

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Final Report: Kentucky Child and Family Services Review
May 2009

INTRODUCTION

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

The Kentucky CFSR was conducted the week of June 20, 2008. The period under review for the onsite case reviews was from April 1, 2007, through June 25, 2008. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services
- The State Data Profile, prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal years 2005 and 2006, and the CFSR 12-month target period ending March 31, 2007
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care cases and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites across the State: 17 cases in Daviess County, 31 cases in Jefferson County, 17 cases in Laurel County
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders, including but not limited to children, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance in regard to its substantial conformity with seven child and family outcomes and seven systemic factors. For the outcome assessments, each outcome incorporates one or more of the 23 items included in the review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement (ANI) based on the results of the case reviews. An item is given an overall rating of Strength if at least 90 percent of the applicable cases reviewed are rated as a Strength. Depending on item ratings, an outcome can be "substantially achieved," "partially achieved," or "not achieved." For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance in regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the

case review requirements must be met. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

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

Overall performance on each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (i.e., a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

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

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

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

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

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

The 2008 CFSR identified several areas of high performance in Kentucky in regard to achieving desired outcomes for children. Although Kentucky did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the CFSR outcomes, the State did achieve overall ratings of Strength for these individual items:

- Item 1: Timeliness of investigations was rated as a Strength in 95 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 11: Proximity of placement was rated as a Strength in 97 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 12: Placement with siblings was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 23: Mental health of child was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of applicable cases.

In addition, Kentucky met the national standards for the following data indicators and composites:

- Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care
- Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification
- Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions
- Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods

Although Kentucky did not achieve the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength, the State performed at fairly high levels on the following items:

- Item 3: Services to prevent removal was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 21: Educational needs of the child was rated as a Strength in 87 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 22: Physical health of child was rated as a Strength in 87 percent of applicable cases.

Despite these areas of strength, the CFSR identified several key concerns in regard to the State's performance in achieving desired outcomes for children and families. The most critical concerns pertained to the following:

- Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations was rated as substantially achieved in only 47.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.
- Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs was rated as substantially achieved in only 47.7 percent of the 40 foster care cases reviewed.

In addition, the State did not meet the national standards for these data indicators and composites:

- Item 2: Absence of maltreatment recurrence
- Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability

The CFSR also identified a key area of concern with a specific item that was rated a Strength in less than 50 percent of the cases reviewed:

- Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents was rated as a Strength in only 42 percent of applicable foster care cases, the lowest-rated item for Kentucky.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

In regard to systemic factors, Kentucky is in substantial conformity with four of the seven systemic factors:

- Quality Assurance (QA) System
- Staff and Provider Training
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with these systemic factors:

- Statewide Information System
- Case Review System
- Service Array

Kentucky's performance in regard to the outcomes experienced by children and families served by the State's child welfare system may be attributed in part to the following key factors:

- Across the State, the number of foster homes and placement resources is insufficient to meet the needs of children.
- The State has a good quality service review process, family team meetings (FTMs), policies, and training, but work needs to be done to connect the results to the day-to-day casework.
- Concurrent planning needs strengthening.
- The State's most effective approach to engaging families, Family Group Decision Making, is not used statewide.
- There is a lack of sufficient mental health and substance abuse treatment resources for children and families.

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

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

two national data indicators for which national standards have been established: the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 90.9 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 89 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 86 percent of Laurel County cases. Kentucky met the national standard for one of the two data indicators pertaining to Safety Outcome 1: Absence of maltreatment recurrence. However, the State did not meet the data indicator for absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care.

Key findings from the 2008 CFSR include the successful implementation in July 2006 of a Timeliness Documentation Template. The template structures case recordings, serves as a foundation for supervision, and instructs staff when timeframes cannot be met. The template was instrumental in an 11-percent increase in documentation of face-to-face contacts with the victim. An analysis indicated that contributing factors related to repeat maltreatment were the lack of available treatment resources for substance-abusing parents and a lack of DCBS caseworker involvement with a family post-crisis, which is influenced by workload.

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:

- Item 1 (timeliness of initiating investigations) was rated as a Strength in 95 percent of the cases.
- Item 2 (repeat maltreatment) was rated as a Strength in 83 percent of the cases.

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in the 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns were that Kentucky did not meet the national standard for maltreatment recurrence, and the CFSR case review item 1 (timely initiation of investigations of child maltreatment) was rated as an ANI. To address these concerns, the State implemented the following key strategies in its PIP:

- Created a targeted, intensive intervention with the courts to sensitize them to high-risk family dynamics
- Increased FTMs, focusing especially on families with young children
- Increased the number of visits and the amount of service provision to families, especially those receiving in-home services
- Engaged community partners, particularly schools, to monitor high-risk children and support their families
- Trained caseworkers to recognize high-risk factors such as family violence, substance abuse, and unaddressed mental illness

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

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

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

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 76.9 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82 percent of Daviess County cases, 71 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 82 percent of Laurel County cases.

Key findings from the 2008 CFSR indicate that Kentucky struggles with a lack of consistency in ensuring that assessment services are provided to reduce risks to children, to ensure that children are safe in their homes, and to prevent removal from their homes. In addition, the findings of the CFSR indicate that when safety issues are identified, services to address the safety issues may not be available, and caseworkers may be insufficiently trained to complete an appropriate risk assessment.

Additional findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:

- Item 3 (services to prevent removal) was rated as a Strength in 85 percent of the cases.
- Item 4 (risk of harm) was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of the cases.

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with this outcome for the 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concern identified at that time was that services provided were insufficient for addressing families' needs, and the assessment of service needs was incomplete.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- The State developed, piloted, and implemented a resource coordination process to facilitate matching needs and services.
- Regional Community Connections for Children teams identified service gaps, determined resources, and refined contracts to align with service needs in each region.

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

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

There are six indicators incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all children. The indicators pertain to the child welfare agency's efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability

for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining indicators focus on the child welfare agency's efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, and permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9) or to ensure that children who have OPPLA as a case goal are in permanent placements and adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10). Permanency Outcome 1 also incorporates four national data standards for which standards have been established: Permanency Composite 1 (Timeliness and permanency of reunification), Permanency Composite 2 (Timeliness of adoptions), Permanency Composite 3 (Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods), and Permanency Composite 4 (Placement stability).

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in only 47.5 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50 percent of Daviess County cases, 45 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 50 percent of Laurel County cases. The State Data Profile indicates that, for the CFSR 12-month target period, the State met the national standards for Permanency Composite 1 (Timeliness and permanency of reunification), Permanency Composite 2 (Timeliness of adoptions), and Permanency Composite 3 (Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods). The State did not meet the national standards for Permanency Composite 4 (Placement stability).

Key findings of the 2008 CFSR indicate that the agency is inconsistent in preventing reentry into foster care and in ensuring that children have placement stability. In addition, regarding permanency for children, the agency is inconsistent in establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner, in making concerted efforts to achieve reunification or permanent placements with relatives in a timely manner, and in achieving adoptions in a timely manner. Some delays were attributable to courts; others were attributable to the agency's lack of diligent effort.

Additional findings in the 2008 CFSR for this outcome included that item 10 was rated a Strength in 100 percent of the cases; however, all other items in Permanency Outcome 1 were rated as ANIs due to the following:

- The agency was inconsistent in preventing foster care reentry, with 81 percent of applicable cases rated as a Strength (item 5).
- Placement stability continues to be a challenge, with 32.5 percent of children either having two or more placements during the period under review or remaining in unstable placements (item 6).
- The agency was inconsistent in establishing a child's permanency goal in a timely manner, and the goal of reunification was maintained for an excessive period of time (item 7).
- The agency was inconsistent in attaining the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner (item 8).
- Frequent court- and agency-related factors resulted in considerable delays in achieving adoptions in a timely manner (item 9).

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- The State did not establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner, which resulted in children remaining in foster care for many years without attaining permanency.
- The State did not make diligent efforts to finalize adoptions in a timely manner. In the adoption process the following delays were identified: in changing the goal to adoption, in finding adoptive homes, and in seeking and obtaining termination of parental rights (TPR).
- The State did not match children with foster care providers carefully at the time of placement into foster care or when a placement change was necessary, resulting in placement instability.

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

- The State reviewed and revised Standards of Practice (SOP) regarding support services to families and children at the time of reunification, relative placement, adoption finalization, placement stability, and concurrent planning. Social work staff was trained, coached, mentored, and monitored on the revised SOP.
- The State revised a policy to require at least one FTM at the initial 5-day case planning conference or at the 3-, 6-, and 9-month case reviews for foster care cases to address permanency and concurrent planning issues. FTMs were convened at reunification, adoption finalization, relative placement, and case closure for out-of-home care (OOHC) to develop a family case plan. In addition, FTMs were conducted on all placement disruptions and potential disruptions.
- Factors that influenced foster care reentry were evaluated and action plans were developed to reduce the reentry rate.
- The DCBS Division for Protection and Permanency (P&P) and the Office of General Counsel collaborated with the Administrative Office of Courts (AOC) to conduct forums in each judicial district among judges, service region administrators, and regional attorneys to address timely achievement of permanency.
- The State revised the Diligent Recruitment Plan semiannually to improve matching the types of homes recruited to the needs of children in OOHC.

Kentucky met its target goals for this outcome before the end of its PIP implementation period.

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

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

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was rated as substantially achieved in 67.5 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. The item was rated as substantially achieved in 80 percent of Daviess County cases, 45 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases.

Although item 11 (proximity of placement) and item 12 (placement with siblings) were rated as Strengths, all other items assessed for this outcome were rated as ANIs. The following key concerns were identified in the case review:

- There was a lack of consistency in promoting frequency and quality of visitation between children and their fathers, mothers, or siblings in foster care (item 13).
- There was a lack of consistency in efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family, culture, and community (item 14) and in efforts to maintain and strengthen parent-child relationships while children are in foster care (item 16).
- The agency was not consistent in regard to seeking and evaluating relatives as potential placement resources (item 15).

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- The agency was not consistent in placing siblings together when a separation was not necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children (item 12).
- The agency was not consistent in supporting frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings (item 13).
- The agency was not consistent in making diligent efforts to preserve children's connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, family, faith, and friends while the children were in foster care (item 14).
- The agency was not consistent in making diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal relatives) as potential placement resources for children in foster care (item 15).
- The agency was not consistent in supporting or maintaining the bonds between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers (item 16).

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

- The State reviewed and revised OOHHC SOP for placements with siblings and relatives; preserving connections; and visitation with mothers, fathers, and siblings. Tip sheets were developed. Social work staff, and PCP and DCBS resource parents were trained on the revised SOP.
- The state revised the diligent recruitment plan to ensure adequate placement resources for siblings.

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

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

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

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in only 47.7 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 35 percent of Daviess County cases, 36 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 82 percent of Laurel County cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 58 percent of the foster care cases and 32 percent of the in-home services cases.

Key findings in 2008 for this outcome were the following:

- There continues to be a lack of consistency in assessing and meeting the service needs of parents and children. The agency was more likely to assess and meet the needs of children and foster parents than to assess and meet the needs of either fathers or mothers (item 17).
- There were inconsistencies in adequately involving families, particularly fathers, in case planning. Fathers were less likely to be involved in case planning (54 percent) than were mothers (74 percent) or age-appropriate children (79 percent) (item 18).
- There were inconsistencies in both the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children (item 19).
- There were inconsistencies in both the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents. Fathers were less likely to be visited by caseworkers (30 percent) than were mothers (60 percent) (item 20).

