained a combined score of 86.7% of cases rated as a strength for this item (see table 43). The improvement on the scores for this item can be attributed to clarification to policy regarding requirements for routine physical health care and monitoring of this item through the State CFSR process. Observations from the state CFSR indicate that there are more health care providers, especially dentists that will accept Wyoming Medicaid, which has improved the availability of services in many communities. There has also been an increased focus from DFS on completing health checks for children that enter care in a timely manner which has helped ensure that children’s physical health needs are address quickly. As with previous well-being items, when foster care cases and in-home services cases are compared using the combined State CFSR scores, cases involving children that experience out-of-home care show higher ratings for item 22 (see table 44). This would indicate that overall families that have a child that experiences placement receive better quality assessments and services related to their physical health.

Table 43: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 22

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	72%	85.4%	84.7%	87.6%	91.1%	86.7%
# Applicable	39	82	85	89	45	301

Table 44: Foster Care Vs. In-Home Cases: Cumulative state CFSR Scores item 22

		Area Needing Improvement	Strength
	Foster Care	12%	88%
	In-Home	22.9%	77.1%
Total		13.2%	86.8%

Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders commented that although gaps in physical health services continue to exist in some communities, overall service availability has improved. Specific gaps would include shortages of health care providers (especially dentists) that accept Medicaid Payments in some communities. DFS staff commented that they feel that they have improved documentation regarding health needs and services within the case file, which has contributed to improvement on this item. Foster parents, especially those with large numbers of children, commented that it is often difficult to transport children to multiple appointments with multiple providers and that some streamlining of the process regarding transportation and scheduling would be helpful.

Summary: Based on the scores obtained from the State CFSR process and the comments made by stakeholders DFS believes that it has made significant progress in the area of screening and providing services to address the physical health needs of children. DFS believes that this increase is due to changes in policy that clarify the expectations regarding physical health care as well as monitoring this process through the State CFSR reviews.

Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of the child

Policy: DFS policy requires that for both juvenile services and child protection cases a pre-dispositional report is prepared for the court prior to the disposition hearing. The pre-dispositional report documents current mental health and mental health histories for the family and child. DFS policy also requires that a family assessment be completed on every case open for services within 30 days of case initiation. The family assessment tool contains domains for assessing mental health and substance abuse issues for family members and children and based on the scores obtained from the tool, it is used as a referral tool for further evaluation by a licensed professional. In addition to the assessments provided above, DFS requires that a MAYSI-II (Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument-Second Version 2) screening be provided to all children between the ages of 12 and 17. This assessment provides insight into the adolescent’s mental health status and is used as a guide to determine if further evaluation by a mental health professional is needed. The policies and processes described above were developed and implemented during the states PIP implementation period (2004-2006).

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: DFS received an overall rating of 74% of applicable cases rated as a strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR (See table 45). The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR state that DFS did not consistently assess children’s mental health needs and that DFS did not consistently meet children’s needs for services. In order to address these findings DFS created the assessment and referral process and policy described above.

State CFSR Findings and Data Interpretation: DFS has made significant progress in its ability to assess the mental health needs of children and provide services based on those needs. Based on the State CFSR review DFS has obtained a combined score of 87.9% of cases rated as a strength for this item (see table 45). The improvement on the scores for this item can be attributed to improvements in the screening, assessment and referral process. Observations from the State CFSR indicate that mental health services are more readily available to children as evidenced by the improvement in scores for this item over time. When the combined scores from the State CFSR for foster care cases and in-home services case are compared, there is a slight increase in scores for foster care children on item 23 (see table 46).

Table 45: Percent of Cases rated as Strength. CFSR Item 23

	2002 Federal CFSR	State CFSR Round 1	State CFSR Round 2	State CFSR Round 3	State CFSR Round 4	State CFSR Combined
%Strength	74%	79.2%	90%	91.9%	90.7%	87.9%
# Applicable	43	77	90	86	54	307

Table 46: Foster Care Vs. In-Home Cases: Cumulative state CFSR Scores item 23

	Area Needing Improvement	Strength
Foster Care	11.2%	88.8%
In-Home	15.8%	84.2%
Total	12.3%	87.7%

Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders commented that the availability of mental health services has improved overall in the last several years, even in rural communities. The availability of substance abuse treatment for adolescents continues to be an issue in some communities. There were mixed comments from staff regarding the assessment process that was developed as a result of the states PIP; some staff stated that the family assessment tool was too broad and therefore ineffective, specifically that the assessment tool was not comprehensive and specific enough to determine the necessity for further assessment or evaluation; other staff stated that the family assessment tool was useful for assessing needs and making referrals.

Promising approaches: The Wyoming Department of Health is in the process of developing a case review process based on the State CFSR process that will evaluate the effectiveness of mental health services for Wyoming Citizens. DFS anticipates sharing data and collaborating in this process for the purpose of improving mental health services for the children it serves. Wyoming was also awarded a Systems of Care grant in 2005 and several communities are in the process of developing or implementing programs. DFS has already seen positive impacts from these programs as evaluated in the State CFSR process. Specific positive impacts observed during the State CFSR case review were increased communication and coordination of services between DFS and other agencies, as well as the use of wraparound services for the purpose of preventing entry into out of home placement.

Barriers: The Wyoming Citizens Review Panel 2006 and 2007 annual reports identify the need to evaluate the use of the Child in Need of Supervision (CHINS) statutes in Wyoming. The WYCRP states that CHINS statutes are not uniformly applied, resulting in inappropriate mental health treatment of some children within the system. DFS believes that some children with significant mental health and behavioral issues enter the child welfare system and believe that these children would be better served through a mental health case management model as opposed to a child welfare or juvenile services case management model. The WYCRP has made the recommendation that the Wyoming legislature studies how CHINS are used in Wyoming in an interim study, take public comment through interim committee meetings then address the use of these statutes in the 2009 legislature.

Summary: Based on the scores obtained from the State CFSR Reviews and the comments made by stakeholders DFS believes that it has made significant progress in the area of screening, and making appropriate referrals for mental health services. DFS believes that the improvements in screening and assessment processes has improved services to address the mental health needs of children.

Section IV: Systemic Factors

A: Statewide Information System

Overview of Systemic Factor: The systemic factor of Statewide Information System was found to be in substantial conformity during the 2002 Federal CFSR Review. Findings from the review stated that the State's information system could identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child in foster care. Since the 2002 Federal CFSR review, DFS has made improvements in reporting SACWIS data to DFS administrative staff and field staff and has undertaken efforts to improve data quality and AFCARS and NCANDS reporting. Specific strategies are discussed in the individual item below.

Item 24: Statewide Information System

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS is currently operating a statewide SACWIS system (WYCAPS) that can readily identify the demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is in foster care. DFS policy provides specific guidelines and timeframes for data entry for intake, track assignment, allegations, caseplanning, placements, permanency review, face to face contacts and case closure. DFS policy requires that required data is entered within the prescribed timeframes for every case for both child protection and juvenile services cases.

WYCAPS also captures data for in-home services cases including child protection cases and juvenile delinquency cases. WYCAPS captures a wide array of data related to allegations of abuse and neglect, assessments, demographic data, foster care provider data as well as fiscal data related to service provision. WYCAPS has the ability to document the physical location of children in DFS custody, including unpaid placements and relative placements. WYCAPS contains a functioning case management system for both placement and in-home services cases that is available and utilized by office managers, supervisors, and frontline workers for both the child protection and juvenile services divisions within the agency. WYCAPS has the ability to produce case-specific as well as aggregate reports by region/district; these reports are available and accessible statewide. Currently, DFS does not use private agencies to perform case management functions; however, WYCAPS does have the functionality to allow secure access to outside entities.

Longitudinal data aggregated from WYCAPS is reported monthly to field managers, supervisors, state office staff, and DFS administrators. Longitudinal reports include, placement trends, per 1000 youth by county, IV-E penetration rates, face to face contacts with children in placement, lengths of time in stay, length to adoption, case contacts, fiscal data, staffing and caseload data as well as intake flow, and tracking of foster care providers. Reports are available for the state, district/region, and office and by program affiliation (child protection, and juvenile services).

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR Review stated that the State's information goals for the placement of every child in foster care.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS has made significant improvements in its data quality most notably in its ability to track certifications of foster parents, documenting face to face contacts with children in placement, and ensuring that each child in out of home placement has a racial designation assigned in WYCAPS. DFS has also improved data quality regarding entering dates for termination and relinquishment of parental rights, which increased data accuracy on its AFCARS submissions.

Barriers: Although DFS has improved data quality regarding documenting Compelling Reasons, Permanency Hearings, and dates of TPR filing, initial analysis suggests that DFS continues to find discrepancies between the data found in the physical case file and data documented in WYCAPS for the aforementioned data fields. During stakeholder interviews DFS staff (caseworkers, Supervisors, Administrators) stated that the amount of time required to enter data limited the amount of time available to spend face to face with clients.

Summary of Status of Statewide Information System: DFS believes that its SACWIS system is a strength due to the fact that it is a fully functioning child welfare and juvenile services information system that is accessible statewide and functional as both a longitudinal database and a case management system. DFS also believes that the improvements to data accuracy described above have improved its ability to use SACWIS data for planning and management.

B. Case Review System

Overview of Systemic Factor: Wyoming was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System during the 2002 Federal CFSR Review. Item 25 was assigned a rating of area needing improvement because, although there was evidence that every child had a written case plan, CFSR findings indicate that DFS caseworkers were not consistently involving parents as partners in the case planning process. Item 26 was rated as Strength because the CFSR found that DFS provided a periodic administrative review on the status of each child at least once every 6 months. Item 27 was assigned a rating of area needing improvement because the required 12-month permanency hearings were not being consistently held in a timely manner across the State. Item 28 was rated as an area needing improvement because CFSR findings indicated that there are areas within the State where the courts and the agency appear to be reluctant to pursue termination of parental rights (TPR), and that there were delays at the county level in the process of filing for TPR, and finally that there were court delays in processing contested terminations.

Item 25: Written Case Plan

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS policy requires that a written case plan be developed for all cases that are opened for services. A case plan must be developed for a CPS prevention case when direct services are provided or purchased by DFS. For in-home services cases, case plans must be completed within 30 days of substantiation or upon the completion of the assessment (for assessment cases); or within 60 days if the court hearing or investigation is not complete. In-home juvenile services cases must be completed within 30 days of adjudication. For foster care cases, a written case plan must be completed within 60 days of placement or

change in placement. DFS policy requires that case plans be developed with the family through the family partnership process for both in-home services and foster care cases when appropriate. DFS policy requires that case plans contain clearly articulated and measurable goals, and that services are clearly described and that the caseplan address visitation and transportation issues. DFS policy requires that a complete copy of the plan must be provided to the parents, foster parents, courts and attorneys and placement facilities within seven days of completion of the plan.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement in the 2002 Federal CFSR. The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that DFS was not effectively involving parents in the caseplanning process. In order to address these findings DFS made significant changes to its caseplanning process. DFS has redesigned its caseplan structure and caseplanning policy to be inclusive of families. DFS has also integrated the family partnerships model into its caseplanning process in order to be inclusive of families and their natural support groups.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: The structure of the caseplan and the caseplanning process has substantially changed since the 2002 Federal CFSR review. The new process incorporates family centered practice by specifically integrating the case planning process with family partnerships and explicitly requiring family participation in case planning as well as explicitly requiring the case plan to address the safety, permanency and well-being needs of the family. The case plan is also required to address the specific needs for transportation, visitation, and concurrent planning. Results from the State CFSR reviews and available SACWIS data suggest that written case plans are completed for all applicable cases.

Barriers: Results from the State CFSR reviews and available SACWIS data suggest that DFS has not fully implemented the family partnerships model across the state. Stakeholders stated that the reasons for this lack of implementation of family partnerships was due to the fact that the meetings were duplicative of existing meetings such as Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings, caseplanning meetings and treatment team meetings. DFS staff also stated that the time required to organize and schedule a family partnership meeting creates a barrier to implementing this practice. Results from round 4 of the State CFSR review found that DFS is not routinely involving absent parents, especially fathers, in the case planning process. DFS staff also stated that the revisions to the caseplanning form were redundant and cumbersome.

Summary of Status of Written Case Plan: Based on the information available through the state CFSR and SACWIS data, DFS believes that written case plans are being developed for all applicable cases in all areas across the state. DFS believes that family partnerships has increased the involvement of families in the caseplanning process, but also believes that the family partnership process has not been fully implemented statewide and has not been fully integrated into practice. DFS also anticipates developing specific strategies designed to involve absent parents in the caseplanning process as part of its upcoming Program Improvement Plan in order to address this systemic factor.

Item 26: Periodic Reviews

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS policy requires that a quarterly progress report be used in out-of-home placement cases to ensure services are provided to families and children in abuse/neglect, CHINS and juvenile delinquency open courts cases. All subsequent quarterly reviews build off the initial quarterly report to provide a running history of the case and are submitted to juvenile courts, guardian ad litem, public defender, county attorney/district attorney, and families quarterly. Family partnership team meetings may be used to gather the information necessary for these reports and serve as a guide for the quarterly Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meeting. DFS requires periodic reviews at 3 months, 6 months, and 9 months. The first 6 month periodic review is required to be reviewed in court.

The six month review determines the continuing necessity for and appropriateness and safety of the placement; the extent of compliance with the case/permanency plan, extent of progress which has been made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating the placement in foster care; projected date the child may be safely returned to the home or placed in another permanent home; and focus on the progress made for the permanency goal. This includes a careful review of the time frames, i.e., 15 out of the most recent 22 months in placement. Additionally, at least every three (3) months, the caseworker conducts a periodic review that includes a staffing review of placement and the permanency plan, written reports to the Court including progress of the child and/or family toward case/permanency goal and appropriateness of continued out of home placement.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR Review stated that DFS provides a periodic administrative review on the status of each child at least once every 6 months.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS has a clearly defined policy that requires the completion of periodic reviews that involve persons pertinent to the caseplanning process and that is strengths based and designed to expedite permanency for children.