Kentucky did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome during its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- Inadequate assessments of the needs of children, parents, and foster parents resulted in service needs of children and parents that were not addressed in service plans.
- Efforts to involve families in the case planning process were not consistently effective, especially for fathers.
- The State's contacts with children were not sufficient in frequency and quality to ensure children's safety and promote their permanency and well-being.
- Caseworker contacts with parents were not sufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- The State reviewed and revised SOP for the following: in-home and out-of-home services; continuous quality assessment case planning and management; case transfers; matching needs with services; engagement; relationship building; and active involvement of mother, father, children, foster, and adoptive parents. Tip sheets were developed and social work staff, PCC staff, and resource parents were trained on the revised SOP.
- The State developed and piloted a resource coordination process to facilitate matching needs and services.
- The State conducted random customer satisfaction surveys of mothers, fathers, foster parents, youth, and PCC staff regarding case planning processes relevant to needs and services.

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

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

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

Kentucky did not achieve substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87.2 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 71 percent of Daviess County cases, 90 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 91 percent of Laurel County cases. Foster care cases were rated as Strengths in 88 percent of the applicable cases compared to 80 percent of the in-home services cases.

Findings of the 2008 CFSR indicate a lack of assessment of educational needs despite information that an educational assessment was warranted, and concerted efforts were not made to meet the educational needs.

Kentucky was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its PIP.

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

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

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 83.6 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 80 percent of Daviess cases, 85 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 85 percent of Laurel County cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85 percent of foster care cases and 80 percent of in-home services cases.

Key findings of the 2008 CFSR identified inconsistencies in the State's ability to assess and meet the physical and dental health needs of children.

Kentucky did not achieve substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP. The key concerns identified were related to mental health services. Mental health services were insufficiently available in some areas of the State. In areas of the state where mental health services were available, there were issues with the quality of available services, long waiting lists, lack of specialized services, and insufficient communication among mental health staff and caseworkers.

To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- DCBS collaborated with the Kentucky Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation to address identification, consistency, and quality issues by both agencies.
- Training needs and opportunities related to attachment and loss issues for children in OOHC were identified.

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

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

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

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The 2008 CFSR found that the State's information system, TWIST, cannot track placements and moves of children placed in the homes of private child-placing agencies.

Kentucky was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in the 2003 CFSR and was not required to address it in its PIP.

Case Review System

Five indicators are used to assess the State's performance in regard to the systemic factor of Case Review System. The indicators examine the development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), the implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the

timeframes established by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 28), and the notification and inclusion of foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers in case reviews and hearings (item 29).

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. While item 26 (process for periodic review every 6 months) and item 27 (permanency hearings within 12 months) were rated as Strengths, all other items for this systemic factor in the 2008 review were rated as ANIs. The following concerns were noted:

- Parents and children were not actively involved in the development of case plans on a consistent basis (item 25).
- Although the State has a process in place for filing a TPR petition, TPR hearings are not conducted in accordance with ASFA required timeframes. According to the data from the case review results for item 7, the State was in compliance with ASFA requirements related to TPR in 76 percent of the applicable cases (item 28).
- Although the agency has a policy in place to provide notifications of hearings and reviews to foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care, according to both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholders' comments, there are inconsistencies in how foster and adoptive parents are notified of reviews and hearings and given opportunities to be heard (item 29).

Kentucky did not achieve substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address it in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- The agency was not consistent in actively involving parents and children in case plan development.
- The State was not consistent in holding permanency hearings in a timely manner.
- Although the State had a process for filing for TPR in accordance with ASFA, adherence to these timelines varied across counties and court systems.

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

- The SOP regarding permanency, concurrent planning, and aggravated circumstances were revised to require FTMs and case reviews to occur at 5, 6, and 9 months for children in OOHC.
- Subsequent training regarding the revised SOP was held with staff and foster parents.
- The State implemented a process to identify children who were in OOHC from 9 to 12 months.
- The Concurrent Planning Quality Team reviewed, analyzed, and revised the concurrent planning process.
- The State collaborated with AOC, the Office of General Counsel, and the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law to implement the Termination Barriers Project.
- State statutes were analyzed to assess whether revisions were needed to be more consistent with ASFA.
- State statutes were analyzed to assess whether revisions were needed to permit cooperative (open) adoptions.

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

Quality Assurance System

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

Kentucky is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2008 CFSR found that the State has in place effective licensing standards and policies to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services, including practice guidelines for caseworkers to follow when visiting children, and practice guidelines for administrative staff to follow when conducting contract reviews (item 30). In addition, the State has a robust QA system that is similar to the CFSR process, conducts QA reviews, analyzes findings, and prepares reports to ensure continuous quality improvement in achieving positive outcomes for children and families. Supervisors use information and data reports from the QA results to provide feedback to caseworkers to inform their casework practice as well as to track emerging themes (item 31).

Kentucky was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address it in its PIP.

Staff and Provider Training

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

Kentucky is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The 2008 CFSR found the following strengths of the State's training program:

- The State has a process in place for ensuring that the initial training is completed before a caseworker receives full responsibility for a caseload. Training starts as soon as possible after the caseworker is hired (item 32).
- Although the State has no set number of hours required for ongoing training, the DCBS Training Branch provides specific, required courses. In addition, staff may use other training opportunities, take a graduate-level course, or use an M.S.W. stipend program to earn an advance degree. The State tracks training in the Training Records Information System which can provide a real-time, certified, individual training record for an employee (item 33).
- The State uses an established, formal curriculum for pre-service training consisting of the Permanence and Safety-Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting, and ongoing training requirements support the skills and knowledge base needed to provide care for foster and adoptive children (item 34).

The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address it in its PIP.

Service Array

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

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array for the 2008 CFSR.

The key concerns of the 2008 CFSR regarding service array were the following:

- While Kentucky has a comprehensive service assessment and delivery system in place (item 35), the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews both disclose a lack of some essential services such as mental health services and substance abuse treatment services in some parts of the State (item 36).
- The State does not consistently individualize services to meet the unique needs of the children and families (item 37) due in part to the lack of flexible funds and to the impact of recent budget cuts on the availability of some essential services.

The State was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its PIP. The key concerns identified at that time were the following:

- Although most stakeholders suggested that a large array of services was available to children and families, many service gaps were identified. These included foster homes, therapeutic foster homes, in-patient substance abuse services, substance abuse groups for adolescents, domestic violence services, job training, post-adoptive services, dentists who accept Medicaid, mental retardation services, early intervention, and psychiatrists. There were also problems of long waits to access services (item 35).
- In addition, the State's service array was not readily available in all counties, there were waiting lists for needed services, and families experienced difficulties in accessing needed services (item 36).

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

- DCBS and Department for Mental Health/Mental Retardation Management staff collaborated to address service array issues for families and children.
- P&P regional staff partnered with community mental health centers to address service needs and the service array related to families and children.
- DCBS increased effective targeting and utilization of contract services.
- DCBS expanded the Targeted Assessment Program (TAP) program to Madison, Fayette, and Hardin counties. TAP provides comprehensive assessment and early links with service providers in counties with the highest rates of recurrence.
- The State promoted transportation access.

- The regional Community Connections for Children team identified services gaps, determined resources needed, and refined contracts to align with service needs in each region.
- The regional Community Connections for Children contracting process clearly addressed safety, permanency, and well-being.

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

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

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

Kentucky is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The 2008 CFSR found that the State has mechanisms in place to ensure ongoing consultation in the development of the CFSP.

- The State consults with external stakeholders in developing the CFSP through various surveys, special studies, and collaborative efforts with internal and external partners (items 38 and 39).
- The State has mechanisms in place to ensure coordination of services and benefits (item 40).

The State was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address it in its PIP.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

The assessment of this systemic factor focuses on the State's standards for foster homes and child care institutions (items 41 and 42), the State's compliance with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents (item 43), the State's efforts to recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of foster children (item 44), and the State's activities in using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate permanent placements for waiting children (item 45).

Kentucky is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The 2008 CFSR found the following strengths in the State's policies regarding foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention:

- The State has established and implemented clear standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with best practice (item 41).
- Kentucky has specific licensing standards that apply to all licensed child care institutions, foster care providers, and approved foster family homes (item 42).

- The State is in compliance with the Federal requirements for criminal background clearances and safety requirements for prospective foster and adoptive parents (item 43).
- DCBS is diligent in the use of cross-jurisdictional resources to locate placements for waiting children (item 45).

Despite these areas of strength, the CFSR noted concern that, although DCBS has a recruitment plan, the State does not have an informed process in place to ensure diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. Although the State requires and monitors regional recruitment plans, according to the Statewide Assessment, there are challenges with data discrepancies regarding the number of DCBS resource homes approved and closed during the year. In addition, the State does not have necessary information about foster parents in homes approved by private child-placing agencies. These two issues prohibit the informed development of a statewide diligent recruitment plan that includes both private and DCBS resource home capacity (item 44).

Kentucky was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor during the 2003 CFSR and was not required to address it in its PIP.

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

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved*	Met National Standards?	Rating**	Percent Strength
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	90.9	Met 1 of 2		
Item 1: Timeliness of investigations				Strength	95
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment				ANI	83
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	76.9			
Item 3: Services to prevent removal				ANI	85
Item 4: Risk of harm				ANI	80
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	47.5	Met 3 of 4		
Item 5: Foster care reentry				ANI	81
Item 6: Stability of foster care placements				ANI	67.5
Item 7: Permanency goal for child				ANI	77.5
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	70
Item 9: Adoption				ANI	50
Item 10: Other planned living arrangement				Strength	100
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	67.5			
Item 11: Proximity of placement				Strength	97
Item 12: Placement with siblings				Strength	100
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	57
Item 14: Preserving connections				ANI	84
Item 15: Relative placement				ANI	69
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	59

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

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

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

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved	Rating**	Percent Strength
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs	No	47.7		
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	57
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	54
Item 19: Caseworker visits with child			ANI	71
Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	42
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	87.2		
Item 21: Educational needs of child			ANI	87
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	83.6		
Item 22: Physical health of child			ANI	87
Item 23: Mental health of child			Strength	90

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

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

Table 3. Kentucky CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Statewide Information System	No	2	
Item 24: The State is operating a statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care			ANI
Case Review System	No	2	
Item 25: The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parents that includes the required provisions			ANI
Item 26: The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review			Strength
Item 27: The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter			Strength
Item 28: The State provides a process for TPR proceedings in accordance with the provisions of ASFA			ANI
Item 29: The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child			ANI
Quality Assurance System	Yes	4	
Item 30: The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of children			Strength
Item 31: The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented			Strength
Staff and Provider Training	Yes	4	
Item 32: The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services			Strength

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Item 33: The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP			Strength
Item 34: The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children			Strength
Service Array	No	2	
Item 35: The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency			Strength
Item 36: The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP			ANI
Item 37: The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency			ANI
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Yes	4	
Item 38: In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP			Strength
Item 39: The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP			Strength
Item 40: The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same population			Strength
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	Yes	3	
Item 41: The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			Strength
Item 42: The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds			Strength

Systemic Factors and Items	In Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Item 43: The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children			Strength
Item 44: The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom adoptive homes are needed			ANI
Item 45: The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children			Strength

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

**Items may be rated as a Strength or as an ANI.

Final Report
Kentucky Child and Family Services Review
May 2009

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

INTRODUCTION

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

The Kentucky CFSR was conducted the week of June 16, 2008. The period under review for the case reviews was from April 1, 2007, through June 20, 2008. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS)
- The State Data Profile prepared by CB, which provides State child welfare data for fiscal year (FY) 2005, FY 2006, and the CFSR 12-month target period ending March 31, 2007
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care cases and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in Daviess County, 31 cases in Jefferson County, 17 cases in Laurel County
- Interviews or focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 65 cases reviewed were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of these 65 cases are presented in the table at the end of this section. The percentages presented in this table and in subsequent tables in the report may not total to exactly 100 percent due to rounding.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

Table of Case Characteristics

	Foster Care Cases	In-Home Cases
Total Cases	40	25
When case was opened/child entered foster care		
Case was opened prior to the period under review	31 (77.5%)	23 (92%)
Case was opened during the period under review	9 (22.5%)	2 (8%)
Child entered foster care during the period under review	16 (40%)	
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than age 10	22 (55%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	0	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	13 (32.5%)	*
16 and older	5 (12.5 %)	*
Race/Ethnicity		*
Black (Non-Hispanic)	9 (22.5 %)	*
White (Non-Hispanic)	23 (57.5%)	*
Hispanic (of all races)	2 (5%)	*
Two or more races (Non-Hispanic)	6 (15%)	*
Primary reason for opening case		
Physical abuse	7 (17.5%)	1 (4%)
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	14 (35.0%)	16 (64%)
Abandonment	1 (2.5%)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	2 (5.0%)	0
Substance abuse by parent	4 (10%)	3 (12%)
Child's behavior	9 (22.5%)	0
Substance abuse by child	1 (2.5%)	0
Domestic violence in child's home	1 (2.5%)	3 (12%)
Child in juvenile justice system	0	1 (4%)
Other	1 (2.5%)	1 (4%)

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

SECTION A: OUTCOMES

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

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

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

The second round of the CFSRs assesses a State’s current level of performance by once more applying the high standards and a consistent, comprehensive, case review methodology. The results of this effort are intended to serve as the basis for continued PIPs

addressing areas in which a State still needs to improve, even though prior PIP goals may have been achieved. The purpose is to ensure that program improvement is an ongoing process and does not end with the completion of a PIP.

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

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State's performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and ANI ratings. Key changes in the CFSR case review process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of the State's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR review, which was held in FY 2003, the State's status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Differences in findings across the sites included in the Onsite Review are described when noteworthy. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (e.g., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate. For the tables, figures displayed may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	6	8	6	20	90.9
Partially Achieved	0	0	1	1	4.5
Not Achieved or Addressed	0	1	0	1	4.5
Total Applicable Cases	6	9	7	22	
Not Applicable Cases	11	22	10	43	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards			
	National Standard (%)	State's Percentage	Meets Standard?
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6 or higher	93.5	No
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68 or higher	99.82	Yes

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 based on the following findings:

- The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 90.9 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 89 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 86 percent of Laurel County cases.
- Kentucky did not meet the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence.

However, the State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1 during its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns identified in the 2003 CFSR were the following:

- The case reviews identified inconsistent practice with respect to the timeliness of initiating a response to child maltreatment reports and establishing face-to-face contact with children and families.
- The State did not meet the national standard for the measure pertaining to maltreatment recurrence.

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

- The State revised the Standards of Practice (SOP) related to Multiple Response System (MRS), Families in Need of Service Assessment, and Continuous Quality Assessment (CQA) regarding initiation of investigations in open cases. Caseworkers were trained on the revised SOP and on conducting timely investigations in ongoing cases.
- The State refined and integrated family engagement skills and family team meeting (FTM) skills into the DCBS Division of Protection and Permanency (P&P) training curriculum.
- Mandatory FTMs were required on all second reports received on children age 3 and younger.
- The State tracked monthly caseworker visits to DCBS foster homes and increased the number of monthly foster home visits to address concerns regarding maltreatment of children in foster care.

The State met its target goals for this outcome by the end of its PIP implementation period

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings of the 2008 CFSR pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented below.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 22 (34 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a

maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the policy requirements of the State child welfare agency.

Kentucky policy uses MRS to categorize reports of Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations. The supervisor determines the initial level of risk based on information received, history of the family, the existence of prior reports, and the CPS Multiple Response Matrix.

The following are the response timelines established by Kentucky. Response time is measured from the time the intake is approved by the intake supervisor to the time of the first face-to-face visit with the alleged victim.

- Imminent risk: when a report is categorized as imminent risk, the caseworker must establish face-to-face contact with the alleged victim and family within 1 hour
- Non-imminent risk involving physical abuse: when a report is categorized as non-imminent risk involving physical abuse, the caseworker must establish face-to-face contact with the alleged victim and family within 24 hours
- Non-imminent risk involving allegations other than physical abuse: when a report is categorized as non-imminent risk involving allegations other than physical abuse, the caseworker must establish face-to-face contact with the alleged victim and family within 48 hours

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

Item 1	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	6	8	7	21	95
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	0	1	5
Total Applicable Cases	6	9	7	22	
Not Applicable	11	22	10	43	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 89 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 1 was rated as a Strength when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy or law. It was rated as an ANI in one case when the investigation initiation and a face-to-face contact with the victim child were not within the required timeframes.

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 95 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage exceeds the 90 percent required for an overall item rating of Strength. This item was rated as an ANI in Kentucky's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

Due to receiving an ANI rating on item 1 in the 2003 CFSR, the State implemented a Timeliness Documentation Template in July 2006 to improve accountability and prompt staff to explain the investigative process when timeframes could not be met. This practice improved documentation of face-to-face contacts with the victim from 87.7 percent in the first quarter of the PIP to 98.8 percent in the final quarter of the PIP. The Statewide Assessment suggests that case reviews are effective in promoting improved practice because they provide immediate feedback to the caseworker and supervisor when timeframes are not met.

According to the Statewide Assessment, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) data indicate improvement on this item from 72.3 percent Strength ratings for the period January through March of 2006 to 79.8 percent Strength ratings for the same period in 2007.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency responds to allegations of abuse and neglect in a timely manner. A few stakeholders, however, indicated that it was difficult to meet the 1-hour response time requirement when travel time from the office to the home exceeded 1 hour.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 12 (18 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 2	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	3	4	3	10	83
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	1	2	17
Total Applicable Cases	3	5	4	12	
Not Applicable	14	26	13	53	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 80 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 75 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 2 was rated as a Strength when there was no indication of two or more substantiated or indicated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an ANI in two cases because at least two substantiated maltreatment reports occurred within a 6-month period.

Despite the absence of recurrence of substantiated maltreatment reports in many of the cases that were reviewed, reviewers expressed concerns about the many cases in which there were multiple reports on the family during the life of the case before a report was substantiated. The “life of the case” refers to time span from the first time that an allegation of abuse or neglect was reported on any child in the family to the time of the Onsite Review. The following are key findings with regard to this concern:

- In 15 cases, there were at least 5 reports but less than 10 reports.
- In four cases, there were between 10 and 14 reports during the life of the case.
- In five cases, there were 15 or more maltreatment reports during the life of the case.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 83 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that there was no recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State used its National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System submissions to research risk conditions associated with recurrence. These high-risk conditions were incorporated into new caseworker training and disseminated

through statewide meetings and the CQI process. Each service region developed a plan to address recidivism. Some of the regions implemented some or all of the following strategies:

- Created a targeted, intensive intervention with the courts to sensitize them to high-risk family dynamics
- Increased FTMs, especially focusing on families with young children
- Increased the number of visits and the amount of service provision to families, particularly families receiving in-home services
- Engaged community partners, especially the schools, to monitor high-risk children and support their families
- Trained caseworkers to recognize high-risk factors for repeat maltreatment such as family violence, substance abuse issues, and unresolved mental health issues

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has decreased the incidence of repeat maltreatment through the creation of management reports that track repeat maltreatment cases, the CQI process (which provides feedback to caseworkers), and the provision of family preservation services to high-risk families.

Safety Outcome 2

Safety Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	14	22	14	50	76.9
Partially Achieved	2	5	2	9	13.8
Not Achieved or Addressed	1	4	1	6	9.2
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 76.9 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for a rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 82 percent of Daviess County cases, 71 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 82 percent of Laurel County cases. Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2 in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concerns identified in the 2003 CFSR were the following:

- In some cases, the services provided to prevent the child’s removal from the home were not sufficient to address the family’s needs.
- In some cases, the assessment of the family’s service needs was incomplete.

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

- The State developed, piloted, and implemented a resource coordination process to facilitate the matching of needs and appropriate services.
- The regional Community Connections for Children Teams identified service gaps, determined available resources, and refined contracts with community providers to be in alignment with the service needs identified in each region.

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

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

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 41 (63 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded from this assessment if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For this item, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families to prevent placement of children in foster care while, at the same time, ensuring their safety. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 3	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	10	13	12	35	85
Area Needing Improvement	0	5	1	6	15
Total Applicable Cases	10	18	13	41	
Not Applicable	7	13	4	24	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 72 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 92 percent of Laurel County cases. Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 35 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were provided to the parents and children to prevent removal (26 cases).
- The children were appropriately removed from the home without service provision because the removal was necessary to ensure the children’s safety (four cases).
- The children were placed with a relative caregiver and appropriate services were provided so that the children did not enter foster care (five cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. Services included, but were not limited to, the following: assessments for substance abuse, substance abuse treatment, Drug Court, weekly visitation in the home, anger management services, financial assistance services (including payment of utility bills and vouchers for food), housing services, concrete services such as vouchers for cleaning supplies and a vacuum cleaner), domestic violence services, in-home parenting education services, case management services, in-home counseling services, transportation services, respite care services, psychological services (mental health screenings and treatment), rehabilitation services, legal services, behavioral therapy, shelter services for mothers and children, intensive in-home family preservation services, assistance to parents to meet children’s medical needs, and services for parents of children with developmental disabilities

Item 3 was rated as an ANI in six cases when reviewers determined the following:

- Diligent efforts were not made to provide services to families to prevent placement of children in foster care while at the same time ensuring their safety (five cases).
- No services were provided to the relative caregiver to ensure the child’s safety (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 85 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or reentry after reunification. That percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky involves families in identifying services needed to prevent removal of children by using an FTM approach. FTMs are available to all incoming families on a statewide basis and at the time a child is reunified with family.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that the Family Preservation Program (FPP) is a short-term, crisis-intervention program designed to maintain children safely in their own homes. This also was reported to be available statewide. The Statewide Assessment indicates that, of all children served by FPP between July 2006 and June 2007, only 6.3 percent experienced a removal.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that some courts are reluctant to allow children who have been abused or neglected to remain in their homes even when intensive services are being provided. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the work of the Court Improvement Program, which involves both the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and DCBS, will continue to address this issue.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that the agency's effectiveness in providing services to prevent placement depends on the following factors:

- Legislative funding of CPS prevention and in-home programs
- Funding of necessary services in the community to support families

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

_____ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 65 cases. For this item, reviewers assessed whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the children in their own homes or while in foster care. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below.