Barriers: In an analysis of WYCAPS data it was determined that 66% of children that entered care for the first time in calendar year 2007 had either a 3 month or 6 month periodic review documented in WYCAPS within 180 days of first placement. DFS believes that this is a data entry and documentation error and that these figures do not accurately reflect practice. This belief is supported by comments made by staff during the stakeholder interviews that stated that periodic reviews were routinely completed, but not always documented in WYCAPS. Stakeholder comments made during the State CFSR process also suggest that overcrowding of court dockets may present a barrier to timely completion of periodic reviews. Both internal and external stakeholder stated that although court dockets are often crowded, courts make extended efforts to prioritize juvenile cases and often rearrange court schedules to accommodate reviews.

Summary of Status of Periodic Review: Due to missing data related to periodic reviews DFS cannot conclusively state that periodic reviews are occurring statewide. Based on stakeholder comments DFS believes that the low percentage of children in placement that have timely periodic reviews documented in WYCAPS is due to data entry error and not a true reflection of actual casework or court practice. DFS does not have any qualitative or quantitative data on the effectiveness of periodic reviews and is therefore unable to determine whether this process is impacting permanency outcomes for children.

Item 27: Permanency Hearings

Policy and Procedural Requirements: Statutorily, a permanency hearing is held in court (12) months from the date of the child's removal from the home and placement in foster care, and not less than once every twelve months thereafter. At the 12-month review/permanency hearing the court reviews the case plan to determine the health and safety of the child; the continuing necessity for the placement; the appropriateness of the current placement; the reasonableness of efforts made to reunify the family and the consistency of those efforts with the case plan; the appropriateness of the case plan and the extent of compliance with the case plan including the permanent placement of the child; whether progress has been made toward alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating placement outside the home and the extent of that progress; and the date the child is expected to be returned to the home or placed for adoption or legal guardianship. Additionally, the Court makes a determination and written findings as to whether reasonable efforts to reunify the child with the family have been made. Reasonable efforts include whether services to the family have been accessible, available and appropriate. If the Court determines in any hearing that reasonable efforts to reunify are inconsistent with the permanency plan for the child or reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify the family are not required due to certain criminal behavior as outlined in state Statute, a permanency hearing shall be held for the child within 30 days after the determination. Reasonable efforts shall be made to place the child in a timely manner in accordance with the permanency plan, and to complete whatever steps are necessary to finalize the permanent placement of the child.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement in the 2002 Federal CFSR. The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that required 12-month permanency hearings were not being consistently held in a timely manner across the state. The findings also stated that stakeholders commented that there are delays in scheduling hearings due to the workload of district attorneys and judges. In order to address these findings DFS collaborated with the Children's Justice Project and developed training materials for the court system regarding ASFA requirements, which included permanency reviews.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS has a clearly defined policy that requires the completion of permanency hearings that involve persons pertinent to the caseplanning process and that is strengths based and designed to expedite permanency for children and is in compliance with ASFA provisions.

Barriers: In order to assess completion and documentation of 12 month reviews an analysis of WYCAPS data was conducted. Of the 678 children that entered care during calendar years 2005 and 2006 that were in continuous out of home placement for at least 365 days, 52.8% had a 12-Month hearing entered into WYCAPS with a 12 month review date between the date of entry and 365 days from the date of entry. 83.6% of these children had a 12 month review with a date of review within their placement episode. DFS believes that the low percentage of children in placement that have timely permanency hearing is the result of data entry errors and documentation error and that these figures do not accurately reflect practice. This belief is supported by comments made by staff during the stakeholder interviews that stated that periodic reviews were routinely completed, but not always documented in WYCAPS. Information from the National Center for State Courts Reassessment of Wyoming's Juvenile Court System (2006) states that on average 12 Month permanency planning hearings meet federal and state guidelines reporting a mean number of days between removal and 12 month hearing of 327 days. Although the number of cases reviewed in the reassessment was small (n=8) it does suggest that DFS may be under-reporting 12 month hearings in WYCAPS.

Results from the statewide survey of child welfare professionals conducted by the National Center for State Courts as part of the Reassessment of Wyoming's Juvenile Court System state that "judges, DFS and prosecuting attorneys have unmanageable abuse and neglect caseloads. All groups agree that the number of judges available to handle abuse and neglect cases in a timely fashion is inadequate. All stakeholders stated that their caseloads were either unmanageable or barely manageable only because they made child abuse and neglect cases a priority and did so at the cost of other case types". The report further describes the increasing number of requirements and the strict timelines; the difficulty of coordinating the efforts of multiple players; the demand on court calendar time; the need to provide, in a timely way, an array of services for children and families and their unavailability in many locations; and the impact that methamphetamine cases have had on the court system. The stakeholder feedback from the State CFSR process correlates with the findings from the reassessment report in that Judges and other court personnel stated that they prioritize juvenile cases and that docket time and court calendars are limited in many jurisdictions.

Promising Approaches: The Children's Justice Project is in the process of developing an automated Court tracking system that will enable courts to monitor individual cases; analyze court processes and trends; and track child outcomes. The automated Court tracking system will provide alerts regarding the need to conduct 12 month permanency hearings, which could improve performance on this systemic factor. DFS will be actively involved in the creation of this data system and anticipates sharing data between systems in order to better track and monitor outcomes for children.

Summary of Status of Permanency Hearings: Due to missing data related to permanency hearings DFS cannot conclusively state that timely permanency hearings are occurring statewide. Based on stakeholder comments DFS believes that the low percentage of children in placement that have timely permanency hearings documented in WYCAPS is due to data entry error and not a true reflection of actual casework or court practice. Based on the findings from the Reassessment of Wyoming's Juvenile Court System it would appear that the court system continues to have difficulty meeting timelines for permanency hearings. DFS anticipates

continuing its collaboration with the Children's Justice Project in order to improve performance on this systemic factor.

Item 28: Termination of Parental Rights

Policy and Procedural Requirements: A petition to terminate parental rights is to be filed within 60 days of the judicial determination that reasonable efforts to reunify the child and parent are not required due to certain criminal behavior. State statute does not place a timeline to file a petition for termination of parental rights in the other situations where the Court finds that reunification with a family is not required for other reasons. However, the statute does mandate that for children having been placed in foster care under the responsibility of the state fifteen (15) of the most recent twenty-two (22) months the state is to file a petition to terminate parental rights or seek to be joined as a party to the petition if a petition has been filed by another party, unless the child is in the care of a relative; the state agency has documented in the case plan a compelling reason for determining that filing the petition is not in the best interest of the child or the state agency has not provided services to the child's family deemed to be necessary for the safe return of the child to the home, if reasonable efforts are required to be made. State statute requires that a termination of parental rights hearing shall be held within 90 days of the filing of a termination petition unless continued by the court for good cause. DFS policy permits a parent to voluntarily relinquish parental rights and consent to adoption. The written relinquishment is required to be completed in the presence of a district court judge or court commissioner. The County or District attorney represents DFS in filing a petition for termination of parental rights. DFS contracts with the Attorney General's Office to assist the county or district attorney in handling termination of parental rights proceedings. However, the Attorney General's Office is only involved when requested by the respective county or district attorney. The Attorney General's office does represent DFS in adoption actions and the termination of parental rights. DFS describes the following exception to filing TPR: the child is in the care of a relative; DFS has documented in the case plan a compelling reason for determining that filing the petition is not in the best interest of the child; DFS has not provided services to the child's family deemed necessary for the safe return of the child to the home.

DFS identifies children who have been in care for 15 of the last 22 months using WYCAPS data. A report that monitors ASFA compliance is updated every week and made available to field staff. The report lists children who have been in care 15 of the last 22 months that do not have any applicable ASFA exceptions. DFS also provides a list of children that have a compelling reason documented in WYCAPS so that field staff can review the compelling reason and determine its appropriateness in relation to ASFA requirements.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement in the 2002 Federal CFSR. The findings from the 2002 CFSR state that there are areas within the State where the courts and DFS appear to be reluctant to pursue termination of parental rights; there are delays at the county level in the process of filing for terminations, there are court delays in processing contested terminations; and there are areas within the State in which the courts and the District Attorney's offices are reluctant to pursue TPR if there is no family already available to adopt the child. In order to address these findings DFS collaborated

with the Children's Justice Project and developed training materials for the court system as well as DFS staff regarding termination of parental rights.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS has developed a reliable automated process for determining and reporting children who are not in compliance with ASFA requirements. This level of reporting has enabled the agency to identify and address the specific permanency issues for these identified children. Providing this list has also improved data quality for entering termination and relinquishment dates, dates of termination filings, compelling reasons, and dates of death for parents. DFS has also benefited from the creation of the Children's Permanency Unit within the Attorney General's office. Stakeholder feedback states that the Children's Permanency Unit has led to the completion of more termination of parental rights cases and has helped to standardize the process as well as alleviating the responsibility of local county attorneys for pursuing termination of parental rights cases.

Barriers: The National Center for State Courts Reassessment of Wyoming's Juvenile Court System (2006) found the average time between TPR petition and TPR hearing was 229 days (median = 197 days) for 16 cases reviewed, and stated that the average does not meet the NCJFCJ suggested timeframe of 60 days between TPR petition and TPR trial. Stakeholder comments also suggest that there is still reluctance to pursue TPR in some jurisdictions unless an adoptive family has already been located.

Summary of Status of Termination of Parental Rights: DFS believes that it has clearly defined policy that describes the process for pursuing termination of parental rights. DFS has also greatly improved its ability to identify and report children who are not in compliance with ASFA requirements. Stakeholder comments also support that the collaborations with the Children's Justice Project in regards to providing training and improving court process related to the termination of parental rights has had a positive impact on this item. Stakeholder comments also suggest that the creation of the Children's Permanency Unit within the Attorney General's office has increased the number of termination of parental rights cases that are pursued and improved timeliness of completing termination of parental rights cases. DFS data and the findings from the Reassessment of Wyoming's Juvenile Court System suggest that there are still problems with the timeliness of termination hearings and with filing for petitions of terminations for children in care 15 of the last 22 months.

Item 29: Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS policy states that caseworker shall provide notice of all legal proceedings to foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers involving children in their care. Foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers have the right to be heard in all legal proceedings with regards to children in their care. DFS policy also states that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers should be expected to participate in court hearings and meetings regarding the children in the care including Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT's), Family Partnership Meetings, and other planning meetings such as Individual

Education Plan (IEP). The Supreme Court adopted rules pertaining to notice, opportunity and right to be heard for caregivers/foster parents which became effective July 1, 2007.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement in the 2002 Federal CFSR. The findings from the 2002 CFSR state that DFS does not provide a consistent process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers regarding reviews and hearings and that although policy exists regarding notification there is no description as to how the caregiver is to be notified and there is no automated process for monitoring notifications. In order to address these findings DFS improved its policy requirements regarding notification of foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS has clarified its policy regarding the process for notifying foster and pre-adoptive parents of hearings and reviews. When foster parents were interviewed during the State CFSR stakeholder meetings the majority stated that they were usually informed of court hearings and reviews by the DFS caseworker and were encouraged to participate. In some communities there appeared to be a lack of communication and notification regarding hearings and reviews between DFS and foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers. The majority of foster parents stated that they felt that their input was valued; a smaller number felt that they were not fully included and recognized in court hearings and reviews.

Barriers: Although DFS has clarified its policy regarding the process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers of hearings and reviews there is not a means to monitor whether they have been notified. Without a mechanism for monitoring this issue it is not possible to clearly evaluate the magnitude of the problem or measure change in the process over time.

Summary of Status of Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers: DFS has improved its policy regarding the necessity of notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of hearings. The majority of foster parents interviewed during the State CFSR reviews stated that they were notified of hearings and reviews by the DFS caseworker. In order to fully understand performance issues with this item DFS anticipates developing a means of monitoring whether foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers are notified of reviews or hearings, or conducting specific analysis regarding this item.

C. Quality Assurance System

Overview of Systemic Factor: Wyoming was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. The findings from the 2002 federal CFSR review state that the state has the required standards in place to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children. The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR also stated that the State had developed the framework for a statewide quality assurance system; however a fully functioning system was not currently in place.

Item 30: Standards Ensuring Quality Services

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS has developed specific policies and procedures to ensure the safety and health of children being served in foster care as well as created dedicated positions for monitoring and providing services to foster parents. Policy and practice requirements include monitoring of foster homes to determine whether they comply with all certification standards; ensuring that children in foster care for more than 30 days receive a health check and that the medical needs of a child are reviewed as part of the 6- and 12-month permanency reviews. DFS also requires that foster parents complete a standardized monthly report that includes a description of any relevant safety or health issues and describes routine health services. These monthly reports are reviewed by the caseworker or foster care coordinator and any health or safety issues are addressed. DFS policy requires that foster parents immediately contact DFS in the case of an emergency involving a foster child. DFS policy requires that monthly face to face contact be made with each child in foster care in the residence of the child. DFS policy requires that the caseworker and the child must meet in private and that the caseworker assesses and address any relevant safety issues with the child. DFS policy requires that foster parents report any suspected child abuse or neglect immediately to law enforcement or to DFS.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State has the required standards in place to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: The combined scores of items rated as a strengths from the State CFSR for foster care cases for item 22 (physical health of child) is 88%, which is a 16% improvement from the score obtained during the 2002 Federal CFSR. This provides some indication that DFS has improved its ability to meet the physical health needs of children in foster care. Overall stakeholders commented that the availability of health services for children in care has improved, especially access to dental care. Some communities continue to struggle with access to dental care and are therefore required to travel to other communities in order to access dental providers. DFS believes that the creation of the standardized monthly reporting form for providers has increased the communication between foster parents and DFS staff and has enabled DFS to identify and mitigate potential health or safety problems. DFS also believes that its increase in face to face contact with children in foster care has also positively contributed to ensuring the health and safety of children in foster care. Observations from the State CFSR review indicate that when DFS caseworkers visit children they interview them privately and ask specific questions regarding the child's safety and health.

Barriers: Of concern for the state is the failure to meet the national standard for the absence of abuse and neglect in foster care, which indicates that DFS needs to improve monitoring of children in out of home placement. DFS anticipates addressing this deficiency in its upcoming PIP.

Summary of status of Standards Ensuring Quality Services: Findings and stakeholder comments from the State CFSR review suggest that 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 and that these standards have been implemented statewide. Due to the failure to meet standards for substantial conformity for the safety measure of absence of abuse and neglect in foster care as reported in the ACF data profile, DFS anticipates reviewing and making any required changes to policy or practice to ensure the safety of children in foster care.