Item 4	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	14	24	14	52	80
Area Needing Improvement	3	7	3	13	20
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

The item was rated as a Strength in 82 percent of Daviess County cases, 77 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 82 percent of Laurel County cases.

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

Item 4 was rated as an ANI in 13 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- Risk was identified but no services were offered to address the risk (two cases).
- There were inadequate ongoing safety and risk assessments (three cases).
- There were inadequate risk assessments of relatives who were visiting with the children (one case).
- There were inadequate safety assessments prior to reunification or placement with relatives (two cases).
- The State did not obtain a criminal record check on a parent in the home who had been previously incarcerated (one case).
- The State did not conduct an initial safety assessment or the initial assessment was inadequate to assess safety issues (three cases).
- The State did not follow up with a family that moved out of county with the children (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had appropriately addressed the risk of harm to the children in 80 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for an overall rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky addresses risk of harm by requiring caseworkers to assess the safety of children in out-of-home care (OOHC) through face-to-face contact at least every 30 days, or more often if needed. When services are provided for an in-home case, the caseworker must assess the safety of the child through face-to-face contact in the home every 30 days, or more

often if needed. If a child is in a private child care (PCC) facility or private child-placing (PCP) agency foster care, the caseworker must have face-to-face contact with the child at least quarterly.

The CQA is the instrument used to determine risk of harm and safety issues. If safety concerns are identified, a prevention plan is negotiated with the family to address immediate safety concerns. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, efforts to enhance capacity to address risk of harm include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Coaching and mentoring caseworkers to have private conversations with children in foster care
- Creating tip sheets to guide discussions between the caseworker and family during visits
- Assessing safety issues during the family visits by a professional who is supervising the visit
- Decreasing the maximum number of children who may reside in a foster home from six to five to reduce safety issues

The following barriers to addressing risk of harm issues also were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- When safety issues are identified, there may not be services available to address the safety issues.
- Caseworkers may have insufficient training to gather the information needed to complete an appropriate risk assessment.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that caseworkers conduct the CQA assessment during the initial investigation and then at least every 6 months after that or whenever there are significant occurrences in the case that warrant a CQA. Various stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency continuously assesses safety and risk throughout the life of the case including at case closure.

II. PERMANENCY

Permanency Outcome 1

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	5	9	5	19	47.5
Partially Achieved	4	10	4	18	45.0
Not Achieved	1	1	1	3	7.5
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

Conformity of statewide data indicators with national standards			
	National Standard (Scaled Score)	State's Composite Score	Meets Standard?
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6 +	125.4	Yes
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4 +	123.4	Yes
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7 +	122.8	Yes
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5 +	93.8	No

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. This determination was based on the following findings;

- The outcome was substantially achieved in 47.5 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for an overall rating of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50 percent of Daviess County cases, 45 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 50 percent of Laurel County cases.
- Kentucky did not meet the national standard for Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability.

However, Kentucky met the national standards for Permanency Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification, Permanency Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions, and Permanency Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods.

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- The State did not establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner resulting in children remaining in foster care for many years without attaining permanency.
- The State did not make diligent efforts to finalize adoptions in a timely manner. The following delays were identified in the adoption process: changing the goal to adoption in a timely manner, making concerted efforts to find adoptive homes, and seeking and obtaining termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with Adoption and Safe Family Act (ASFA) requirements.

- The State did not carefully match children with foster care providers at the time of placement into foster care or when a placement change was necessary, resulting in placement instability.

To address these concerns, Kentucky implemented the following strategies in its PIP.

- The State reviewed and revised SOP regarding support services to families and children at the time of reunification, relative placement, adoption finalization, placement stability, and concurrent planning. Caseworkers were trained, coached, mentored, and monitored on the revised SOP.
- The State revised a policy to require at least one FTM at the initial 5-day case planning conference or at the 3-, 6-, and 9-month case reviews for foster care cases to address permanency and concurrent planning issues. The FTMs and reviews were to focus on permanency and concurrent planning issues. FTMs were convened at reunification, adoption finalization, relative placement, and case closure for OOHC to develop a family case plan. In addition, FTMs were conducted on all placement disruptions and potential disruptions.
- Factors that appeared to contribute to foster care reentry were evaluated and action plans were developed to reduce the reentry rate.
- P&P and the Office of General Counsel (OGC) collaborated with AOC to conduct forums in each judicial district that included judges, service region administrators, and regional attorneys to address timely achievement of permanency.
- The State revised the Diligent Recruitment Plan (DRP) semiannually to improve the matching of types of homes recruited to the needs of children in OOHC.

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

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

Item 5. Foster care reentries

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 16 (40 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for assessment if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into

foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 5	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	3	6	4	13	81
Area Needing Improvement	0	2	1	3	19
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	8	5	16	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	12	5	24	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 75 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 80 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 11 cases in which the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode. Two cases were rated as a Strength because, although the child reentered foster care, there was evidence that concerted efforts were made to prevent the reentry.

Item 5 was rated as an ANI in three cases in which the child reentered foster care within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode and there was a lack of concerted efforts to prevent reentry

Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 81 percent of the applicable cases, the child’s entry into foster care was not within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Performance on the Measure Relevant to Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification

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

Kentucky's performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was as follows: 14.9 percent of the children exiting foster care to reunification in the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period, reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is less than the national median of 15.0 percent but greater than the national 25th percentile of 9.9 percent. For this measure, lower percentages reflect higher levels of performance.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky uses the CQA tool prior to reunification to determine if safety issues have been addressed. The CQA also is completed at case closure along with an aftercare plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that each region developed specific action plans to improve reentry rates, including identification of family characteristics that are most frequently associated with reentry into foster care. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following as concerns related to foster care reentry:

- The State needs to work with the courts to ensure that there is adequate preparation and time for reunification, especially in substance abuse cases.
- There is inadequate financial and casework support for permanent relative families.
- There is inadequate provision of Family Reunification Services (FRS). During State FY 2007, only 41 percent of reunified children received FRS.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that reentries into foster care may occur when the court orders reunification against the agency's advise. Other stakeholders expressed the opinion that parental relapse into substance abuse may contribute to foster care reentries.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings were necessary to achieve the child's permanency goal or meet the child's service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child's current placement setting. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 6	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	12	7	27	67.5
Area Needing Improvement	2	8	3	13	32.5
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 80 percent of Daviess County cases, 60 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 70 percent of Laurel County cases.

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

- The child did not experience a placement change during the period under review, and either the current placement was stable or the child was discharged from foster care during the period under review (19 cases).
- The placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests and were intended either to help attain the child’s permanency goal or to meet the needs of the child (eight cases). For example, placement changes made to place siblings together or to place the child in the care of a relative may be considered to be in the child’s best interests.

Item 6 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined the following:

- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to further attain the child’s permanency goal (12 cases).
- The child’s placement setting (at the time of the onsite CFSR) was not stable (one case).

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 20 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in 11 cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in 9 cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 67.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability or that changes in placements were in the best interests of the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

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

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

Kentucky's performance during the 12-month CFSR target period on the individual measures included in Composite 4: Placement stability is presented below.

- C4.1: 86.2 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- C4.2: 59.9 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is equal to the national median of 59.9 percent, but less than the national 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- C4.3: 28.0 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is less than the national median of 33.9 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, children may be experiencing placement changes that are not being recorded in the State's statewide information system, The Workers Information SysTem (TWIST). The Statewide Assessment reports that some PCP providers may be moving DCBS children to different foster homes within the same provider agency and notifying DCBS staff either after the fact or, sometimes, not at all. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that DCBS has found that some children have had three or four placement changes within the PCP agency before DCBS became aware of the moves. The State plans to address this problem by launching a PCC tracking module that will allow the PCP agencies to enter the specific placement for each child and accurately record placement changes. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, this is expected to have an effect on the State's performance on the data indicator pertaining to placement stability (Composite 4).

The Statewide Assessment identified the following additional barriers to placement stability:

- The agency does not provide sufficient training for foster parents regarding appropriate parenting of children with behavioral issues.
- The State is inconsistent in its efforts to provide the supports necessary to children and foster parents to ensure a successful transition to a new home when a child moves.
- The agency does not have sufficient specialized homes for children with therapeutic treatment needs so that the child's needs are be appropriately matched to available homes.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR confirmed the concerns noted in the Statewide Assessment about the inability of TWIST to capture the placement location and some of the placement changes experienced by children in PCP agency homes. In addition, several stakeholders expressed the opinion that placement stability is a concern in the State. Various stakeholders identified the following concerns pertaining to placement stability:

- Children experience placement changes when resource parents are not prepared to handle behavioral issues.
- Placement changes sometimes occur when there are inadequate assessments of children’s needs, inadequate screening of foster homes, and/or inappropriate matching of children with foster home resources. The inadequate matching of children with foster homes was noted to be a particular concern for children who are status offenders and who often are placed in foster homes that are not prepared to address the needs of these children.
- The lack of a sufficient number of specialized homes for teenagers, medically fragile children, and sibling groups often results in placement changes.
- Children often experience placement changes when a child is categorized as having a new level of “need” and requiring a different placement if the current placement is not licensed for that level.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 7	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	9	15	7	31	77.5
Area Needing Improvement	1	5	3	9	22.5
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of Daviess County cases, 75 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 70 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 7 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child's permanency goal was appropriate and had been established in a timely manner (31 cases).

The case was rated as an ANI in nine cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child's goal was not established in a timely manner (one case).
- The child's goal was not appropriate given the case situation and assessed needs of the child (four cases).
- No permanency goal was documented in the case record (one case).
- The child had been in foster care for at least 15 of the most recent 22 months, but the agency did not file or join a TPR petition, and there was no documentation in the case record of a compelling reason for not filing for TPR (five cases).

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

- Twenty-three children had a goal of reunification with parents, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship.
- Sixteen children had a goal of adoption only.
- One child had a goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) (referred to as another planned permanent living arrangement in Kentucky)

ASFA requirements were met in 16 (76 percent) of the 21 applicable cases.

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner in 77.5 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

Kentucky's performance during the 12-month CFSR target period on the individual measures included in Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods was the following:

- C3.1: 24.9 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (that is, adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is less than the national median of 25.0 percent.
- C3.2: 90.1 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is less than the national median of 96.8 percent.
- C3.3: 31.6 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is lower than the 25th percentile of 37.5 percent. For this measure, lower scores indicate more positive performance.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, permanency planning goals are to be established with 5 days of entry into foster care during the initial case planning 5-day FTMs. Permanency planning goals are documented in the Concurrent Planning Review Tool and filed in the case record. The Statewide Assessment reports that the State supports concurrent planning by requiring that a concurrent permanency plan is documented in the case plan no later than the FTM periodic review which is to occur no more than 6 months after the child enters foster care.

In addition to the 6-month reviews, the State conducts the following activities to ensure the appropriateness of permanency goals:

- The supervisor and regional attorney review each case quarterly to determine if the goal is appropriate and if necessary tasks are being completed.
- Permanency teams hold pre-permanency reviews in which staff present the case to regional management and other staff in a re-examination of casework efforts, and a review of the parents' progress. Action plans are developed to address any barriers to achievement of the permanency plan. The action plan is reviewed within 3 months to redetermine progress.
- The Citizen Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB) reviews permanency plans for children younger than age 12 who have been in foster care for 9 months or longer.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, permanency hearings occur within 12 months after the child enters foster care and every 12 months thereafter. At these hearings, the court monitors the viability of the permanency goal, in order to reach a decision concerning the planned permanent placement for each child.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following issues as barriers to establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner;

- The State is inconsistent in timely notification to absent parents, causing a delay in establishing reasonable efforts and TPR on absent parents.
- In jurisdictions without a family court, there may be delays in getting the child welfare cases on the court calendar.