Item 31: Quality Assurance System

Policy and Procedural Requirements: The quality assurance program consists of the following processes:

State CFSR Review: In order to assess performance on the CFSR items, DFS in partnership with the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel (WYCRP) has developed and implemented a CFSR review process based on the Federal CFSR review administered by the Administration for Children and Families. The process used in Wyoming is unique as it combines citizen reviewers with DFS staff for the onsite review and conducts public exit conferences. In addition the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel is responsible for organizing and conducting the reviews and for compiling and disseminating the final reports and preparing recommendations based on the findings from each review and for the entire review cycle. DFS is responsible for providing DFS staff as state CFSR reviewers, co-managing the onsite review, and entering, managing and distributing the State CFSR data. DFS believes that using an outside entity such as the WYCRP to evaluate its performance increases objectivity and transparency of the State CFSR process and functioning of the Agency. Incorporating citizens as reviewers creates an opportunity for Wyoming's citizens to become involved in child welfare systems reform at a local level and serves as a vehicle for DFS to create stronger relationships within each community. Between January of 2005 and December 2007 DFS and the WYCRP have conducted 4 rounds of the State CFSR, and has reviewed a total of 378 cases and utilized several hundred citizen reviewers. The affiliation of the citizen reviewers includes: mental health providers, tribal representatives, court personnel county attorneys, state legislators, school personnel, foster parents, foster care alumni, law enforcement, ACF staff, private providers, child advocates, stay at home moms and a multitude of other citizens that represent unique perspectives and provide an objective assessment of the functioning of the child welfare system.

The State CFSR review is a quality assurance process that closely replicates the Federal CFSR review and incorporates all of the key components of the Federal CFSR process including interviews with the family, the child, the caseworker and stakeholders, case debriefings, two levels of quality assurance, and exit conferences that include the scored results of the review and a summary of the stakeholder comments. The State CFSR is conducted annually in each DFS field office across the state. The State CFSR review uses the Federal CFSR Onsite Review Instrument to derive the ratings for the CFSR items and outcomes. No significant modifications have been made to the Onsite Review Instrument used for the State CFSR process. The changes made to the Onsite CFSR instrument for round 2 of the Federal CFSR reviews were incorporated into round 4 of the state CFSR reviews. During round 4 of the State CFSR review, stakeholder

interviews were conducted based on the Federal CFSR process in order to gain additional insight into the CFSR systemic factors as well as the overall functioning of the child welfare/juvenile services systems.

The DFS staff person responsible for administering the reviews in the field offices is a Federal Consultant CFSR Reviewer and a Federal CFSR Consultant Co-Local Site Leader and has participated as a reviewer in numerous Federal CFSR reviews. The WYCRP staff person responsible for administering the state CFSR reviews in the field offices is a Federal CFSR Cross-State participant and has also been a reviewer in numerous Federal CFSR reviews. During the 3rd round of State CFSR reviews ACF regional staff participated as reviewers and provided consultation and feedback on the review process.

CFSR reviewers (both DFS staff and Citizens) are required to participate in a one day reviewer training prior to completing a State CFSR case review. The training is based on the Federal CFSR reviewer training and includes information on the conceptual background of the CFSR, relevant DFS policy and practice standards, the definition and criteria of the CFSR items and outcomes, as well as hands on experience with using the CFSR onsite review instrument.

The sampling and case selection process is also similar to the process used to sample and select cases for the Federal CFSR review. In-home services cases are randomly sampled from SACWIS data and foster care cases are randomly selected from a specified AFCARS submission for each office using the sampling parameters described in the CFSR procedures manual. Both Juvenile Services and Child Protection (including cases from the prevention, assessment and investigation tracks) cases are included in the sampling universe. During round 4 of the state CFSR reviews DFS altered its sampling process to further replicate the Federal CFSR and included a stratified foster care sample based on the federally defined criteria, as well as a case selection process that select similar proportions of in-home and foster care cases to those proportions found in the Federal CFSR review. The number of cases selected for each office for each review is determined by the proportion of open cases in the office within the sampling universe, and by other factors such as research or areas of interest particular to a certain office or region.

The state administered CFSR review contains all of the critical elements and processes required by the federal review and should provide a very close approximation of the Federal CFSR review process. ACF regional staff have participated in the state review process and provided feedback on the process, therefore DFS is confident that the scores derived from the State CFSR review represent an accurate assessment of state performance on the 23 CFSR items. Due to the unique perspective, DFS believes that both the quantitative data and contextual information gathered during CFSR process is a reliable and valid assessment of performance and functioning on the CFSR items and systemic factors. In addition to being a valuable process for preparing and assessing progress on the CFSR review, the state CFSR review process has provided excellent opportunities for training and educating DFS staff and community members regarding the CFSR, as well as created a “hands on” opportunity for reviewers to participate in systems reform efforts.

Results from the State CFSR reviews are presented at the exit conference concluding each review. Results and summaries are provided to DFS field staff, DFS administrators, and DFS state office staff as well as the WYCRP. The reports generated for each office and the annual

report generated by the WYCRP is provided to DFS field Staff and DFS administrators and is publicly available through the WYCRP website. DFS prepares written responses to the recommendations made in the WYCPR annual reports.

Standardized Reporting: The quality assurance unit has developed a set of standardized reports for the purpose of monitoring numerous process and performance measures. The quality assurance unit has also developed a set of web accessible case and person specific reports for defined populations requiring attention that are available to field staff, supervisors and managers. These reports include placement profiles, reports related to caseworker contact, ASFA compliance related to filing of petitions for TPR, and foster parents certification monitoring. The standardized monthly reports contain longitudinal reports aggregated by state, DFS region, office and division. These reports are provided to DFS managers, administrators, supervisors and state office staff on a monthly basis. Key reports include: face to face contact between DFS caseworkers and children in foster care, case contact, ive-penetration, placement, incident count, State CFSR scores, supervisor CFSR scores, staffing ratios, foster parent recruitment, family partnerships, intakes, services expenditures, reunification and adoption measures, alert management, per 1000 youth placement rates, and longitudinal summaries of abuse rates and placement rates by placement type. In addition to case and person specific reports, the web accessible reports contain longitudinal graphs of the reports described above as well as reports on placement length, CFSR data indicators, placement restrictiveness, placement flow and county level outcomes reports designed to be provided to Judges and other community members.

CFSR Supervisor reviews: In addition to the State CFSR process DFS has implemented a monthly supervisor review process using the current CFSR onsite instrument. Each DFS supervisor from both the juvenile services and protective services division is required to review a randomly selected case using the CFSR review instrument. Cases are randomly sampled from cases in the SACWIS system and include both in-home services and foster care cases. This review is automated in WYCAPS and served as the main source of data for reporting progress for the states PIP quarterly reports. DFS anticipates continuing using this process during its next PIP reporting period.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement in the 2002 Federal CFSR. The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that although Wyoming had developed a framework for a quality assurance system, the system had not been implemented. To address these findings, DFS created a dedicated quality assurance unit and developed and implemented the processes described above.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS has fully implemented a statewide quality assurance program that is inclusive of citizens and stakeholders and has also developed standardized aggregate and longitudinal data reports for the purpose of tracking performance on outcomes and on specific process measures.

Barriers: DFS staff stated that they believe that the State CFSR process is valuable, but because it relies on DFS field staff to serve as reviewers it can create resource issues in terms of the time away from the office required to serve as a reviewer. Some DFS caseworkers stated that they do

not consistently receive standardized reports or receive information regarding the scores and findings from the State CFSR reviews.

Summary of status of Quality Assurance System: DFS has developed and implemented a comprehensive statewide quality assurance process specific to the CFSR outcomes, items and systemic factors as well as developed a standardized data reporting structure that supports the CFSR items and goals. DFS considers its improvements to its quality assurance process a strength and does not anticipate any significant issues related to its quality assurance process to be reported during the upcoming CFSR review.

D. Staff and Provider Training

Overview of Systemic Factor: DFS was not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of staff and provider training during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State did not have an effective, comprehensive, department-wide initial training program and that DFS did not have an ongoing training program for staff. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State provides quality training for foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities.

Item 32: Initial Staff Training

Policy and Procedural Requirements: All newly hired DFS caseworkers must complete an initial new hire packet within 30 days of employment. The initiation of the new hire orientation packet was the result of the states Program Improvement Plan, and was designed to provide training specific to child protection and juvenile services issues and an orientation to the Department of Family Services within the first 30 days of employment. The material is intended to give the new worker an initial overview of many of the services provided by the agency, begin mentoring relationships with seasoned workers as well as encourage a cooperative relationship with supervisors and other staff. Material in the packet is broken down into the following categories: agency overview, child protection history, child protection and social work values, community personnel and community relationships, file standardization, understanding the court role in decision making and the MDT process. After each section, the worker must discuss the information with his/her supervisor ensuring appropriate understanding.

Core training is also offered in its entirety twice annually. It is a comprehensive, competency based curricula which is divided into 4 modules; 1 module per month for 4 months (128 classroom hours of instruction). Topics include, but are not limited to: the statutory authority of the agency, the role of the caseworker, family-centered casework, intake, case planning, risk assessment and re-assessment, investigations, family partnerships, independent living, educational transitions, a foster care alumni panel, child development, separation, placement, permanency, and racial and ethnic identity for youth in care. The curriculum also includes an overview of the CFSR process as well as training on the definition, purpose of each of the CFSR outcomes and items. At the conclusion of each module, participants must score an 80% or better on a written exam. Failure to do so, the participant must take another exam on the same material also requiring an 80% or better to pass. If both exams are not passed, a work plan is developed with the participant and their supervisor to identify specific deficiencies and overcome them. All four modules must be completed prior to working cases independently. Each case

worker is given the same initial training with emphasis on current policy, state laws, and best practice. The current Core training curricula was adopted in 2003 from the Institute for Human Services in Ohio. It has been slightly modified to incorporate Wyoming laws and rural case work as well as best practices in family centered casework. The current Core training curricula is constantly being reassessed for the effectiveness and efficiency of partnering with families to create a safe environment for their children. Both child protection and juvenile services workers receive training that covers the core elements described above and in addition receive training specific to their divisions.

New hire names are given to the Training Academy by the Human Resources state office personnel. Contact is made between the supervisor of the new employee and the Training Academy to register for the next Core Training date as well as answer questions regarding the availability of additional training. Since all newly hired staff must attend Core training prior to working cases independent of constant supervision, this process has been 100% effective in ensuing all staff receive Core training.

DFS engages in cross training staff with other agencies and organizations in order to provide new worker and ongoing training that represents a systemic perspective. The following entities currently provide training to DFS staff on a routine basis: C. Henry Kempe Center in Denver, Colorado; the University of Colorado Health Science Center in Denver, Colorado; the Attorney General's office in Cheyenne, Wyoming; the Wyoming Highway Patrol; and the Wyoming Forensic Crime Lab. Some examples of training topics include Non-Accidental Trauma trained by a Pediatrician from the C. Henry Kempe Center; proper use of a child restraint system in vehicles by the Wyoming Highway Patrol; and Urinalysis Administration by the Wyoming Forensic Crime Lab. These partnerships ensure the material being presented to Core participants is up to date and accurate.

The Agency has investigated different approaches in the delivery of Core training in order to find the best delivery method. For example, DFS experimented with providing the training in four consecutive weeks. After doing this only once, it became very apparent this was too much information in a short period of time resulting in diminished retention of vital information. It was then determined to hold a single week of classroom training per month. In the three weeks between training sessions, the worker returns to their office and uses the information with support of seasoned workers and their supervisor. It is not until all four Core modules are complete that a worker can maintain a caseload independent constant supervision.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State does not have an effective, comprehensive, Department-wide initial training program. In order to address these findings DFS developed an initial training program for newly hired staff that provides training in crucial practice areas that is required to be completed within the first 30 days of employment. DFS also developed a training program for field supervisors to increase effective supervision for new workers. DFS also developed a method to track the delivery of training for each caseworker. DFS developed a consistent yearly calendar of available training and created a training manual.

Strengths: DFS has made substantial improvements to its training process based on the findings from the 2002 CFSR review. DFS has created a curriculum that is flexible and supportive of

CFSR outcomes. As emerging trends are identified or policy/legislation changes, Core training is adapted to specifically address these issues. The instructors for Core training are primarily seasoned supervisors and managers from various offices statewide and can therefore provide both practical and conceptual training. Other trainers are professionals from the surrounding area that provide expertise on specific topics such as forensic interviewing and termination of parental rights. Core training is now held at the Family Success Center in Cheyenne, which provides trainers and staff access to state level Administrators and state staff during training sessions.

Summary of status of Initial Staff Training: DFS believes that it has developed and implemented a comprehensive statewide initial staff training curriculum that is inclusive of CFSR concepts and is directed toward ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of children served through the child protection and juvenile services system. DFS considers its initial training program a strength and does not anticipate any significant issues related to its training process to be reported during the upcoming CFSR review.

Item 33: Ongoing Staff Training

Policy and Procedural Requirements: All Child Protection workers, supervisors and managers are required to maintain CPS Certification annually. The certification requirement pertains to all staff regardless of supervisory status or type of field work. For example, investigators, family based workers, supervisors and managers all have the same standard of continuing education to meet. This requires each worker to obtain a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education directly relating to child protection issues. Also, depending on the aptitude and interest of the individual worker, they may specialize in a particular area of CPS work. For example, a worker can specialize in forensic interviewing, investigations, substance abuse or domestic violence.

Annually, all CPS staff including front line workers, supervisors and managers are required to submit their CPS certification request. This request contains a list of their continuing education training from the current year. Supervisors and Managers sign off on the forms verifying the accuracy of the information. These forms are sent to the Training Academy and the names are verified and tracked to ensure all workers have completed their current certification. Local supervisors and managers identify local training needs during supervision, case consultation meetings and through the State CFSR process. Since the inception and use of a database to track individual worker training three years ago, 100% of staff (line worker, supervisor and manager) have maintained certification from year to year.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS was in the process of developing an ongoing training program for staff, but did not have an ongoing staff training process implemented.

Strengths and Barriers:

Strengths: In addition to the overall enhancements made to the DFS training program, DFS believes that identifying training needs through the State CFSR process enables the agency to

target, develop, and provide training that is specifically designed to support and achieve CFSR outcomes.

Barriers: Funding is the main barrier to providing on-going training for agency staff. Regional trainers could also be utilized here to provide intensive and responsive on-going training to staff. They could also be a key resource in the identification of regional issues to be addressed.