- Judicial verbal orders may direct the caseworker toward next steps, but the final written orders may not be timely.
- If the initial finding is dependency instead of adjudicating abuse or neglect, there may be delays as the case moves toward TPR. In these situations, the court would need to re-adjudicate the first petition before the termination petition can proceed, resulting in delays to permanency.
- A partnership between DCBS and AOC was established several years ago that provides training for guardians *ad litem* (GALs) and DCBS staff related to Federal policy regarding permanency needs of children. Select judges also have attended, but there is currently no specific cross-training requirement for all judges to receive this training.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that initial permanency goals are established in a timely manner. However, the stakeholders expressed the opinion that as the case progresses, the child’s current permanency goal may no longer be the most appropriate goal. According to some stakeholders, changing the permanency goal from reunification to adoption, or changing the permanency goal from reunification to OPPLA in a timely manner are the most difficult.

Some stakeholders also commented that, although a child may be placed in a foster home and have goals of reunification and adoption, agency practice does not support working on both goals concurrently; instead, they are worked sequentially, which causes delays in achieving permanency.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 23 (57.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing the cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of this assessment are shown in the table below.

Item 8	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	3	7	6	16	70
Area Needing Improvement	2	4	1	7	30
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	11	7	23	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	9	3	17	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 60 percent of Daviess County cases, 64 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 86 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 8 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency was making concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an ANI in seven cases when reviewers determined that the agency and court did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner.

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 70 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. That percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

Kentucky's performance during the 12-month CFSR target period on the individual measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification is presented below:

- C1.1: 76.5 percent of the reunifications occurred in less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 75.2 percent.

- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 5.7 months, which is less than the national median of 6.5 months but is greater than the national 25th percentile of 5.4 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months indicate a higher performance.)
- C1.3: 56.5 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 48.4 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

The Statewide Assessment identifies many strategies that were implemented in order to improve timely reunification and guardianship. Some of these include:

- The State increased efforts to engage and work with noncustodial fathers, and collaborated with the child support office to locate fathers when their whereabouts was unknown.
- The State developed guidelines for using genograms and ecomaps to identify maternal and paternal relatives at the initial FTM.
- Prior to the 12th month of a child's placement with a relative, an FTM is held to review the child's case plan and placement. If the decision is made that permanent relative placement is in the best interests of the child, court documentation is completed recommending permanent relative custody.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following barriers to timely reunification:

- Caseworkers could benefit from additional training or retraining regarding the immediacy of the need for permanency for all children, especially those residing in a potential adoptive or custodial home.
- Communication between the State and PCP agencies is a barrier to permanency efforts and is an ANI.
- The State is inconsistent in promoting permanency planning efforts with incarcerated parents.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSSR expressed the following opinions regarding delays in reunification:

- Some delays may be due to the amount of time needed for effective substance abuse treatment or a parent's substance abuse relapse.
- Some delays may be attributed to the courts' unwillingness to discharge children to relatives when they think parents need another chance at rehabilitation.
- Some delays are due to the courts granting continuances that are requested by parents' attorneys.

Item 9. Adoption

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 16 (40 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results are shown in the table below.

Item 9	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	2	5	1	8	50
Area Needing Improvement	3	3	2	8	50
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	8	3	16	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	12	7	24	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 40 percent of Daviess County cases, 62.5 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 33 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in eight cases when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner.

Item 9 was rated an ANI in eight cases when reviewers determined the following:

- There were court-related delays caused by granting of continuances and delays in scheduling TPR hearings (three cases).
- There were agency-related delays due to the agency not filing for TPR in a timely manner (one case) or not making a placement with an identified adoptive home in a timely manner (two cases).
- There was a lack of diligent effort to find an adoptive home for the child (two cases).

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Adoption was finalized during the period under review in 5 of the 16 cases that had adoption as goal. In 4 cases, the adoption was finalized within 24 months of the child's entry into foster care, and, in 1 case, the adoption was finalized within 35 months.

- Of the 11 children who remained in foster care at the time of the onsite CFSR, 2 were in pre-adoptive placements. Time in foster care for these 11 children was as follows:
 - 8 had been in foster care for 24 months or longer
 - 3 had been in foster care for less than 2 years

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 50 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

Kentucky's performance during the 12-month CFSR target period on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions is presented below:

- C2.1: 31.0 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national median of 26.8 percent, but less than the national 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 29.4 months. This length of stay is less than the national median of 32.4 months but greater than the national 25th percentile of 27.3. For this measure, a lower number of months equates to a higher level of performance.
- C2.3: 22.4 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage is greater than the national median of 20.2 percent but less than the 75th percentile of 22.7 percent.
- C2.4: 18.8 percent of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 10.9 percent.
- C2.5: 52.2 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is greater than the national median of 45.8 percent, but less than the national 75th percentile of 53.7 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky contributes some of its success with regard to the State’s performance on the Federal adoption composite to the performance of regional attorneys, who are supervised by a central office attorney. The attorneys meet with caseworkers at the Pre-Permanency Planning Conference to make a joint decision whether to pursue a goal change and TPR. The attorney is expected to achieve TPR within 180 days of the goal change.

The Statewide Assessment indicates the following barriers to achieving finalized adoptions in a timely manner:

- The agency is inconsistent in the application of concurrent planning practice, which impacts the timeliness of adoptions.
- Kentucky has overburdened court dockets and allows a lengthy time period in which to resolve TPR appeals.
- DCBS has shortages of specialized adoption caseworkers to handle adoption and recruitment activities, increased numbers of children entering OOHC, and a need for more foster and adoptive homes.
- Reluctance on the part of DCBS staff and courts to seek or grant timely TPR due to the publication in 2006 of “The Other Kentucky Lottery,” a report contending that “quick-trigger” adoptions were occurring in order to bolster financial rewards to DCBS from the Federal Government. The publication was followed by an investigation by the DCBS Office of Inspector General (OIG), and audits by the Auditor for Public Accounts (APA) and the Legislative Research Commission’s (LRC) Program Review and Investigations Committee (PRIC). According to the Statewide Assessment, although the audits failed to find evidence of quick-trigger adoptions, they resulted in extensive negative publicity regarding TPR and adoptions.

In Kentucky, most adoptions are secured by the child’s foster parents, resulting in children achieving permanency more quickly and having fewer placement moves. The Statewide Assessment notes that in Federal FY 2007, 88.9 percent of adoptions were by foster parents. Since many of the homes close as a result of the adoption, additional funding for foster parent recruitment is needed to maintain the supply of foster and adoptive homes.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR agreed with the barriers to achieving timely adoptions that are noted above in Statewide Assessment.

Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for only 1 (2.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this case, reviewers determined if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results are presented in the table below.

Item 10	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	0	1	0	1	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	0	1	0	1	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	10	19	10	39	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in one case when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure long-term placement for the child and provide services necessary for preparing the child for independent living.

Rating Determination

Item 10 assigned an overall rating of Strength. In the one applicable case, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This item also was rated as a Strength in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky uses the permanency goal of OPPLA as a last resort. Required approval of this goal for children age 16 and older is obtained from the Regional Administrator. For children younger than 16 approval of the OPPLA goal must be obtained from the Commissioner. The court then must approve the goal.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Independent Living (IL) coordinators in each region provide IL skills education to all children age 12 and older who reside in DCBS foster homes. IL services also are available for adolescents in private homes, group homes, and institutions. The PCP agency agreement requires private agencies to provide IL services for youth in their care.

In addition, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, youth may extend their commitment in foster care past their 18th birthday in order to receive tuition reimbursement or other IL supports.

The Statewide Assessment notes the following as opportunities for improvement with regard to preparing youth for making the transition from foster care to independent living:

- Youth would benefit from more supervised opportunities to practice and demonstrate mastery of living skills.
- Youth would benefit from an FTM at age 17.5 to ensure that all of the necessary skills are on track for a youth’s emancipation.
- Youth would benefit from additional time spent with their caseworker in discussing their futures.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR praised the State’s IL program, indicating that there is a continuum of services for adolescents from age 12 to young adulthood. The State allows youth to recommit to foster care until age 21 in order to remain in foster care.

Other stakeholders, however, expressed the opinion that the IL program needs to be re-vamped, that youth do not receive the support they need for independent living, and that youth are not prepared for a career. In addition, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that foster parents do not receive training to learn how to teach IL skills to the youth in their homes. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State’s focus on OPPLA as a last resort only, is detrimental in preparing youth to transition out of foster care. Several stakeholders commented that, because youth are not allowed to obtain a driver’s license until they are 18 years of age as the agency cannot accept liability, they are not fully prepared for independence.

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	8	9	10	27	67.5
Partially Achieved	2	11	0	13	32.5
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 67.5 percent of the cases, which is less than the 95 percent or higher required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 80 percent of Daviess County cases, 45 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases. Kentucky also was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concerns identified during the 2003 CFSR were the following:

- The agency was not consistent in placing siblings together when a separation was not necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children.
- The agency was not consistent in supporting frequent visitation between children and their parents and siblings.
- The agency was not consistent in making diligent efforts to preserve the child's connections to neighborhood, community, cultural heritage, family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in making diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal relatives) as potential placement resources for children in foster care.
- The agency was not consistent in supporting or maintaining the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers.

To address these concerns, Kentucky implemented the following strategies as part of its PIP:

- The State reviewed and revised OOHC SOP regarding placement with siblings, relative placements, preserving connections, attachment, and visitation with mothers, fathers, and siblings. Tip sheets were developed. Caseworkers and supervisors and both PCP and DCBS resource parents were trained on the revised SOP.
- DCBS revised the DRP to ensure adequate placement resources for siblings.

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

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

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 33 (82.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child, or if a relationship with the parents was considered to be not in the child's best interests throughout the period under review, or parents were deceased or their

whereabouts were unknown. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child’s most current foster care setting was in close proximity to the child’s parents or close relatives. The results of this assessment are provided in the table below.

Item 11	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	15	9	32	97
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	0	1	3
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	16	9	33	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	4	1	7	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 94 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 11 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed in the same community or county as the parents or that the child’s placement was not in the same community or county, but was in close proximity to the parents. The item also was rated as a Strength if the child was placed out of his or her community or county, but the placement was determined to be necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the child’s permanency goal.

Item 11 was rated as an ANI in one case when reviewers determined that the child’s placement was not in proximity to his or her parents or siblings.