Another barrier currently being addressed is adequate supervisor training. To date, there has not been a consistent, hierarchical training plan which trains a beginning supervisor all the necessary skills, attributes and knowledge on how to be the best supervisor possible. Two years ago, the entire supervisory field throughout the state underwent a three week supervisor training. Currently, attempts are being made to address this issue. DFS is currently in negotiations with The Butler Institute for Families at Denver University to establish and maintain a necessary recruitment and retention plan. A major aspect of this plan is consistent and available supervisor training. In addition, Training Academy staff are actively involved with a newly formed Wyoming Supervisory Training Counsel. This counsel has representation from approximately six state agencies with the mission to structure and implement a supervisor training program all state agencies will value and use by the end of 2008. Funding for accomplishing this mission was provided by the Wyoming State Legislature.

Summary of status of Initial Staff Training: DFS believes that it has developed and implemented a comprehensive statewide ongoing staff training curriculum that is inclusive of CFSR concepts and is directed toward ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of children served through the child protection and juvenile services system. DFS considers its ongoing staff training program strength and does not anticipate any significant issues related to its initial training program to be reported during the upcoming CFSR review.

Item 34: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

Policy and Procedural Requirements:

DFS certified foster homes and approved adoptive homes: Completion of Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE Pre-service Training is required prior to DFS certification of foster homes and approval of adoptive homes. DFS Foster Care Coordinators provide or arrange all PRIDE pre-service training which meets five competency areas: protecting and nurturing children; meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays; supporting relationships between children and their families; connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime; and working as a member of a professional team.

Foster parents are required to have 18 hours of in-service training annually, or 36 hours biannually. Training is available at no cost to the foster parents, although some foster parents participate in outside training at their own expense. In-service trainings may include topics such as helping children develop self-esteem, helping children learn appropriate behaviors, helping children with family reunification, adoption, and preparation for adult life. DFS Foster Care Coordinators work with the foster parents individually and with the foster/adoptive and kinship providers in their area to identify and meet in-service training needs. The Foster Care Coordinators document training attended in the file and/or on WYCAPS.

Child care facilities, foster homes certified by child placing agencies, and homes approved by adoption agencies: Child care facilities and other youth serving substitute care providers are certified by the DFS Early Childhood Division. These include adoption agencies, child placing agencies, group homes, and residential treatment facilities. The private agencies and organizations are responsible for providing pre-service and in-service training for their staff, adoptive families and/or foster families and to document all training received. Compliance with training requirements and other licensing standards are monitored through inspections by the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technology (CASAT). Child Placing Agencies are not certified by DFS if standards are not met.

The sixteen (16) hour pre-service/orientation training for facilities must include: agency philosophy and history; agency policies; agency staff member roles; the family's role in the child's care and the worker's role and responsibilities in relation to the child and family; health and safety procedures as stated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); CPR and First Aid training; orientation to the agency's approved crisis intervention procedures; record-keeping requirements; cultural diversity; separation and loss inherent in out-of-home care for children and families, and for the staff members/foster parents when children leave; confidentiality; substance abuse; the overall importance of the supervision and safety of children; implementation of written emergency and evacuation procedures; driver's safety; bomb threats (exclusive to facilities); and suicide prevention and intervention.

The pre-service/orientation training for child placing agencies approving homes for family foster home care and specialized foster care must include sixteen (16) hours of training including: the purpose, philosophy, organizational structure, and goals of the agency; and its family foster care program, and the relationship of family foster care to other child welfare services; information about the strengths and needs of children and their families who require family foster care services; information about the critical nature and impact of separation and loss for all parties involved in foster care: children, families of origin and foster families; the family assessment and home study process, and criteria for being licensed, certified, or approved as a foster parent; the laws, regulations, policies, and values that direct the agency's child welfare program in general, and specifically, family foster care program; the rights and responsibilities of foster parents and the agency; policies on discipline, confidentiality, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS; health and safety procedures, including first aid, CPR, HIV/AIDS precaution, policies on psychotropic medication, and emergency procedures; the knowledge and practice skills necessary to be a foster parent; foster home licensing requirements; information about the role of the social worker and the foster parents' relationship with the social worker; and information about the need of the foster parents to work with the parents of origin; and Information about educational and other community resources. Foster parents certified by child placing agencies to provide family foster home care or specialized foster care must complete a minimum of sixteen (16) hours annually, at no cost to the foster parents.

Therapeutic foster homes are required to complete a minimum of twenty (20) hours specialized orientation training to assist parents in working with severely emotionally disturbed children/adolescents and twenty hours (20) annually to maintain their approval. All training is required to be documented in the personnel/foster parents file and compliance is reviewed when CASAT completes their inspections. While a specific curriculum is not required by the rules,

many of the child placing and adoption agencies utilize the PRIDE pre-service curriculum and do a combined training with prospective foster and adoptive homes being certified/approved by DFS.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State provides quality training for foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities. The agency continues to work with many stakeholders to coordinate training and assure training needs are met. The Wyoming Foster Adoptive Parent Association is a statewide foster parent association organized and led by foster parents. The purpose of this association is to provide support and on-going training for foster and adoptive parents. The association collaborates with other organizations to host an annual conference and other training throughout the year. Wyoming Kinship Advocacy (WYKA) is an organization devoted to working with kinship providers, particularly grandparents. While they work with some families involved with the Department of Family Services, many of their families have no involvement with DFS. Most senior centers around the state also have support groups for grandparents. Casey Family Programs has been instrumental in developing and coordinating training in the Cheyenne area and statewide by assisting with funding for training and providing training resources for Foster Care Coordinators. The Wyoming State Adoption Council has been active in the past in coordinating and communicating training opportunities available to foster and adoptive parents. Additionally, Foster Care Coordinators work with individuals, organizations and each other to coordinate and organize training to meet the needs of foster, adoptive and kinship families in their areas.

Strengths and Barriers:

Strengths: Foster Care Coordinators are resourceful in obtaining the training that foster and adoptive parents need. The Cheyenne area has a strong interagency training consortium which includes Casey Family Programs and other child placing agencies that can be used as a model for other parts of the state which have multiple agencies serving foster and adoptive families.

Barriers: Foster care coordinators cover large areas of the state or large populations of foster parents making it challenging to assure high caliber training is available when it is needed. The current PRIDE pre-service curriculum is outdated and DFS needs to purchase the most current version as it has more resources on trauma and preparing foster parents for behavioral challenges they are likely to encounter. A number of Foster Care Coordinators augment sections of the curriculum with other resources, however it is not consistent. Smaller communities often do not have the same training opportunities as larger areas of the state. This reflects the availability of resources in the community as well as the vast area covered and/or large workload of Foster Care Coordinators. More Foster Care Coordinators are needed.

Financial resources committed to foster parent training has been inconsistent over the last six years. This has made it difficult to provide statewide training or provide funding so foster parents can participate in training in other parts of the state or the country.

DFS does not have specific data on what child care institutions and foster homes certified by child placing agencies report as to the effectiveness of training they receive. Typically, foster and adoptive homes certified/approved by child placing and adoption agencies report they are satisfied with the training they receive.

Stakeholder Feedback: Comments from foster parents on pre-service training generally indicate the training provides them with the information they need as foster parents, however more training is needed once a child is placed. These needs are usually met on an individual basis or through on-going in-service training. While Foster Care Coordinators who have been in the job for a number of years typically receive favorable comments about the pre-service training, a train the trainer model has not been provided to Foster Care Coordinators hired since the PRIDE pre-service curriculum was implemented in 2002. Comments from stakeholders regarding in-service/on-going training indicate training they need is not always available when they need it. Financial resources committed to foster parent training has been inconsistent over the last six years. This has made it challenging to provide statewide training and provide funding so foster parents can participate in training in other parts of the state or the country. Comments support the need for the state to provide train-the-trainer training for Foster Care Coordinators. They also indicate pre-service training, CPR and First Aid training is not always available when it is needed causing delays in certifying or approving homes. Comments also support the need for a mentoring program for foster parents as well as support groups across the state. Comments from stakeholders support the need for more Foster Care Coordinator positions across the state.

Summary of status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Training: DFS is providing the necessary statewide training for foster and adoptive parents. DFS also believes that the development of the foster care coordinator positions as well as the dedication of state office staff for the purpose of managing the foster care program has improved the agencies ability to provide quality training to foster and adoptive parents. DFS anticipates continually improving its training through addressing the issues outlined above during the upcoming Program Improvement Plan process.

E. Service Array and Resource Development

Overview of Systemic Factor: DFS was found not to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that there was an insufficiency of services to meet identified needs, that access to services is not equal across the State and that services are particularly limited in rural areas, and that there is a lack of capacity to tailor services to meet the unique needs of children and families.

Item 35: Array of Services

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS provides services necessary for accomplishing the goals and tasks for children and families as indicated in the case plan. Case plans are developed individually to meet the specific needs of each child and family. DFS provides direct case management services to all geographical areas the state. DFS has 30 field offices throughout the state, all counties have at least one DFS office and many counties have multiple offices.

Through the PIP process and other systems reform efforts policy and procedures have been developed to focus attention on child safety, permanency and well being. Due to improvements to the assessment process DFS has improved its ability to identify and provide individualized services. Wyoming receives funds from Title IV-B Subpart 2 to improve family preservation and preventive services for children. Family Preservation Services and Family Support Services are combined to promote safe and stable families in a community-based setting. The combined program encourages a holistic approach that includes involving families, community resources and state agencies working together to utilize all available resources to treat the problems children and families face and reduce the need for state intervention. Funds are provided for these services to various communities through a statewide Request for Proposal (RFP) process and directly to local offices to meet specific needs. A portion of these funds is also transferred to the Children's Trust Fund for family support and child-abuse prevention activities.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that there is an insufficiency of services to meet identified needs, and at times an absence of services; there is a scarcity in the State of professional mental health workers who will accept Medicaid payments, therapeutic foster homes, regular foster homes, Native American foster homes, and juvenile detention centers. In order to address these issues DFS implemented a statewide effort for resource family recruitment to improve foster care resources; developed strategies to improve assessment and caseplanning processes and trained and implemented family partnerships. Training on the family partnership process was offered to other agencies within the communities to increase efforts to provide community based services to families at the onset of the case.

The effectiveness of the State's services: DFS provides direct case management services to children and families through its local field offices, these services include intake, prevention, investigation, assessment, placement services, service referral, aftercare and general case management. Based on the scores and observations obtained from the State CFSR review, these primary casework functions are being provided to the majority of clients across the state. Services that are purchased for clients by the department would include: mental health services (individual, family and group counseling), mentoring programs, child care, substance abuse treatment, psychological evaluation, medical services, Independent Living Services, and parenting classes. Based on the stakeholder comments made during the State CFSR review the state lacks substance abuse services, especially inpatient substance abuse services where children can accompany their parents, and substance abuse treatment for teenagers. Stakeholders have also commented on the lack of dental care services in some communities.

Placing and maintaining children in safe environments: As reported in the data profile DFS is not in substantial conformity with safety data element VII (Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care). DFS has conducted case file reviews of the children identified in the report and concluded that there are safety issues as well as data entry and that need to be addressed. DFS anticipates developing strategies to address placing and maintaining children in safe environments as part of its upcoming PIP.

Enabling children to remain home safely when reasonable: As reported in the data profile DFS is in substantial; conformity with safety element VI (Absence of Maltreatment reoccurrence) for the CFSR reporting period as well as for the previous 2 FFY reported in the data profile, which would indicate that DFS is providing the necessary assessments and services to enable children to remain safely in the home. As reported by the State CFSR scores, DFS has also shown improvement on both item 3 and on item 4, which provides further indication that Wyoming has improved its ability to assess safety and risk factors and provide the indicated services.

Helping children in foster care and adoptive homes achieve timely permanency: As reported in the data profile DFS is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Composite 1: (timeliness and permanency of reunification). DFS is below the national median for both the median length of stay for exits to reunification and the re-entry into foster care measure, but is above the national median for exits to reunification in less than 12 months for both cohorts. This would suggest that DFS needs to address issues related to providing aftercare services to ensure the permanency of reunification and to prevent re-entry into the foster care system. As reported in the data profile DFS is in substantial conformity with Permanency Composite 2 (timeliness of adoptions) and exceeds the 75th percentile for exits to adoption in less than 24 months, median length of stay for exits to adoption, children in care 17 or more months achieving legal freedom within 6 months, and legally free children adopted in less than 12 months. These scores would indicate that DFS has increased its ability to achieve adoptions within a timely manner.

Supporting adoptive families after placement and finalization: DFS expended \$4,356,152 for adoption subsidy payments during calendar year 2007. In addition to providing adoption subsidy payments to adoptive families, DFS provides families with transitional services as well as case management services throughout the adoption.

Helping youth to prepare for independent living: Bases on the scores from the State CFSR review DFS has made significant progress toward improving services for children that require independent living services. As reported in the discussion on item 10, DFS has made a 26.3% improvement on this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR review. DFS believes that this improvement in performance can be attributed to changes to policy and increased allocation of resources to the independent living program.

How the State addresses service gaps and the effectiveness of such practices: DFS utilizes the State CFSR process to gather information regarding gaps in services. State level personnel, DFS administrators and local managers attend the debriefing and exit conferences where service availability is discussed as it relates to the onsite review. The summary reports as well as the annual reports created by the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel contain formal documentation and discussion of identified service gaps and the recommendations to the department included in the reports are used for planning purposes and service development.

Strengths and Barriers

Wyoming is a rural state comprised predominately of small and often isolated towns with large distances between them. The geography and population distribution of the state creates issues with providing a full array of services in each of Wyoming's communities. Although gaps in

specialized services exist in some communities, information from the State CFSR process indicates that the majority of cases reviewed did not have significant lack of services and those smaller communities are developing innovative means to provide required services to families. Many cases reviewed and reported in the summary reports written by the WYCRP state that families are receiving wraparound services and comprehensive assessments, which indicates that services have improved in many communities. Specific services that were cited as being in short supply include dental care for children in placement, high level RTC treatment, therapeutic foster care in some communities, and inpatient substance abuse treatment, especially inpatient treatment that allows children to remain with the parents.

Summary of Status of Service Array: Based on the stakeholder comments and results of the State CFSR review, DFS believes that it has improved its Array of Services across the state. Through the State CFSR process DFS has also improved its ability to identify gaps in services by geographic area. Although DFS has increased its service array, it believes that due to the population distribution of the state and it will have continued difficulties providing a full array of required services in every community.

Item 36: Service Accessibility

Policy and Procedural Requirements: Services provided to families through DFS are identified through the case planning and assessment process and specified within the written case plan. Services are either provided directly by agency staff or provided by community or private providers. DFS policy stresses the need to provide community based services when available as well as the need to maintain children within their community. In two counties in WY (Sweetwater, Campbell), Services provided prior to placement for children involved in juvenile delinquency cases are the responsibility of the county probation system. Although an attempt is made to communicate and coordinate services for juvenile delinquents that enter care, this system sometimes limits the ability of DFS to provide community services to prevent removal for these children in these specific communities.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 federal CFSR review stated that access to services is not equal across the State and that services are particularly limited in rural areas.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS does not have any means to quantify changes in the levels of service accessibility. The 2 main sources of relevant data are changes in the scores for the CFSR items as measured by the State CFSR and stakeholder comments regarding the accessibility of services. DFS was found to be in substantial conformity on item 11 during the 2002 CFSR and has maintained scores above 95% for this item as reported in the State CFSR review; this would indicate that there are sufficient placement resources available within the community. Another key indicator of improvements of service accessibility is improvement in performance on item 17 and item 3 since the 2002 Federal CFSR review. DFS has seen significant improvement on item 17 over the first 3 rounds of the State CFSR and analysis conducted on the fourth round

scores concluded that the decrease in performance was related to not providing adequate assessments and services to fathers, while scores for services to the mother, child and foster parent remained relatively high throughout all four rounds. One of the key factors emphasized in the 2002 statewide assessment was the lack of accessibility of services for remote and rural offices. In an analysis conducted on the cumulative scores for item 17 offices were divided into High population (Cheyenne, Casper, Rock Springs, and Gillette) and Low Population offices, and their cumulative scores were compared (see table 47) for item 17. Surprisingly, the lower population offices scored higher on this item than offices with a larger population base. Although scores on item 17 are influenced by many factors such as caseload size and turnover, these findings do suggest that the difference in service availability between rural and urban areas may not be as severe as described in the 2002 statewide assessment. There were not significant differences in the number of comments regarding gaps in resources between stakeholders in rural areas and stakeholders in larger offices during the State CFSR review.

Table 47: State CFSR Scores: High and Low Population Offices: Item 17 Cumulative Scores

		ANI		STRENGTH	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
type	HIGH	40	36.0%	71	64.0%
	LOW	57	22.5%	196	77.5%

Wyoming has been awarded a systems of care grant and has developed pilot projects across the state. Albany County has implemented its project (SAGE Initiative) and results and stakeholder feedback from round 4 of the State CFSR review indicate that the project has had substantial positive impact on services for children and families within Albany County.

Summary of Status of Service Accessibility: Based on the improvement on the scores from the State CFSR on items that rate service provision the comments provided by stakeholders it appears that service accessibility has improved across the state. Although there are indications that service accessibility has improved, DFS recognizes that rural/frontier nature of Wyoming will continue to create barriers to providing the quantity and accessibility of all necessary services to all communities across the state.

Item 37: Individualizing Services

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS provides services necessary for accomplishing the goals and tasks for children and families as indicated in the case plan. Case plans are developed individually to meet the specific needs of each child and family. Through the PIP process and other systems reform efforts policy and procedures have been developed to focus attention on child safety, permanency, and well being. Due to improvements to the assessment process DFS has increased its ability to identify and provide individualized services. DFS policy requires that the caseplan be developed with the family and that services be individualized to meet the needs of the family as specified within the caseplan.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. The findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review stated that there is a lack of capacity to tailor services to meet the unique needs of children and families. In order to address these findings DFS made considerable enhancements to both its assessment and caseplanning process for the purpose of making both processes family-centered and individualized. DFS has also incorporated family-centered concepts as part of its routine training and has made efforts to train external stakeholders on the importance of individualizing services, cultural competence, and family centered practice through presentations on the CFSR process and through the State CFSR reviews.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: Wyoming has made significant progress on item 17 based on the scores obtained through the state CFSR process, which would indicate that Wyoming has improved its ability to provide individualized services. Based on the scores obtained by the State CFSR reviews, DFS has also demonstrated improvement on item 18, which would also indicate that Wyoming has improved its ability to engage and involve families in the case planning process. In the State CFSR summary reports prepared by the WYCRP, the WYCRP has cited increase of wraparound services as an identified trend; this trend was especially prevalent in offices that had a fully implemented Systems of Care grant. DFS believes that the development of additional sites through the Systems of Care grants will increase the states ability to individualize services to clients. DFS has also improved its ability to individualize services to children and families served through the juvenile justice system by developing and implementing a family-centered service model for this population. Observations from the State CFSR review reveal that children and families served through the juvenile services division are receiving family assessments, participating in family partnerships and receiving individualized services based on the information gathered during the assessment process. DFS believes that the combined efforts of improved policy, training, and processes have improved its ability to provide individualized services to families.

Barriers: Stakeholder comments made during the State CFSR review stated that to a limited extent there continues to be a focus on serving the target child instead of the family system, and in some cases there continues to be referral or provision of services that are not based on the individual needs of the client. Overall Stakeholders stated that services were individualized to meet the needs of clients and that both DFS and service providers have improved performance in terms of individualizing assessments and services to children and families.

Summary of Status of Individualizing Services: Based on the State CFSR scores for related items and the stakeholder feedback, DFS believes that it is providing individualized services to children and families across the state. DFS believes that the increase in performance on providing individualized services is attributable to the implementation of a family-centered approach to providing services developed as part of its Program Improvement Plan.

F. Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Overview of Systemic Factor: Wyoming was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS is highly responsive to the community; the agency worked with the community representatives in preparing the State's Child and Family Services Plan and in preparing other plans and reports, and that the State coordinates its services or benefits with other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same population.

Item 38: State Engagement in Consultation with Stakeholders

Policy and Procedural Requirements: The Wyoming Department of Family Services is mandated by state statute to consult with stakeholders. These include the Department of Family Services Advisory Council, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, reviews by the Legislative Service Office, the Children and Families Initiative, and the Interagency Children's collaborative. In addition Wyoming DFS has developed a quality assurance procedure that mirrors the Federal CFSR process including stakeholder interviews. The department has also conducted focus groups with foster parents to assist in determining policy creation. DFS also consults stakeholders through Wyoming Advocates for Youth and the Adoption Council when making policy changes. Representatives from various stakeholders are on all of these councils including foster parents, youth representatives, providers and legislators.

The Wyoming Advisory Council is mandated through Wyoming state statute 9-2-2106, this Council works conjunctively with DFS to oversee the functions of the agency as well as recommends policy and legislation to ensure that the needs of families are being addressed. All members are appointed by the Governor to serve two-year terms. The current members include legislators, foster parents, relative care providers, private providers and a member of the clergy.

Wyoming State statute 14-10-101 mandates that the Department of Family Services have a Juvenile Justice Advisory Council. This Council advises the agency on Juvenile Services provided throughout the state and provide recommendation of policy and practice. The current members represent law enforcement, courts, attorneys, private providers, and foster care alumni.

In 2004, the governor and the legislature created the Children and Families Initiative. A Deputy Administrator of the Department of Family Services was the lead facilitator of this process. This was a process of using stakeholder interviews in every community in the state to develop a plan to meet the needs of the children and families in the state of Wyoming. As a result of hundreds of interviews, a legislative agenda was developed with the goals of Quality Early Childhood Care and Education, Expansion of Healthy Living, and Learning and Problem solving Courts. Other recommendations came in the areas of Prevention, Community Based System of Serviced, Home Owner Initiatives, Role of Schools, the Aging Population and Advocacy for Children and Families.

In 2005 the legislature created the Interagency Children's Collaborative, which consisted of directors or designees of all state agencies serving children and families. The members of this collaborative are: the Department of Health, which includes the mental health and substance

abuse divisions, Department of Corrections, Work Force Services, Department of Education, and foster care alumni. During 2006/2007 the collaborative reviewed four cases each month for children in out of home care, especially children who were placed in residential treatment or psychiatric treatment centers. The collaborative then makes recommendations based on each agency's role in the treatment of the child.

The Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WYCRP) is a private, nonprofit organization created to involve Wyoming citizens in reviewing child welfare practices. The organization gathers information to assess the effectiveness of Wyoming's child welfare system. The specific focus of the organization is to capture trends involving child major injury, child fatalities, foster care services and child protective services. Data collection efforts model federal efforts to evaluate child welfare information. The WYCRP is a federally mandated group of professional and private citizens who are responsible for determining whether state and local agencies are effectively discharging child protective responsibilities; pursuant to the 1996 amendments to the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and any subsequent amendments. Through a review of policies, procedures, research and case review, the purpose of the Citizen Review Panel is to promote child safety and quality services to children and families. One of their primary assistance to the agency is to partner with the State CFSR process by managing the review process and by finding citizen reviewers to partner with state reviewers during the review.

The Wyoming Legislative Services Office (LSO) conducts audits of child welfare programs. These audits are very extensive and include attending meetings with the stakeholders, agency staff at the state and local levels as well as case file audits and data analysis. A program evaluation of court ordered placements (2004) and an evaluation of the foster care system (2005) have resulted in numerous enhancements to child welfare practice in the state. In addition to the aforementioned collaborations, DFS also consults stakeholders through the DFS Advisory Council, the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council, Wyoming Advocates for Youth and the Adoption Council when making policy changes. Representatives from various stakeholders are on all of these councils including foster parents, youth representatives, providers and legislators.

A description of the stakeholders engaged in consultation with the State: In addition to consultation with the formal groups listed above, DFS engages community level representatives through the State CFSR review process. This process mirrors the Federal CFSR process including the use of stakeholder interviews. The WYCRP and the Quality Assurance team conduct focus group meetings in the communities hosting case reviews. The purpose of these meetings is to gain insight and further input into how well the child protection/juvenile services system is working in the various communities that are reviewed. The feedback is used to further refine policies if needed, identify training needs on specific areas such as court process, and provide information to law makers of the needs of individual communities. These recommendations are also included in the CFSP.

During 2007, DFS offices on the Wind River Reservation were included in the State CFSR reviews. Stakeholder meetings were an important part of those reviews. As a result of these reviews DFS has created a liaison position to work with the tribes and provide the state with information needed to enhance the child welfare programs on the Wind River Indian

Reservation. This has resulted in the development of a contract to support the social services programs on the reservation; this includes provision for financial and technical support. This collaboration has allowed DFS to address the needs of the tribes and development of the annual report in consultation with the tribes.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that DFS is highly responsive to the community and that DFS has a strong history of coordinating and collaborating with external community resources.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS has fully integrated its CFSR/PIP and CFSP/PSR processes by using PIP quarterly reporting scores and quality assurance scores for the CFSR items and PIP goals and strategies to assess performance and progress in its CFSP. DFS believes that the integration of this planning process has enabled DFS to consolidate its strategic long-term planning efforts and therefore create more effective and realistic plans. DFS also believes that its collaboration with the WYCRP and the enhancements to its quality assurance processes has provided a much richer source of data and contextual information that has become an integral component of both the CFSR and CFSP process.

Summary of Status of State Engagement in Consultation with Stakeholders: Based on the previous rating of strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR and the additional enhancements the state has made to improve its ability to engage statewide stakeholders in planning processes, DFS believes this item continues to be a strength.

Item 39: Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to the CFSP

Policy and Procedural Requirements: Stakeholder interviews are conducted by DFS and the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel (WYCRP) throughout the state as part of the State CFSR process, the feedback from these interviews is used to develop the annual reports which are submitted to ACF. Information gathered from the State CFSR review process and stakeholder interviews are used to develop program improvement plans at the local level, which allows the field offices to focus on areas which are unique to their communities. The progress made by the field offices is reported in the annual progress and services report.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the agency worked with the community representatives in preparing the State's Child and Family Services Plan and in preparing other plans and reports.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS believes that its collaboration with the WYCRP and the enhancements to its quality assurance processes has provided a much richer source of data and contextual information that has become an integral component of both the CFSR and CFSP/PSR process.

Summary of status of Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to the CFSP: DFS believes that it has developed and implemented a statewide process for incorporating feedback from stakeholders for the purpose of developing Annual Reports Pursuant to the CFSP. Based on the previous rating of strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR and the additional enhancements the state has made to improve its ability to engage statewide stakeholders in planning processes, DFS believes this item continues to be a strength.

Item 40: Coordination of CFSP Services with Other Federal Programs

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS works collaboratively through a series of formal and informal relationships with other state agencies responsible for administering state programs. In coordination with the Mental Health Division of the Department of Health, Wyoming has begun the Systems of Care program and Children’s Mental Health Waiver in the state. There are currently two pilot sites in Wyoming. The offices of the Department of Family Services and Department of Health have worked closely together in the implementation of these programs.

DFS continues to work collaboratively with the Children’s Justice Project and has been very involved in participating in training opportunities, the implementation of pilot projects as well as CFSR related activities. DFS has also improved its collaborative efforts with both tribal programs in Wyoming. DFS has created a full-time liaison position to work with the tribes and provide the state with information needed to enhance the child welfare programs on the Wind River Indian Reservation. This has resulted in development of a contract to support the social services programs on the reservation, which includes provision for financial and technical support. This collaboration has allowed DFS to continually improve the collaborative efforts with both tribal programs. DFS also works collaboratively with the Mental Health Division and Substance Abuse Division. DFS continues to coordinate work with the Division of Developmental Disabilities in regard to the Children’s waiver.

The Wyoming Department of Family Services is responsible for administering the Child Support Enforcement and Federal Parent Locator Service programs, the Juvenile Justice System, and the states IV-B programs and coordination between these programs occurs internally through administrative meetings and planning processes, through the interagency children’s collaborative, and through joint planning efforts. DFS works closely with the child abuse prevention and early intervention programs both at the state and community level.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State coordinates its services or benefits with other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same population.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: DFS believes that the improvements and processes that have been developed to improve relationships with and services for both tribal programs represent strength for the state. Tribal representatives have been actively engaged in the State CFSR process as well as the statewide assessment, which has provided valuable insight and information to the process. DFS also believes that its close relationship with the Children’s Justice Project and the Wyoming

Citizen's Review Panel has strengthened the agencies abilities to provide services to children and families through the implementation of court reform and innovation by the Children's Justice Project and the creation of a consistent, transparent and objective feedback loop provided by the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel.