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to ensure that children were placed in foster care placements that were in close proximity to their parents or relatives, or that were necessary to meet special needs. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated a Strength in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State currently does not have valid data regarding the percentage of children placed in the same county as the county of origin due to the manual nature of the information collected about children residing in homes belonging to PCCs. Policy requires that children must be placed with their siblings in the most family-like, least restrictive setting that is in closest proximity to the family’s home. The Statewide Assessment notes that a barrier to placing children in close proximity is the

limited availability of residential therapeutic programs in non-urban areas of the State. According to the Statewide Assessment, in December 2006, there were 60 children with severe mental health needs in foster care who were placed out-of-State due to the lack of an in-State resource.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that many children in foster care are placed in the same county and in close proximity to their parents or relatives when a resource is available. They noted that when children are placed some distance from their families, it usually is due to the child’s need for specialized treatment.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 21 (52.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were, or had been, placed together and, if not, whether the separation was necessary to meet the needs (service or safety needs) of one or more of the children. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 12	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	6	7	8	21	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	7	8	21	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	13	2	19	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the applicable cases. Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings, or that the separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child’s best interests.

Rating Determination

Item 12 is assigned an overall rating of Strength. Reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care (when appropriate) in 100 percent of the applicable cases. This item was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

The Statewide Assessment reports that DCBS uses the CQI case reviews to monitor siblings being placed together unless there is clear evidence that separation is necessary to meet the needs/best interests of the child. According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2007 90 percent of children in foster care were living with siblings. In addition, the Statewide Assessment reports that in 2003, the State changed policy to allow siblings of children placed in therapeutic foster homes to be placed together in the therapeutic home.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCBS makes concerted efforts to keep sibling groups together when they are placed in foster care, or to reunite them if they are separated. However, stakeholders also noted that when there is a lack of resources for large sibling groups, the agency attempts to place the children in close proximity to one another.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 30 (75 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child’s life (or parents were deceased), or visitation with a parent was considered to not be in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings in foster care, whether these visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families, and whether concerted efforts were made to ensure that the quality of parent-child visitation was sufficient to maintain the continuity of the relationship. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 13	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	4	6	7	17	57
Area Needing Improvement	3	10	0	13	43
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	16	7	30	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	4	3	10	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 57 percent of Daviess County cases, 37.5 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 13 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children, or the agency made concerted efforts to promote frequent visitation even when the current visitation frequency did not meet the child’s needs.

Item 13 was rated as an ANI in 13 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation between children and their mothers (five cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation between children and their fathers (eight cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation between siblings in foster care (two cases).

Concerns about the quality of visitation were identified for the mother in four cases. Concerns about the quality of visitation with the father were identified in three cases. Concerns about the quality of visitation with siblings were identified in two cases.

Specific information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below. As shown in the table, for the applicable cases, children visited with their fathers at least once a month in 55 percent of the cases, with their mothers at least once a month in 68 percent of the cases, and with their siblings at least once a month in 50 percent of the cases.

Visitation Frequency (during the period under review)	Mother and Child	Father and Child	Siblings in Foster Care
At least once a week	9 (32%)	7 (32%)	1 (17%)
Less than once a week but at least twice a month	8(29%)	3 (14%)	2 (33%)
Less than twice a month but at least once a month	2 (7%)	2 (9%)	0
Less than once a month	7 (25%)	4 (18%)	3 (50%)
Never	2 (7%)	6 (27%)	0
Total Applicable Cases	28	22	6

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 57 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation frequency and quality were sufficient to meet the needs of the child and family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, visitation agreements are negotiated during the initial FTM. The expectation is that parent visitation should be scheduled not less than once every 2 weeks for children, and 2 to 3 times per week (when possible) for infants. Visits should last for at least 1 hour and take place in the parent’s home or other neutral location excluding the DCBS office. According to the Statewide Assessment, using data from the CQI case review process as the source, current performance for item 13 is 77.1 percent. The strengths noted in the Statewide Assessment included a contract with community partners to supervise visits, an effort to plan visits around the parents’ schedule, an effort to hold visits in family friendly settings, and a practice of allowing foster parents who have been sufficiently trained to transport children to the family home when unsupervised visitation is approved.

Barriers to visitation that were noted in the Statewide Assessment included the following;

- Parents who do not attend scheduled visits
- Parents without transportation to children who are placed some distance away
- Foster parents who are not comfortable with the child’s emotional upheaval after a family visit
- Caseworkers who fear for their safety when they take children to the parents’ home

In addition, the Statewide Assessment states that the frequency of visitation between siblings in foster care often depends on the foster parent’s willingness to initiate the visit, transport the children, and supervise the visit.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment expresses the opinion that the October 16, 2006, murder of Boni Frederick, a support service aide who was murdered while supervising a parent-child visit in the parent’s home, had an impact on caseworker visits with parents. The murder highlighted issues with staff safety during parental visits. According to the Statewide Assessment, many staff became reluctant to conduct home visits unless they are paired with another caseworker, potentially decreasing the frequency and quality of the visits, although the State’s data reports did not reflect a decrease in parental visitation.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency could improve the frequency and quality of children’s visitation with parents and siblings in order to better meet the needs of children. According to several stakeholders, the State contracts with four supervised visitation centers that provide visits with flexible scheduling. These visitation centers are located in neighborhoods with high removal rates.

Item 14. Preserving connections

_____ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for 38 (95 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 14 are presented in the table below.

Item 14	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	14	10	32	84
Area Needing Improvement	1	5	0	6	16
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	19	10	38	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	1	0	2	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 89 percent of Daviess County cases, 74 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases.

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

Item 14 was rated as an ANI in 6 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with schools and friends (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family members (four cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain any of the child's connections (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school in 84 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CQI data show gradual improvement in preserving connections for children. In the 2003 PIP baseline data, children's connections were maintained in 80 percent of the cases. The current CQI data indicate that connections are being maintained in 85 percent of cases. One barrier to maintaining connections mentioned is that, for Native American children, it can take a long time to locate the correct Tribe and inform it that a child who is a member of that Tribe has entered foster care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that practice is inconsistent with regard to agency efforts to preserve the child's connections to extended family (especially siblings not in foster care), community, religion, and cultural heritage while the child is in foster care. However, some stakeholders noted that when children enter foster care they may be allowed to continue their education in the same school.

Item 15. Relative placement

_____ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 36 (90 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers

were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal relatives) as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 15	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	4	11	10	25	69
Area Needing Improvement	4	7	0	11	31
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	18	10	36	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	2	2	0	4	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of Daviess County cases, 61 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases.

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

- The child was placed with relatives (five cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (20 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an ANI in 11 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives but did search for maternal relatives (four cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for either maternal or paternal relatives (seven cases).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 69 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy requires that possible relative placements are to be explored at the initial FTM and, within 30 days of the FTM, the caseworker is to diligently seek both maternal and paternal relatives as possible placement resources. The Statewide Assessment notes that, although children may be placed with relatives who do not receive any financial

support, funding for relative caregivers who are not licensed foster parents may be available if the family meets eligibility criteria through the kinship care program. If eligible, the family could receive up to \$300 per month per child.

According to the Statewide Assessment barriers to relative placements include the following:

- When the State wants to consider relatives who reside out-of-State as a placement resource, the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) process is cumbersome and time-consuming.
- The State is inconsistent in preparing and supporting relative caregivers to deal with emotional and behavioral issues of the children for whom they are caring.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency makes diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives (both maternal and paternal relative) for placements.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 29 (72.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child, or a relationship with the parents was considered to be not in the child’s best interests throughout the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of this assessment are provided in the table below.

Item 16	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	3	7	7	17	59
Area Needing Improvement	3	8	1	12	41
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	15	8	29	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	5	2	11	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	20	10	40	

The item was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of Daviess County cases, 47 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 87.5 percent of Laurel County cases.

Item 16 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children. Item 16 was rated as an ANI in 12 cases when reviewers determined that there was not a concerted effort to support the bond between the child and his or her mother and/or father.

Specific findings pertaining to this item were as follows:

Efforts Made to Support Relationships	With Mother	With Father
Encouraging the parent’s participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	11	5
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in the above events, activities, or appointments	2	0
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	9	5
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parent role models	8	3
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	1	3

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care in 59 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, data from the CQI case reviews show an increase in the percentage of cases where the parent-child relationship was supported. The PIP baseline in 2003 indicated that in 73 percent of the applicable cases, the agency was effective in supporting the parent-child relationship and the recent CQI shows that this percentage has increased to 83 percent.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that the agency supports the child’s relationships with parents by encouraging parents to attend children’s activities and accompany their children to appointments, by identifying and reaching out to fathers, and by having foster parents mentor and coach parents.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	6	11	14	31	47.7
Partially Achieved	8	11	3	22	33.8
Not Achieved or Addressed	3	9	0	12	18.5
Total Applicable Cases	17	31	17	65	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 47.7 percent of the cases reviewed, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 35 percent of Daviess County cases and Jefferson County cases, and 82 percent of Laurel County cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 23 (57.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases and 8 (32 percent) of the 25 in-home services cases. Kentucky also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- Inadequate assessments of the needs of children, parents, and foster parents resulted in service needs of children and parents that were not addressed in service plans.
- The agency was not consistent in its efforts to involve parents, especially fathers, in the case planning process.
- The caseworkers’ contacts with children were not of sufficient frequency and quality to ensure children’s safety and promote their permanency and well-being.
- The caseworkers’ contacts with parents were not of sufficient frequency and quality to meet the needs of the children and families.

To address the identified concerns, the State developed and implemented the following strategies in its PIP:

- The State reviewed and revised SOP for in-home and out-of-home services; CQA case planning and management; case transfers; matching needs with services; engagement; relationship building; and active involvement of mother, father, children, foster, and adoptive parents. Tip sheets were developed and social work staff, PCC staff, and resource parents were trained on the revised SOP.
- The State developed and piloted a resource coordination process to facilitate matching needs and services.
- The State conducted random customer satisfaction surveys of youth, mothers, fathers, foster parents, and PCC staff regarding case planning processes relevant to needs and services.

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings of the 2008 CFSR pertaining to the specific items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 17 was applicable for all 65 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had adequately assessed the needs of children, parents, and foster parents; and provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children’s (but not parents’) needs pertaining to educational, physical health, and mental health needs. These are addressed in later items. The case review results are presented in the table below.

Item 17	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	9	14	14	37	57
Area Needing Improvement	8	17	3	28	43
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

The item was rated as a Strength in 53 percent of Daviess County cases, 45 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 82 percent of Laurel County cases. In addition, the item was rated as a Strength in 67.5 percent (27 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 40 percent (10 cases) of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 17 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. Item 17 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined that there was inadequate assessment of needs and/or inadequate services to meet identified needs.

Specific case review findings for item 17 are shown in the table below. The data indicate that, for both foster care and in-home services cases, the agency was more likely to assess and meet the needs of children and mothers than those of fathers.

Target Person for Assessment and Services	Foster Care			In-Home Services		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Mother's needs assessed and met	28 (87.5%)	4	32	18 (72%)	7	25
Father's needs assessed and met	17 (61%)	11	28	9 (43%)	12	21
Foster parent's needs assessed and met	33 (94%)	2	35			
Child's needs assessed and met	33 (82.5%)	7	40	20 (80%)	5	25

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 57 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the State had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children (when appropriate), parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. Reviewers determined that 81 percent of clients had an adequate needs assessment while 76 percent of clients had the identified service needs met. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CQA is the mechanism for assessing the needs of children and identifying the needed services. Services needed are documented in the case plan. The Statewide Assessment reports that the CQI case review process established the 2003 PIP baseline for item 17 at 72.5 percent of cases rated as a Strength. Within the past 2 years, CQI performance has been rated as a Strength for this item in 80 percent of cases.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following barriers to adequate assessment and provision of services needs:

- Caseworkers are inconsistent in their ability to assess safety and risk issues, and their clients' needs.