The partnerships in creating the Systems of Care and Children's Mental Health waiver have increased the level of family centered wrap around services for children in the two pilot communities. State CFSR results in these two communities indicate a better working relationship between the agency and families as well as the relationship with other agencies in the community.

Summary of status of Coordination of CFSP Services with Other Federal Programs: DFS believes that it is coordinating CFSP Services with Other Federal Programs across the state. Based on the previous rating of strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR and the additional enhancements the state has made to improve its ability to coordinate CFSP services across the state, DFS believes this item continues to be a strength.

G. Foster and Adoptive Home Licensing, Approval, and Recruitment

Overview of Systemic Factor: Wyoming was found to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Home Licensing, Approval, and Recruitment during the 2002 Federal CFSR. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the state has implemented standards that address safety, health, sanitation, and child well being, and that the standards are applied equally to children placed in foster care and relative foster care placements receiving title IV-E funds. The findings also stated that the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances, and that the state has implemented several initiatives to enhance cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. In addition the 2002 Federal CFSR reported that there is no structured statewide process to ensure aggressive recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State. In response these findings DFS increased resources and management structures related to its foster care program, made significant improvements to foster care policy, and developed and implemented recruiting strategies designed to recruit foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State.

Item 41: Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions

Policy and Procedural Requirements

DFS certified foster homes and approved adoptive homes: The State has implemented certification standards for family foster homes and approval standards for adoptive homes that are reasonable in accord with recommended national standards. State certified foster homes are issued a certificate by the local DFS office to provide Family Foster Care, Relative Foster Care, Relative Foster Care/Non-IV-E Eligible (only training hours have not been met), and/or Specialized Family Foster Care. Certification standards address requirements for: minimum age, background checks, physician's statement, tuberculosis testing, training, home health and safety

checks, home studies, foster parent responsibilities, and recertification. Certificates approving foster homes are not issued until all certification requirements are met.

DFS approved adoptive homes are required to meet the same standards as foster parents although a certificate is not issued. DFS completes adoptive home studies and approves adoptive homes under the following circumstances: when ordered by the court; when requested through ICPC, and/or for a home which is already a foster home and was not previously approved as an adoptive home in which case the home study is updated; and when a home applies to be certified as a foster home and approved as an adoptive home. Home studies are typically completed within 120 days and within 90 days if a child is placed in the home.

Policy governing DFS certified foster homes has been updated several times since the 2002 Federal CFSR with the most recent update in November, 2007. The entire social service policy manual was reformatted in the fall of 2007 so foster care policy was reformatted and sections were reorganized. Changes were also made to be more consistent with national foster care standards; emergency planning and disaster requirements were added; and a number of policies including requirements for background checks, training, and foster parent responsibilities were clarified. Sections were also added on problem solving procedures and DFS responsibilities. Compliance issues are typically handled by the local DFS offices, however, the State Office can provide consultation and/or assistance in reviewing and/or investigating complaints regarding DFS certified foster homes.

Child care facilities, foster homes certified by child placing agencies, and homes approved by adoption agencies: The State has implemented certification standards for all agencies/organizations certified by DFS under State of Wyoming rules *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children*. The standards are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards for the types of organizations/agencies certified. Types of certificates issued under these rules include: Child Placing Agency, Child Placing Agency with Therapeutic Foster Care, Shelter/Group Home or Crisis Center, Residential Treatment Facility, Detention Center, Maternity Home, and Adoption Agency.

Standards have been developed based on a level of care system starting with the least restrictive - family foster care, and graduating to most restrictive - detention. Each level is required to meet the minimum standards of family foster care, with additional requirements based on the level of care provided. Certification standards address requirements including: agency responsibilities, services provided, staff, educational qualifications, orientation and training, background checks, tuberculosis testing, maximum capacity and/or staff to child ratios, child eligibility, placement procedures, agency policy and procedures, records, safety codes and regulations, physical conditions, functional safety, emergency procedures, physical environment and equipment, special health precautions, fire standards, and health and sanitation.

Certification standards for foster homes certified by Child Placing Agencies or approved for adoption by Adoption Agencies also include: demonstrating financial stability; physical and emotional capability to provide foster care; written home study process and requirements; and foster parent responsibilities. The certifying agency may not issue a certificate for Family Foster

Home Care, Specialized Foster Care and/or Therapeutic Foster Care until all certification requirements are met.

The Early Childhood Division is the division within the Department of Family Services that is responsible for assuring all standards are met under the *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children*. DFS contracts with the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technology (CASAT) to complete on-site certification reviews. Certificates are issued by the DFS Early Childhood Division once all certification or recertification requirements are met. The Division also investigates all compliance complaints and concerns to ensure the health and safety of children and youth served by agencies and/or organizations certified under these standards.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State had implemented standards that address safety, health, sanitation and child well being. Stakeholders expressed the opinion that facilities are held to high standards and that the licensing and certification process is thorough. Since the 2002 Federal CFSR, many improvements have been made to improve the standards for foster homes and institutions. More Foster Care Coordinators have been added to the system. Previously, only a few areas of the state had a dedicated Foster Care Coordinator, now there are dedicated Foster Care Coordinators in every district of the state. Foster Care Coordinators participate in monthly phone calls focused on discussion of foster care issues and topics. The State Foster Care Consultant has also begun reviewing foster care files to assess compliance with DFS certification policies. These changes are assisting in assuring compliance as well as in standardizing practice for DFS certified foster homes.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: Stakeholders continue to comment that DFS certified foster homes and DFS certified facilities are held to high standards and that the licensing and certification process is thorough.

Barriers: DFS has limited resources and manpower to monitor contract provider's compliance with standards ensuring that children in foster care placements are provided quality services that protect their health and safety. Although improvements have been made to assure health and safety standards are met by agencies and organizations certified by DFS, more still needs to be done. Some agencies and organizations certified under the *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children* were concerned when DFS began contracting with the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technology (CASAT) to perform on-site certification and recertification inspections. However, this process is assisting with assuring compliance with standards and in assuring the health and safety of children and youth served by these agencies and organizations.

The *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children* were revised in 1998 and have been in the process of being revised for a number of years. Revisions are being made to help clarify standards and to update standards to be more in-line with national standards. Stakeholders have commented that the standards are overly restrictive for foster homes certified by Child Placing Agencies. This perception, in part, is because the format of the

standards makes it difficult to determine which standards apply to facilities, foster homes or both. Additionally, although the Wyoming Title IV-E Secondary Foster Care Eligibility Review held February 26, 2007 to March 2, 2007 found the State in Substantial Compliance, one recommendation made was to, “Develop State contractual agreements and procedures governing licensing of foster care providers by child placement agencies and contractors that provide documentation that coincides with IV-E eligibility requirements...to ensure that licensing documentation is readily available to the State for future federal reviews.” The revisions will address these concerns.

While not all relatives are interested in being certified to provide foster care and/or are qualified to provide foster care, the increased number of relative homes providing care has created additional challenges to assure their needs are met. Continuous review of the certification standards for foster homes is required to assure minimum health and safety standards are realistic and do not discourage otherwise qualified relatives from becoming certified foster homes.

The increase in relative foster homes as well as the overall number of foster homes in Wyoming has created the need for more Foster Care Coordinators to assure that the state is providing consistently excellent services to foster parents and to assist in assuring the health and safety of children and youth in DFS certified homes. The *2007 Annual Report* written by the Wyoming Citizen Review Panel recommends “creation of a foster care coordinator in each DFS office and clarification of support and supervision of foster care coordinators”. Recommendations were made as a result of stakeholder comments, observations and results of State CFSR reviews.

WYCAPS provides fields to enter certification dates, certification status and other basic data. Recertification dates can be tracked; however, WYCAPS is not an optimal case management tool for certification/recertification purposes whether certified as a DFS foster homes or certified under the *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children*.

Summary of status of Standards of Foster Homes and Institutions: DFS believes that it has implemented statewide standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards. DFS continues to improve its standards for family foster homes and child care institutions by addressing the aforementioned policy issues.

Item 42: Standards Applied Equally

Policy and Procedural Requirements: DFS issues a variety of certifications under the State of Wyoming *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children*. Types of certificates issued under these rules by the DFS Early Childhood Division include: Child Placing Agency, Child Placing Agency with Therapeutic Foster Care, Shelter/Group Home or Crisis Center, Residential Treatment Facility, Detention Center, Maternity Home, and Adoption Agency. Certified Child Placing Agencies issue certificates for Foster Family Home Care and/or Specialized Foster Care to homes which meet applicable standards. Agencies certified as a Child Placing Agency with Therapeutic Foster Care issue certificates to foster homes that meet the standards for Therapeutic Foster Care.

Local DFS offices issue certificates for State certified foster homes who meet agency standards outlined in DFS foster care policy and procedures. Certificates are issued to homes approved to provide: Family Foster Care, Relative Foster Care, Relative Foster Care/Non-IV-E Eligible (only training hours have not been met), and/or Specialized Family Foster Care.

The certifying authority makes the determination on whether or not a waiver to the standards can be allowed. Waivers are rare and typically only granted when it is in the best interest of a child. For instance, waivers have been made to the number of children a specific foster home certified by a Child Placing Agency can care for when the local DFS office, Early Childhood Division and Child Placing Agency are in agreement. The purpose of a waiver is usually to accommodate placing a sibling group together.

DFS certified foster homes: To ensure certification standards are applied equally to all DFS certified homes, a Foster Care Coordinator has been assigned to each area of the state. They are responsible for the recruitment, certification and monitoring of foster homes. After a family has been certified, the local DFS office monitors the foster home to assure its compliance with certification and all-applicable standards and regulations. The monitoring process includes, but is not limited to, on-site inspections and evaluations. The biannual recertification of foster homes requires a complete review of the foster home status. This review includes a home study update, review of placements, training records, and all other certification requirements. DFS staff notifies the Foster Care Coordinator of any compliance issues or concerns when they become aware of them and those concerns are investigated. The State Foster Care Consultant has also begun reviewing foster care files for State certified foster homes to ensure certification standards are applied equally across the state.

Child care facilities and foster homes certified by child placing agencies: To ensure the *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children* are applied equally to all approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds, the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technology (CASAT) makes on-site recertification visits to childcare institutions throughout the state using a standardized review document. Each visit consists of a physical site inspection, review of personnel files, policy and procedure review, child file review, and interviews with staff and residents. DFS staff notifies the Early Childhood Division of any concerns of noncompliance with the certification standards. The Division investigates monitors and addresses any compliance issues.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the standards are applied equally to children placed in foster care and relative foster care placements receiving title IV-E funds.

Strengths and Barriers

Standards are applied equally to all certified foster family homes and child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds under each set of standards. The *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children* are in the process of being revised as stakeholders have commented that the standards are overly restrictive for foster homes certified

by Child Placing Agencies. This perception, in part, is because the format of the standards makes it difficult to determine which standards apply to facilities, foster homes or both. The Early Childhood Division and Protective Services Division are working together to ensure the standards for foster homes are the same regardless of who certifies the home.

Summary of status of Standards Applied Equally: DFS believes that this item continues to be an area of strength and that Standards are applied equally to all certified foster family homes and child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds under each set of standards across the state.

Item 43: Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Policy and Procedural Requirements: The State complies with all Federal requirements for background clearances including checking state child abuse central registries and conducting fingerprint based criminal history record information searches of the National Crime Information Center. Additionally, fingerprint based criminal history record information is obtained from the Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation. The State Office, reporting the results back to the local office or private agencies requesting the check, completes the actual “check”. Background clearances are required to be completed and results received and reviewed prior to certification for all homes applying to foster and/or adopt a child whether certified or approved through DFS, a Child Placing Agency or an Adoption Agency. Compliance is reviewed through home study and file reviews at local field offices for DFS certified homes.

Compliance with this requirement is mandatory and assured for agencies and organizations certified under the *Standards for Certification of Providers of Substitute Care Services for Children* through the on-site processes used at the initial certification and at each recertification completed by the Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technology (CASAT). The State Office monitors compliance by reviewing the results of the reviews. A certificate is not issued unless all certification standards are met.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances. Since the 2002 Federal CFSR the state has improved standards for criminal background clearances by implementing criminal background clearances mandated through the Adam Walsh Act.

Strengths and Barriers

Limited resources and manpower have challenged DFS and the Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) to provide timely results of fingerprint based background checks. It often takes three weeks or longer from the time the fingerprint cards are received in Cheyenne until the agency or local DFS office receives the results. Additional funding was not provided to either agency to accommodate increased demands. Increased funding could provide additional staff to process requests and streamline the process as well as allow DFS to purchase technology which will decrease the turnaround time to obtain results.

The myriad of regulations surrounding release of results of background checks have also frustrated foster parents, agencies and DFS staff. Prospective foster parents or provider staff may have been fingerprinted recently because of other jobs or volunteer requirements, but those results cannot be shared between agencies or organizations. Fingerprints often have to be re-taken because they are not readable. Sometimes this is because the fingerprints are not “classifiable” due to the condition of the fingerprints or because the person taking the fingerprints did not take clear imprints. WYCAPS provides a field to indicate whether or not background requirements have been met.

Summary of status of Requirements for Criminal Background Checks: DFS believes that it has improved its process for ensuring criminal background checks are completed across the state. DFS believes that this item is an area of strength.

Item 44: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

Policy and Procedural Requirements: Wyoming has at least one designated Foster Care Coordinator in each of the 6 DFS Districts across the State. The Foster Care Coordinators are responsible for foster care recruitment, certification, and retention activities and are responsible for the recruitment of potential foster families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. Each Foster Care Coordinator is responsible for submitting an annual recruitment and retention plan for the area they cover. They identify strategies to recruit new foster homes including homes that: a) will take and successfully care for older youth and hard to place children; b) are racially/ethnically diverse to match the race/ethnicity of children in care; and/or c) will provide specialized care. The coordinators have monthly conference calls to exchange ideas and develop strategies to increase the number of adoptive and foster homes in their district. DFS designated two (2) state office consultants for adoption and foster care to provide technical assistance to the field offices and assist with recruitment activities. Recruitment efforts are made on an ongoing basis to secure culturally diverse foster homes. DFS contracts with Tribal social services in Fremont County where a majority of American Indians reside. Both tribes have hired their own Foster Care Coordinator in the past year. Wyoming Statute and DFS policy and procedure require staff to conduct diligent searches to find non-custodial or absent parents and other relatives and to place children in DFS custody with family whenever possible.