- Recruitment and certification (R&C) caseworkers are inconsistent in their assessment of needs and provision of services to foster parents.

The Statewide Assessment notes that some of the unmet services as determined from customer surveys include the following:

- Access to transportation and child care services for parents to attend meetings and service provider appointments
- Substance abuse treatment services, mental health services, transportation, housing, parenting skills training, and family counseling for biological parents
- The use and quality of FTM practices for alerting families to available resources
- After-school programming, activities with peers, adoption preparation, and mental health services for children in foster care
- Support groups, legal assistance, family therapy, housing, additional visitation with their children, and parenting classes for fathers
- Additional visitation with family members, opportunities to drive, opportunities to hold jobs, more opportunities to visit with friends and siblings for foster youth

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State is effective in identifying and addressing the needs of foster parents. However, several stakeholders agreed with the Statewide Assessment that the lack of transportation for parents to obtain services is often a barrier. Stakeholders also identified caseworker turnover and provider turnover as barriers in assessing needs and providing services to meet the needs of children and parents.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 63 (97 percent) of the 65 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, or if the child was too young, had cognitive delays, or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in case planning and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the children's best interests. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child had actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 18	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	11	15	34	54
Area Needing Improvement	8	19	2	29	46
Total Applicable Cases	16	30	17	63	
Not Applicable Cases	1	1	0	2	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

The item was rated as a Strength in 50 percent of Daviess County cases, 37 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 88 percent of Laurel County cases. In addition the item was rated as a Strength in 24 (63 percent) of the 38 applicable foster care cases and 10 (40 percent) of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 18 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when appropriate) in the case planning process.

Key findings with regard to this item are presented in the table below. The data indicate that, for the cases reviewed, fathers were less likely to be involved in case planning (54 percent) than were mothers (74 percent) or appropriate children (79 percent). However, involvement of both children and mothers in the case planning was generally low.

Person Involved in Case Planning	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable Cases	Yes	Applicable Cases
Mother	26 (81%)	32	16 (64%)	25
Father	20 (67%)	30	8 (36%)	22
Children	20 (83%)	24	7 (70%)	10

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 54 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents, children, and foster parents in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in Kentucky's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky regulations require the caseworkers to involve all children age 6 and older, their parents, and any other significant person in the child’s life (including those who may not be living in the family unit) in case planning, to the fullest extent possible.

The Statewide Assessment notes that improvement is needed in the quality of case plans and in the inclusion of fathers in case planning. Additionally, the Statewide Assessment notes that empowering parents and youth with the skills and knowledge needed for meaningful involvement in writing the case plan also is needed.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following barriers to involving the child and family in case planning:

- Service provider participation in case planning is waning in some areas due to the time commitment required to participate in FTMs, resulting in parents participating less in case planning.
- Stakeholders report that parents express feeling intimidated by the complexity of the case planning process.
- Transportation difficulties for youth who are placed in residential programs some distance away from their home county are particularly problematic.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State has improved its diligent efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers in case planning. Stakeholders also said that there is a Parent Advocate program that provides a mentor for families entering the child welfare agency, and assists families in understanding and engaging in the case planning process. However, some stakeholders indicated that there are long waiting lists for this program. Additional comments from stakeholders with regard to engaging parents in case planning are presented under item 25 in the Systemic Factors section of the report.

Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 19	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	10	19	17	46	71
Area Needing Improvement	7	12	0	19	29
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

The item was rated as a Strength in 59 percent of Daviess County cases, 61 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 100 percent of Laurel County cases. In addition, the item was rated as a Strength in 77.5 percent (31 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 60 percent (15 cases) of the 25 in-home services cases.

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

- There were no visits with the child during the period under review (one case).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, and when visits occurred the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (eight cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child; however, the quality of the visits was satisfactory (three cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (seven cases).

Specific caseworker visit information from the case reviews is presented in the table below.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits with Child	Foster Care Cases	In-Home Services Cases
Visits occurred on at least once a week	1 (2.5 %)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	2 (5%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	30 (75%)	15 (60%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (17.5%)	9 (36%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	1 (4%)
Total Cases	40	25

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 71 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State requires monthly caseworker visits with children placed in DCBS foster homes or with relatives, and twice-a-month visits with children in DCBS medically fragile or Care Plus homes. Policy requires quarterly caseworker visits with children in privately supervised placements, which includes children in the foster homes of PCP agencies or in private residential settings. According to the Statewide Assessment, as of December 2007, 53.7 percent of children were in PCC placements. The caseworker is required to visit with children in out-of-State residential placements at least annually.

According to the Statewide Assessment, frequent caseworker visits with foster children present a rigorous challenge for the State. The State has requested that each region develop a plan to improve the percentage of children who are visited each month by their caseworker.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that there is room for improvement of both the quantity and quality of caseworker visits children.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents

_____ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 57 (88 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of the children. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker's face-to-face contact with the children's mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and/or ensure the children's safety and well-being. The results of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 20	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	6	13	24	42
Area Needing Improvement	10	20	3	33	58
Total Applicable Cases	15	26	16	57	
Not Applicable Cases	2	5	1	8	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

The item was rated as a Strength in 33 percent of Daviess County cases, 23 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 81 percent of Laurel County cases. In addition, item 20 was rated as a Strength in 14 (44 percent) of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 10 (40 percent) of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 20 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children, and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. Item 20 was rated as an ANI when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The frequency and/or quality of caseworker visits with the mother were insufficient to meet the needs of the child (10 cases).
- The frequency of the caseworker visits with the mother was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning, service delivery, and attaining case goals (three cases).
- The frequency of the caseworker visits with the mother was insufficient, but when visits occurred they did focus on issues pertaining to case planning, service delivery, and attaining case goals (three cases).
- There were no visits with the mother (two cases).
- The frequency and/or the quality of caseworker visits with the father were insufficient to meet the needs of the child (11 cases).
- The frequency of the caseworker visits with the father was sufficient, but the visits did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning, service delivery, and attaining case goals (one case).
- The frequency of the caseworker visits with the father was not sufficient, but when visits occurred they focused on issues pertaining to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (two cases).
- There were no caseworker visits with the father (13 cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table below. The data in the table indicate that caseworkers were more likely to visit mothers at least once a month (60 percent of applicable cases) than they were to visit fathers at least once a month (30 percent of applicable cases).

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits with Parents	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	0	0	1 (4%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	0	0
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	16 (53%)	6 (24%)	14 (56%)	7 (33%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	11 (37%)	12 (48%)	8 (32%)	7 (33%)
There were no visits during the period under review	1 (3%)	6 (24%)	2 (8%)	7 (33%)
Total Applicable Cases	30	25	25	21

Rating Determination

Item 20 is assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 42 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. This item also was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State requires a minimum of monthly face-to-face contact with the parents for both in-home and foster care cases. In addition, there must be a minimum of one monthly contact in the home with the parents of the children in OOHC. According to the Statewide Assessment, for December 2007, the percentage of cases with monthly contacts in the residence was 58 percent for in-home cases and 68 percent for foster care cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders did not comment on this item during the onsite CFSR.

Well-Being Outcome 2

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	5	19	10	34	87.2
Partially Achieved	1	0	0	1	2.6
Not Achieved	1	2	1	4	10.3
Total Applicable Cases	7	21	11	39	
Not Applicable Cases	10	10	6	26	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2, which includes only one item, item 21. Educational needs of the child. Reviewers determined that the outcome was substantially achieved in 87.2 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. The outcome was substantially achieved in 71 percent of Daviess County cases, 90 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 91 percent of Laurel County cases. In addition, item 21 was rated as a Strength in 30 (88 percent) of the 34 applicable foster care cases and 4 (80 percent) of the 5 applicable in-home services cases. Kentucky was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and, therefore, was not required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to this outcome are presented below.

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 39 (60 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if children were not of school age or if children in in-home cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to

determine whether children’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether concerted efforts were made to meet those needs. The results of this assessment are provided below.

Item 21	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	19	10	34	87
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	1	5	13
Total Applicable Cases	7	21	11	39	
Not Applicable	10	10	6	26	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Item 21 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and concerted efforts were made to provide services if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an ANI in five cases when reviewers determined the following:

- There was a lack of assessment of educational needs despite information that an educational assessment was warranted (four cases).
- Concerted efforts were not made to meet the child’s educational needs (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. Reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children in 87 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95-percent standard is set for this item because it is the only item assessed for the outcome.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky regulations require caseworkers to request an educational assessment through the local education agency. The educational assessment is submitted to the court within 60 days of the child entering foster care. For children younger than 5 years of age, a referral for a developmental screening is required within 30 days. Any assessed needs are to be included in the case plan and noted in the CQA.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the State’s CQI indicates that the percentage of cases that achieve this item has improved from the baseline score of 72.6 percent of cases rated as a Strength, to the most recent finding of approximately 80 percent of cases rated as a Strength.

Barriers to meeting children’s education needs that were reported in the Statewide Assessment included the following:

- Inconsistent use of the educational passport
- Inconsistent educational advocacy on the part of foster parents and caseworkers
- Caseworkers and foster parents who are not knowledgeable regarding the qualification criteria for special education

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that when children have to change schools, there are issues with continuity of services and with transfer of records to the new school. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that the majority of foster parents work collaboratively with the schools to meet the educational needs of their foster children.

Well-Being Outcome 3

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement					
	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	12	23	11	46	83.6
Partially Achieved	1	2	1	4	7.3
Not Achieved or Addressed	2	2	1	5	9.1
Total Applicable Cases	15	27	13	55	
Not Applicable	2	4	4	10	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 83.6 percent of the applicable cases, which is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 80 percent of Daviess cases, 85 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 85 percent of Laurel County cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85 percent (34 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 80 percent (12 cases) of the 15 applicable in-home services cases. Kentucky was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- Mental health assessments and services were provided only partially or not at all in some cases.
- The agency was not consistent in ensuring that children exposed to domestic violence, maltreatment, or other potentially traumatic events received mental health assessments or services.

To address these concerns, Kentucky implemented the following strategies as part of its PIP:

- DCBS collaborated with the Kentucky Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation (DMHMR) to address identification, consistency, and quality issues by both agencies.
- DCBS identified training needs and opportunities related to attachment and loss issues for children in OOHC.

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

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

Item 22. Physical health of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 47 (72 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children's physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 22	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	9	21	11	41	87
Area Needing Improvement	3	2	1	6	13
Total Applicable Cases	12	23	12	47	
Not Applicable Cases	5	8	5	18	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

The item was rated as a Strength in 75 percent of Daviess County cases, and 91 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 92 percent of Laurel County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent (36 cases) of the 40 foster care cases and 71 percent (5 cases) of the 7 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 22 is assigned a rating of Strength when reviewers determined that children’s health needs (medical and dental) were routinely assessed and services provided as needed. Item 22 was rated as an ANI in six cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Children’s physical health needs had not been appropriately assessed or addressed (four cases).
- Although the child’s physical health needs were assessed, the identified service needs were not addressed (one case).
- Children’s dental needs had not been appropriately assessed or addressed (two cases).

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of ANI. In 87 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was adequately addressing the health needs of children in foster care and in-home services cases. This percentage is less than the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as a Strength in the State’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are responsible for ensuring that children entering foster care receive a health screening within 48 hours, and for making arrangements for children to have a medical examination, dental examination, and ear and eye examination with 2 weeks of foster care entry. These are to be documented in the case record and in the medical passport.