DFS works with certified adoption agencies to place children in adoptive homes when a child or youth becomes free for adoption or is likely to be free for adoption and relatives, certified foster homes or agency approved adoptive homes are not identified as permanency options. The worker sends the child’s profile and photograph to the State Adoption Consultant. The child’s profile is then sent to the certified adoption agencies in the State of Wyoming. If the agencies have no matches, the worker is encouraged to prepare the child’s profile for the Adoption Exchange in Denver. Waiting children who consent to have their profiles posted on the internet are posted on this website.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated there is no structured statewide process to ensure aggressive recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State. In order

to address these findings, DFS engaged in numerous strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of foster homes.

“Make a Difference” was an advertising campaign held February, 2004 through March, 2005. Print and radio ads, brochures and flyers were created as a part of the campaign with the Governor of the State of Wyoming partnering with DFS to recruit foster and adoptive homes through an intense publicity effort. Radio and TV ads were broadcast as both paid and public service announcements and print ads were purchased in regional and local papers across the state.

Another campaign, “Get in the Game” was created in conjunction with the University of Wyoming Athletics Department which featured radio, live reads and print ads during University of Wyoming men’s and women’s athletic events from October, 2006 through March, 2007. The print ads reflect children, youth and families of various races and ethnicities.

DFS has relied on the AdoptUsKids media campaigns and our partnerships with the Adoption Exchange and Wyoming certified adoption agencies to recruit adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom adoptive homes are needed.

Strengths and Barriers:

Kevin Campbell provided training to over 50 DFS staff and other stakeholders in May, 2007 to learn how to do “Family Finding”. Kevin Campbell is a youth permanency expert. As a director at Catholic Community Services of Western Washington State, he helped create Family Finding, a practice that reconnects children with lost biological family members by utilizing Internet-based search technology. Catholic Community Services of Western Washington State were the creators of the original Homebuilders model, the nationally recognized FAST Teams and Family Finding practice. He has provided technical assistance for the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning at the Hunter College of Social Work in New York City to numerous jurisdictions, child welfare and mental health organizations across the country in the Family Finding model. Staff are using these strategies to do child specific recruitments. As Wyoming is not racially and ethnically diverse in most areas of the state, child specific recruitments have been our most effective recruitment and placement strategy to keep children connected with their family, community and culture. Most DFS child welfare staff has participated in the “Knowing Who You Are” training which was implemented in partnership with Casey Family Programs. This has been the first workshop for many staff bringing awareness to and increasing skills and knowledge needed to begin to address issues of race and disproportionality in the child welfare system. According to some stakeholders, we will not be effective in recruiting a substantial number of non-relative foster homes reflecting the race and ethnicity of youth in care because prospective homes do not trust the system.

Word of mouth, as result of positive experiences with DFS and the foster care system, is our most effective strategy in recruiting and retaining non-relative foster homes. As a result, the expectation is for every DFS employee to be a “recruiter” for foster homes by being responsive to the needs and requests of foster homes and providing or arranging support as needed.

DFS has also relied on a partnership with Wyoming Faith Initiatives to reach out to faith communities whose congregations have members that reflect the race and ethnicity of children and youth in care. In May, 2007, Wyoming Faith Initiatives sent a packet of information to over 800 churches and organizations on their mailing list for National Foster Care Month. In previous years, they have run the “One Church, One Child” campaign. This organization has shifted its mission, so DFS is looking for additional partnerships to help in this area.

It has been challenging to obtain consistent funding needed to: 1) support the foster care recruitment and retention plans the Foster Care Coordinators develop, 2) develop an on-going statewide advertising campaigns targeted to audiences matching the race and ethnicity of children in foster care, and 3) support on-going foster care and adoption support and retention activities.

Summary of status of Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes: DFS believes that it has developed, implemented and continues to improve upon statewide strategies designed to recruit and retain quality foster and adoptive parents. DFS believes that these improvements to its foster care and adoptive recruiting strategies are an area of strength across the state.

Item 45: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

Policy and Procedural Requirements: The State of Wyoming is a member state of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). This allows for a smooth transfer of a child for the purposes of foster care, adoption, and/or other permanent placements to another state. Trainings for ICPC are generally held at least on a yearly basis for DFS workers. For example, when PL 109-239, Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006 became effective 10/1/2006, training was provided at the Social Services training in August 2006 in preparation for the new law. In 2007, all field offices were trained via video conference on ICPC provisions. ICPC policies are contained within the Family Services Resource Manual and is accessible both in hard copy and the internet.

When a Wyoming child is being considered to reside out of state, the Wyoming DFS workers sends the referral to the Deputy Compact Administrator in Cheyenne who then sends the referral on to the state that will conduct the home study and supervision. When an approval is received, it is sent back to the Wyoming worker who can then work with the out-of-state worker and family to further complete the permanency plan; supervision, and work to get the plan completed and dismissed. When a child from out of state is being considered to reside in the State of Wyoming, the referral is sent from the Deputy Compact Administrator in Cheyenne to the Wyoming DFS field office that will be conducting the home study, foster care study or adoption study. The home study is conducted, and if approved the Wyoming DFS office also supervises the placement, until the case is dismissed.

The Deputy Compact Administrator (DCA) works effectively with all DFS offices within state and all DCA's in other states and jurisdictions that are party to the compact as well as with attorneys from within state and out of state; tribal offices; the WY AG's office for complicated

issues; adoption agencies both in and out of state; Residential Treatment Facilities both in and out of state, and Medicaid Officers.

If a child has exhausted all relatives and foster care for a permanent placement; and has become free for adoption, DFS provides the child's profile and photograph to the state adoption consultant. The child's profile is then mailed to the certified adoption agencies in the State of Wyoming and to the DFS foster care coordinators statewide. If the agencies and/or DFS foster care coordinators have no matches, the worker is encouraged to prepare the child's profile for the Adoption Exchange in Denver. In this way, other states and jurisdictions have access to the child's information and quite possibly a good permanent match for the child.

Round 1 CFSR Findings and PIP Strategies: This item was rated as a strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR Review. Findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR stated that the State has implemented several initiatives to enhance cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

Strengths and Barriers

Strengths: A strength that Wyoming has is low to no turnover in regards to state ICPC staff. Two of the staff in the protective services division that oversees the ICPC program have been responsible for ICPC functions for well over ten (10) years. This has made the DFS field staff and community partners, such as attorneys and adoption agencies, have some level of comfort when questions need to be answered. In addition, the Children's Justice Project in collaboration with DFS will be conducting a study on the effectiveness of the ICPC process in Wyoming, which will provide useful information regarding the functioning of ICPC.

Barriers: Recently, APHSA has made new provisions so that other large entities that do adoption work (American Academy of Adoption Attorneys or AAAA) have become comfortable with signing on to the new provisions. Another barrier may be to work to get Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) passed. Although Wyoming works very well with other states in getting their children on WY Medicaid and works diligently to get WY children on another state's Medicaid, this could be a step to make the process more coordinated. Many times getting a child on Medicaid in general in another state is a barrier. ICAMA will help where children are IV-E and adopted, but if they are not IV-E all the states have their own state option, and can decide or not to offer state Medicaid. It has been challenging getting everyone on board within state and out of state with the new fingerprint FBI requirements. Other barriers have included school districts not wanting to allow the children to enroll, courts dropping jurisdiction without getting the concurrence of both states, family members or workers not wanting to fully certify a family and then there is no federal assistance. Again this can tie back into the states not offering their state Medicaid to a family or allowing them to receive a child only grant. Sometimes by not being able to offer a sufficient Financial and Medical plan to a family, it can contribute to a failed placement.

Summary of status of State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements: DFS believes it has a fully developed and implemented statewide process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent

placements for waiting children. Based on the previous rating of strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR and the continued efforts DFS has made to ensure processes exist to facilitate the timely adoption or permanent placements for waiting children, DFS believes this item continues to be a strength.

Section V: Assessment of Strengths and Needs

Outcome Areas and Systemic Factors: Strengths.

Based on the scores obtained from the State CFSR review, the data reported in the ACF data profile and the supplemental data included within the statewide assessment DFS believes that Safety I, Permanency II, Well-Being II and Well-Being III are outcome areas of strength. Within the systemic factors DFS believes that items 24, 31, 32, 34,39,40,41,42,43,44 and 45 are areas of strength.

Safety I: DFS performed well on both items within this outcome area during the 2002 Federal CFSR review and continues to score well on both items based on the scores from the State CFSR. DFS also performed well on the related data measures contained within the data profile and was in substantial conformity with the absence of maltreatment measure. Stakeholder comments were also supportive of the agencies ability to respond to reports of child maltreatment and the agencies ability to reduce the occurrence of future abuse.

Permanency II: Although not all of the items with Permanency Outcome II are in substantial conformity, all of the items within this outcome area have demonstrated improvement from the ratings from the 2002 Federal CFSR review based on the scores from the state CFSR. DFS believes that practice and policy changes implemented as part of the state Program Improvement Plan contributed to improvements across the items contained within this outcome area.

Well-Being II: Based on the scores from the State CFSR, stakeholder comments, and focus groups conducted with youth it appears that educational needs are being assessed and addressed for both children being served in the home and for children in out of home care. Based on the scores obtained from the State CFSR, there has been significant improvement on this item since the 2002 Federal CFSR review.

Well-Being III: There has been significant improvement on both items contained within this outcome area since the 2002 Federal CFSR review based on the scores from the State CFSR. DFS believes that improvements on these items are attributable to the implementation of new assessment processes and monitoring through the State CFSR. DFS recognizes that there remains opportunity for improvement on both of these items, especially in regards to improving access to dental care and specialized mental health services, but feels that the increase in the scores for both of the items within this outcome area makes this an area of strength.

Item 24: Statewide Information System: This systemic factor was rated as a strength in the 2002 Federal CFSR review, and continues to be improved. DFS has made significant changes to its AFCARS reporting and believes these changes have greatly improved the accuracy of AFCARS data quality.

Item 31: Quality Assurance System: This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR review, because the state had developed but not implemented a Quality Assurance system. DFS believes that it now has an active and comprehensive QA process that accurately and routinely measures the CFSR items and outcome measures. In addition, the QA process is a collaborative process with the Wyoming Citizens Review Panel and is inclusive of communities and external stakeholders.

Item 32: Initial Staff Training: This item was rated as an area needing improvement during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. Since 2002 DFS has made significant improvements to its initial training program. Improvements include the creation of 2 dedicated state office staff for the purpose of managing and developing the training program, and the development of a training curriculum that supports the CFSR outcomes and a family centered service delivery system.

Item 34: Foster and Adoptive Parent Training: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. DFS feels that the training for foster and adoptive parents continues to be a strength, and has improved due to the creation of a specific state office position for the purpose of managing the foster care program. DFS also believes that the creation of regional foster care coordinator positions across the state has improved the management, accessibility and frequency of foster and adoptive parent training.

Item 38: Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. DFS believes that it has improved its process for obtaining input from external stakeholders for the purpose of achieving the goals and objectives of the CFSP and therefore believes this item continues to be an area of strength across the state.

Item 39: Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to the CFSP: DFS believes that it has developed and implemented a statewide process for incorporating feedback from stakeholders for the purpose of developing Annual Reports Pursuant to the CFSP. Based on the previous rating of strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR and the additional enhancements the state has made to improve its ability to engage statewide stakeholders in planning processes, DFS believes this item continues to be a strength.

Item 40: Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs: DFS believes that it is coordinating CFSP Services with Other Federal Programs across the state. Based on the previous rating of strength for this item during the 2002 Federal CFSR and the additional enhancements the state has made to improve its ability to coordinate CFSP services across the state, DFS believes this item continues to be a strength.

Item 41: Standards of Foster Homes and Institutions: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. DFS believes that it has implemented statewide standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards. DFS continues to improve its standards for family foster homes and child care institutions and believes that this item remains an area of strength for the state.

Item 42: Standards Applied Equally: This item was rated as strength during the 2002 Federal CFSR review. DFS believes that this item continues to be an area of strength and that Standards are applied equally to all certified foster family homes and child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds under each set of standards across the state.

Item 44: Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes: As a result of both the findings from the 2002 Federal CFSR and audits of the foster care program conducted by the Wyoming Legislative Services Office, DFS has made substantial improvements to its foster care program. These improvements include the creation of a state level foster care consultant position as well as the creation of regional foster care coordinators. The creation of these positions has led to an increase in the number of certified foster homes over the last 3 years, as well as more targeted and specific foster care recruitment strategies. Stakeholder feedback indicates that the foster care coordinators serve a valuable function, but that there may not be enough positions allocated to meet current demand.

Item 45: State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements: This item was rated as strength in the 2002 Federal CFSR, and DFS believes that the ICPC as well as ICJ process continues to work efficiently. DFS has reviewed a small number of ICPC cases as part of the State CFSR review, and observations from the review indicate the ICPC process is timely, and that the communication regarding ICPC between states is efficient. Stakeholder feedback regarding the ICPC process has been positive, especially with DFS staff who have been involved in ICPC cases.

Outcome Areas and Systemic Factors: Areas Needing Improvement

Safety II: Although there has been improvement on the scores for both items 3 and 4 since the 2002 Federal CFSR, any score beneath the national standard on these items is of concern to the state. Also of concern is the failure of the state to obtain substantial conformity with safety data measure VII (abuse in foster care). Due to the changes in the requirements of the onsite review instrument for item 4, DFS has seen a decrease in the performance on this item during the fourth round of reviews. DFS would like a specific review of its risk and safety assessment process, especially in regards to monitoring ongoing risk and safety concerns as well as issues related to assessing risk and safety issues for children involved in juvenile delinquency. Due to the states failure to attain substantial conformity with safety data measure VII, DFS would like a specific review of its process for ensuring the safety of children in out-of-home placement.

Permanency I: Based on the combined scores obtained in the State CFSR reviews, DFS has seen a decrease in performance on items 7 and 8. Due to the more specific requirements regarding ASFA provisions and the timeliness of completion of permanency plans in the round 2 onsite CFSR instrument, DFS has seen a significant decrease in performance on item 7 during the fourth round of reviews. Therefore DFS believes that it could benefit from a specific review of its process for ensuring compliance with ASFA as well as issues regarding the timely establishment of permanency goals. DFS believes that it would also benefit from a review of its utilization of concurrent planning. Information from the State CFSR review suggests that when concurrent planning is used, it is an effective means of expediting permanency, but observations and stakeholder feedback also suggest that the use of concurrent planning is not always applied.

DFS believes that an analysis and review of the aforementioned issues will also provide needed insight into the related systemic factors of Written Case Plan (Item 25), Periodic Reviews (Item 26), Permanency Hearings (Items 27), and Termination of Parental Rights (Item 28).

Well-Being I: Based on the scores obtained from the state CFSR process, DFS has seen significant improvement on both items 19 and 20, but has seen a decrease in performance for both items 17 and 18 with the most extreme decreases occurring between the 3rd and 4th round of reviews. DFS believes that the cause of the decrease in performance on items 17 and 18 are related to the more specific requirements in the onsite review instrument for assessing and involving both parents in the case planning process. As stated previously in the statewide assessment, DFS believes that not assessing or involving absent parents (especially fathers) is the primary cause for the decrease in performance on these items. Therefore DFS believes that an outside review of this issue would benefit the state and lead to the development of appropriate strategies to improve performance. As described previously in the statewide assessment, DFS has developed and implemented a family group decision making process (Family Partnerships). Data gathered through the State CFSR process as well as available SAWIS data indicates that the utilization of family partnerships is not uniform across offices. DFS believes that a specific review of the usage of family partnerships could lead to a greater understanding of their potential benefit as well as to strategies designed to increase the usage of this process. DFS believes that a review of the agencies ability to assess the needs, and provide individual services to families will provide useful information regarding the related systemic factors of Array of Services (Item 35), Services Accessibility (Item 36), and Individualizing Services (Item 37).

Proposed Review Sites

Wyoming would like to propose the following sites in addition to the largest metropolitan site (Cheyenne) for review in the upcoming CFSR review.

Sheridan (Sheridan County): The Sheridan office is located in the northern part of the state approximately 325 miles North of Cheyenne. Sheridan currently has 43 children in out of home placement. Sheridan has 7 CPS workers with average caseloads of 15 and 3 probation officers with average caseloads of 14. Sheridan is a unique community with wide variations in income, which creates unique caseload dynamics. Sheridan also is the location of the Wyoming Girls School, which will enable an evaluation of the community dynamics and unique service array that this institution provides.

Sheridan County has a court system that has expressed interest in both the CFSR process and collaborating with DFS to improve CFSR outcomes; DFS would like an evaluation of the court process in Sheridan County in order to evaluate the impact and influence of positive court and agency relationships. SACWIS data reports that Sheridan County has a lower proportion of children in relative foster care and a higher proportion of children in residential treatment within its child welfare population as compared to the rest of the state. Although the lower utilization of relative placement is not unique to Sheridan County, an evaluation of this issue through the CFSR review would provide valuable insight into the underlying causes of this pattern, and suggest possible strategies to address this issue. Sheridan County would also provide an opportunity to evaluate issues related to engaging as visiting parents. As demonstrated by the

cumulative State CFSR scores for Sheridan county, the rating for item 17b (needs and services for parents) is 66.7% and the rating for workers visits with parents is 71.4%. DFS speculates that the lower performance on these items is related to lack of engagement of fathers, which is a prevalent issue throughout the state and an issue highlighted in the statewide assessment. Because the Sheridan office has a relatively lower caseload and lower worker turnover relative to other offices across the state, an analysis of the issues related to engaging parents would allow a “control” for the variable of limited resources in terms of staff time, and present a clearer evaluation of the practice and policy issues related to engaging parents. Sheridan County also has one of the highest re-entry rates (22.7%) as reported in the County Level Composite Data; this re-entry rate combined with the relatively low median time to Reunification (3.9 months), and the relatively high Reunification rate <12 months (74.4%) suggests that there may be issues related to returning children to soon, or with adequate provision of after-care services. The relatively high rate of re-entry could also be related to the inclusion of juvenile delinquents within Wyoming’s system. Initial data reported in the statewide assessment suggest that the rates of re-entry for juvenile delinquents are disproportionately higher. Due to the fact that the state is not in substantial conformity with Permanency composite 1, an evaluation of a county with these re-entry and reunification dynamics would provide valuable information for the rest of the state regarding the underlying issues related to the relationships between reunification and re-entry.

Rock Springs (Sweetwater County): Rock Springs is the third largest office in the state and is located approximately 256 miles West of Cheyenne on Interstate 80. Rock Springs currently has 13 child protection workers and 3 probation officers. The Rock Springs office currently has 151 children in out of home placement for both Divisions. Rock Springs is one of the most heavily impacted offices in relation to the energy boom that has been occurring in Wyoming over the last several years. Impacts of the energy boom often include increases in the numbers of reports of abuse and neglect as well as increases in the number of juvenile offenses. “Boomtown” environments also create unique issues for child welfare agencies due to the influx of populations that have limited connection to the community or relatives residing within the state. As reported in the cumulative State CFSR scores, an evaluation of the Rock Springs office would provide information on issues related to performance on items 7 and 8, which both scored at 66.7%. As mentioned before, permanency issues, especially performance on items 7 and 8 are a reoccurring theme throughout the statewide assessment, and the State has an interest in exploring issues related to performance on these items. Another area of interest would be an evaluation of the State’s ability to conduct comprehensive family assessments and provide the indicated services. The relatively low score (68.2%) for Well Being Outcome 1 suggests that there are issues with assessing needs, providing services and engaging families in the casework process. DFS anticipates that the relatively low score for Well Being 1 is related to the issue of engaging absent parents, and would appreciate an evaluation of this issue through the CFSR process. Rock Springs would also allow an analysis of the issues related to re-entry and stability of placement. As reported in the County Level Composite Data, Rock Springs has one of the highest re-entry rates in the state (24.2%) and also has lower scores for the placement stability measures for children that have been in care for more than 12 months. Rock Springs also has a lower score for item 6 (stability of placement) than the state average (80% as compared to 92.2% respectively), which would make it an ideal candidate to explore and explain issues related to placement stability and the failure of the state to attain substantial conformity with Permanency Composite 4.

Statewide Assessment Instrument and process

DFS felt that the statewide assessment process was clearly described and documented within the Statewide Assessment Instrument and that the expectations and requirements were clear. The availability of technical assistance through the Planning Calls was also helpful in terms of completing the process and the availability and assistance of regional ACF staff during the process was also greatly appreciated.

Section VI: Statewide Assessment Participation:

State CFSR Stakeholder Interviews: During the 4th round of the State CFSR reviews DFS and the WYCRP conducted Stakeholder Interviews in each of the communities where the reviews occurred. The feedback gathered from these stakeholder interviews was incorporated into the statewide assessment. The location and stakeholder groups that were interviewed are:

County/Community	Stakeholder Groups Interviewed
Buffalo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Court Representatives ▪ District Court Judge ▪ County Attorney ▪ Foster Parents
Casper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ Education (Local School District) ▪ Child Protection Team ▪ Law Enforcement ▪ Service Providers (MH, SA,RTC). ▪ Foster Parents ▪ Youth
Carbon County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ District Court Judge ▪ County Attorney ▪ Foster Parents ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys
Cheyenne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster Parents ▪ DFS Caseworker ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ District Attorney ▪ Providers (RTC, SA, Mentors) ▪ Youth ▪ District Court Judge ▪ GAL ▪ CASA ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ Schools ▪ Community Mental Health

Cody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ Foster Parents ▪ District Court Judge ▪ Youth
Evanston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster Parents ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ District Court Judge ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ Community Mental Health ▪ Municipal Drug Court ▪ Youth Drug/Alcohol Court
Douglas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ Schools ▪ Head Start ▪ Public Health ▪ Mental Health ▪ Lifenet (Private Provider) ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ District Court Judge ▪ Foster Parents ▪ Youth
Gillette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County Attorney ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ 2 District Court Judges ▪ Foster Parents ▪ Law Enforcement ▪ Schools ▪ Mental Health ▪ Substance Abuse ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ Youth
Goshen County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ County Attorney ▪ District Court Judge ▪ Foster Parents ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ Youth
Jackson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Caseworkers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ District Court Judge ▪ County Attorney
Fremont County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ Foster Parents ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ District Court Judge ▪ Public Health ▪ Mental Health ▪ Schools ▪ Law Enforcement ▪ Head Start ▪ Child Development Center
Powell (Community Meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ Law Enforcement ▪ Schools ▪ Public Health ▪ Mental Health
Rock Springs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster Parents ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ Child Protection Team ▪ County Attorney ▪ Schools ▪ Youth
Sheridan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ District Court Judge ▪ County Attorney ▪ Foster Parents ▪ Law Enforcement ▪ Schools ▪ GAL ▪ CASA ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ Mental Health ▪ Substance Abuse ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ Youth
Thermopolis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ Law Enforcement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster Parents ▪ Schools ▪ Mental Health ▪ County Attorney
Wheatland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youth ▪ DFS Caseworkers ▪ DFS Supervisors and Managers ▪ Foster Parents ▪ Child Protection Team
Worland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County Attorney ▪ District Court Judge ▪ GAL ▪ Parents Attorneys ▪ DFS Caseworkers

Juvenile Justice Youth Focus Groups: In addition to the Youth meetings held as part of the State CFSR process, the Juvenile Services Division held regional youth focus groups. Youth focus groups were facilitated across the state. Each region was asked to conduct two groups, one consisting of juveniles in placement and another consisting of juveniles in the community on probation. Focus groups for juveniles in placement were conducted with juveniles at Red Top Meadows, Wyoming Girls School, Attention Homes and several other group homes. A total of 40 juveniles participated in these groups. Focus groups were conducted with juveniles being served in the home in Uinta, Sweetwater, Natrona, Laramie, Park and Fremont Counties. A total of 57 juveniles participated in these groups. The information gathered from these focus groups was summarized and incorporated into the statewide assessment.

Statewide Assessment Team: In order to solicit input for the statewide assessment, a statewide assessment team was assembled. The activities of the team included reviewing and interpreting the data and stakeholder comments from the State CFSR Review, reviewing and interpreting the ACF data profile and Safety Measures and Permanency Data Composites, providing input on the systemic factors and reviewing and providing input into the statewide assessment document. DFS also envisions the statewide assessment team as forming the core team for managing the PIP process. The Statewide Assessment Team Members are:

Member	Affiliation
Honorable Peter Arnold	District Court Judge, Cheyenne
Honorable John St. Clair	Wind River Tribal Court Judge
Peg Brown-Clark	Unit Director , Special Education
Wendy Curran	Health Policy Analyst/Governors Office
Elizabeth Gagen	Chief Deputy Attorney General, AG-Administration
Donna Griffin	Executive Community and Rural Health Division
Tara Ackerman	Children’s Justice Project Coordinator
Brenda Oswald	Governor’s Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities
Lisa Brockman	Psychiatric Case Manager
Lisa Gossert	WYCRP Chair. Casey Family Programs
Brenden McKinney	Executive Director Casey Family Programs, Cheyenne Office

Jan Ross	CASA
Bob Quick	DFS Juvenile Services Administrator
Rick Robb	DFS Protective Services Administrator
Katie Hogarty	Governors Office
Kelly Hamilton	WYCRP
Dan Wilde	DFS Deputy Director
Lori Hutchinson	WYCRP
Chad Shaver	DFS CFSR Coordinator/CFSR Data Manager

Comments and Feedback: Drafts of the Statewide Assessment were distributed for comment and feedback to the following organizations. Feedback and Comments were then incorporated into the Statewide Assessment Document:

Citizen Review Panel Members

Executive Committee

President-Lisa Gossert; **Vice President**-Rose Kor; **Treasurer**-Carla Thurin; **Member at Large**- Jackie Brown; **Secretary**-Tara Ackerman

<p>ACKERMAN, Tara Children's Justice Project Wyoming Supreme Court</p>	<p>FARSTAD, Kathleen Therapist, Cheyenne Children's Clinic</p>	<p>McADAMS, Larry Eastern Shoshone Tribal Social Services</p>
<p>ALDRICH, Andy Department of Family Services</p>	<p>GOSSERT, Lisa Casey Family Programs</p>	<p>McKINNEY, Brenden Casey Family Programs</p>
<p><i>BLICK, Jim</i> Park County Schools</p>	<p><i>GOODWIN, Douglas</i></p>	<p>McMANUS, Chelsey (</p>
<p>BROWN, Jacqueline K. Family Law Center, LLC</p>	<p><i>HALSEY, Lisa</i> Platte County School District</p>	<p>OSWALD, Brenda Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities</p>

<p>DELANCEY, Cindy Carbon County Attorney</p>	<p>HANS, Patricia Foster Parent/Association</p>	<p>PATTON, Marilyn Community Services Coordinator WY DOH/MH/SA</p>
<p>DITTMAN, April Youth Home Incorporated</p>	<p>KOR, Rose ALIGN</p>	<p>RHODES, Velma Northern Arapaho Child Protective Services</p>
<p>ELLIOTT, Kay CASA</p>	<p>LAMBERT, Kim C Tribal Legal Advocate/Fremont County Coroner</p>	<p>STEPHENSON, Lee Ann</p>

Children's Justice Project Advisory Council

Tara Ackerman, CJP Coordinator Wyoming Supreme Court	Nicky Anderson Assistant Deputy Cheyenne Department of Family Service	Michael Blonigen Natrona County District Attorney Casper
Jean Day Guardian ad Litem Jackson	Lindy Glode Clerk of District Court Rawlins	Honorable John Fenn District Court Judge Sheridan
Holly Hansen State Court Administrator Cheyenne	Honorable Nena James District Court Judge Green River	Jill Kucera Senior Assistant Attorney General Cheyenne
Dan Wilde Deputy Director Cheyenne	Brenden McKinney Director, Casey Family Programs Cheyenne	Honorable Erin Mercer Wyoming State Representative Gillette
Anne Reiniger Child Advocate Jackson	Ryan Roden Deputy State Public Defender Cheyenne	Honorable Tony Ross Wyoming State Senator Cheyenne
Honorable Wade Waldrip District Court Judge Rawlins		

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