The Statewide Assessment reports improved performance on this item. In October 2004, 60.9 percent of children’s cases were rated as a Strength on this item, while in January 2007, 73.3 percent of children’s cases were rated a Strength. However, the Statewide Assessment also reports that Kentucky’s performance on this item is below expectations for meeting the physical and dental health

needs of children. Barriers that affect performance on this item were scarcity of practitioners and facilities in the eastern rural Appalachian region, limited number of providers who accept the State’s Medicaid medical card, placement changes, infrequent updates to the Medical passports, and a need for a better understanding of the impact of prenatal substance abuse on children’s development.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSSR expressed the opinion that foster parents are involved in ensuring that medical and dental care needs are met and that the agency is meeting most routine medical and dental needs. Barriers described by stakeholders included delays in obtaining a Medicaid card, the poor quality of dental services, difficulty in obtaining specialty dental services, and the lack of specialty medical services in some parts of the State.

Item 23. Mental health of the child

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 40 (62 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs, or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been assessed appropriately, and that appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The findings of this assessment are presented in the table below.

Item 23	Daviess County	Jefferson County	Laurel County	Total	Percent
Strength	10	18	8	36	90
Area Needing Improvement	0	3	1	4	10
Total Applicable Cases	10	21	9	40	
Not Applicable Cases	7	10	8	25	
Total Cases	17	31	17	65	

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of Daviess County cases, 86 percent of Jefferson County cases, and 89 percent of Laurel County cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent (28 cases) of the 31 applicable foster care cases and 89 percent (8 cases) of the 9 applicable in-home services cases.

Item 23 was rated a Strength when reviewers determined that children's mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed.

Item 23 was rated as an ANI in four cases when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were not assessed nor addressed (three cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but services to address identified needs were not provided (one case).

Ratings Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. Reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children in 90 percent of the cases reviewed, which is equal to the 90 percent or higher required for a rating of Strength. This item was rated as an ANI in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a mental health screening is required within 30 days for all children entering foster care. If a need for further services is indicated, the caseworker is to make arrangements for service provision within 2 working days of receipt of the assessment. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, data from the State's case quality review show improvement from the PIP baseline of 69.2 percent to a current rating of 79.2 percent of children's cases being rated as a Strength for this item.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the CFSR noted the following concerns with regard to psychotropic medications for children in foster care:

- There is a need for psychiatric consultation for children who take multiple psychotropic medications.
- Psychotropic medications are often prescribed by pediatricians when child psychiatrists are not available.
- Psychotropic medications are being prescribed (possibly inappropriately) to very young children.
- Some children may be medicated when other alternatives for behavior management have not been fully explored and used.

Additional concerns expressed by stakeholders included the following:

- Some children experience long stays in psychiatric hospitals that may not be necessary.
- Too many children are being placed in out-of-State psychiatric hospitals.
- There is a lack of day treatment mental health resources that might prevent hospitalization.
- There is a lack of a sufficient number of child psychiatrists.

Despite these concerns, several stakeholders commented that Kentucky caseworkers and foster parents diligently seek out mental health services for their clients when they are needed.

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the CFSR Final Report provides information regarding the State’s substantial conformity with the seven systemic factors examined during the CFSR. Information on the items included under each systemic factor comes from the Statewide Assessment and from interviews with stakeholders held during the onsite CFSR. Additional information may come from other Federal reports or assessments.

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for the systemic factors is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (i.e., a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

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

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

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

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

Status of Statewide Information System

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as an ANI. Although the State’s information system, TWIST, is able to identify the goals, status, and demographic characteristics of children in foster care, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that, at the time of the onsite CFSR, TWIST is not able to readily identify the location of all children in foster care. It was noted that when children are in foster care through a PCP agency, the State does not have the address of the child’s foster placement in its data fields, only the address of the private placement agency. Consequently, placement changes may occur without the State being aware of it.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCBS operates a comprehensive statewide automated child welfare information system. This system, TWIST, is used to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of children in foster care. Numerous updates to TWIST were made since the 2003 CFSR to support Regional Centralized Intake by implementing a Risk Matrix tool and the CQA tool to guide decision-making. A case planning component developed in 2005 tracks individual and family tasks and goals, and provides ticklers concerning the progress of the case. The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and AOC have the ability to view data in TWIST via an interface. DMHMR services staff can view TWIST via a batch process and manual data sharing.

According to the Statewide Assessment:

Currently, Kentucky has less information on placement moves for children in PCP foster homes. Although Kentucky knows the agency of placement, we do not have the addresses of private foster homes in TWIST data fields and consequently do not capture moves between private foster homes within the same licensing agency.

The State plans to launch a PCC TWIST tracking module which will be web-based for ease of data entry by PCP agency staff. However, the data will be stored in the TWIST application and reported in CB's Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System data submissions. This tracking system will improve the State's ability to report accurate data about children's moves which will possibly negatively impact the State's performance on Permanency Composite 4: Placement stability. In addition, the proposed PCC tracking module will collect the family structure date of birth, race, and ethnicity for foster parents belonging to PCP agencies, and store the data in TWIST. This will allow the State to develop a statewide DRP that includes needs for both PCP and DCBS foster home capacity.

The Statewide Assessment discussed the State's external scrutiny in the previous 2 years related to reviews and audits of the adoption and foster care system by CHFS's OIG, APA, and LRC's PRIC. The audit reports identified a need for improved data tracking on the following:

- Child placements and moves
- Court activity services for the child and family to aid in reunification or adoption
- Recruitment efforts and the number of foster and adoptive homes approved and closed during the year

The Statewide Assessment states that the PCC TWIST tracking module also will address many of the audit concerns.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR confirmed that TWIST is unable to capture the placement location and moves of children between private foster homes within the same licensing agency. According to stakeholders, PCP providers enter the correct placement information onto a form which is sent to DCBS staff for data entry into a tracking system. According to stakeholders, this manual process delays the availability of correct placement information for approximately 1 month and that plans for the web portal for data entry by PCP staff should improve the accuracy and timeliness of placement data.

Stakeholders expressed the opinion that the current data systems capture the goals, status, and demographic characteristics of all children in foster care and the placements of children in DCBS foster homes. Stakeholders identified the following Strengths of DCBS's current information system:

- Data entry is accurate and timely resulting in a high level of data integrity. CQI staff support and train supervisors to understand reports.
- TWIST provides excellent support for caseworkers and managers with good basic demographic information, the ability to take care of duplicates, and longitudinal information.
- Report parameters are flexible and allow data to be extracted weekly, monthly, quarterly, point-in-time, or for a rolling year. CQI staff can run queries set up by technical staff if there is a need for a special request. Reports are available for staff performance evaluations and to track performance with Federal indicators.
- Ticklers are available to caseworkers and managers, and can be requested by case, by activity, or by caseworker. These are used extensively to manage key performance areas, caseloads, and caseworker performance.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

Status of Case Review System

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The State was not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following key concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- The agency was not consistent with respect to actively involving parents and children in case plan development.
- The State was not consistent with regard to holding permanency hearings in a timely manner.
- Although the State had a process for filing for TPR in accordance with ASFA, adherence to these timelines varied across counties and court systems.

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

- Revised a policy to require at least one FTM at the initial 5-day case planning conference or at the 3-, 6-, and 9-month case reviews for foster care cases to address permanency and concurrent planning issues
- Held subsequent training regarding the revised SOP with staff and foster parents
- Implemented a process to identify children who were in OOHC from 9 to 12 months to plan for timely permanency
- Used Concurrent Planning Quality Team reviews to analyze and revise the concurrent planning process
- Collaborated with AOC, OGC, and the American Bar Association (ABA) Center on Children and the Law to implement the Termination Barriers Project
- Analyzed Kentucky State statutes to assess for needed revisions to be more consistent with ASFA
- Analyzed State statutes to assess for needed revisions to permit cooperative (open) adoptions

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

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings of the 2008 CFSR with regard to this systemic factor are presented below.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 was rated as an ANI because both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that parents are not consistently engaged in the case plan development process. In addition, the findings of the CFSR case review (item 18) indicate that mothers were involved in case planning in only 74 percent of the applicable cases and fathers were involved in case planning in only 54 percent of the applicable cases.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Kentucky has extensive policy on developing case plans for all children in foster care and ongoing protective service cases. An initial FTM/case review is required within 5 days for children placed in foster care and within 15 days of opening a case for all in-home cases. During an initial case planning conference, a family case plan, an individual Youth Action Case plan, and a Visitation agreement for each child in placement are developed jointly with parents or guardians, agency staff, children age 6 and older if appropriate, an objective third party (OTP), the child’s attorney, the child’s caregiver, and the court-

appointed special advocate. Ongoing case plans for children in OOHC or for in-home cases are required every 6 months or whenever significant changes in family circumstances occur.

Although the Statewide Assessment notes that there has been a significant reduction in the percentage of cases with a past-due plan, it also notes that little progress has been made in the involvement of families and others in case planning. In addition, according to the Statewide Assessment, results of a customer satisfaction survey over the past 3 to 4 years consistently indicate that about 50 percent to 60 percent of families, foster parents, and youth agreed or strongly agreed that they were involved in case management decisions, although 70 to 80 percent report being invited to the meetings.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following barriers to engagement of parents in the case planning process:

- High caseloads of caseworkers
- High turnover in the caseworker position
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of engagement of fathers
- The format of the current case plan, which is not user-friendly for parents

Stakeholder Interview Information

There was general agreement among stakeholders across the State commenting on this item during the onsite CFSSR that the agency prepares timely case plans for foster care and in-home services cases. While some stakeholders praised the general quality of the case plans, others commented that the plans are not individualized and are not specific about the expectations for successful completion.

There was general agreement from stakeholders across the sites that parents are involved in case planning. However, a few Laurel County stakeholders expressed the opinion that, at times, parents are not involved in case planning; instead, a completed case plan is given to them. They believe that this occurs when parents do not agree to certain requirements or a particular service. When there is disagreement about case plans, the court convenes a mediated meeting that involves all parties in producing a signed agreement, similar to a case plan, that stipulates the tasks and services.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength. The State has an administrative review process in place for cases to be reviewed by an OTP at a minimum of every 6 months. Although the Statewide Assessment noted that DCBS does not collect data on the timeliness of the periodic reviews, stakeholders across the sites stated that the 6-month case reviews are both timely and substantive, and help the cases move forward in achieving case goals and objectives.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, periodic reviews are administrative reviews that are facilitated by the family service office supervisor. They are to be held at least every 6 months until a child achieves permanency. The reviews must include biological parents, the care provider, the child if age 6 or older, GALs, caseworker, supervisor, and an OTP. Written notice is required to be given to parents, care providers, and children 2 weeks prior to the review. TWIST provides reminders for upcoming review dates and also provides a monthly report that informs regional managers of upcoming conference dates. The report for the periodic review is submitted to the court.

The Statewide Assessment reports that consistent documentation of periodic review data is a challenge for the State, and that both technical and practice changes are needed to ensure that periodic review data are timely and accurate.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that cases are being reviewed at least every 6 months. They also indicated that, in general, the periodic case reviews are substantive and help move the case forward in terms of achieving case goals and objectives. Each case review includes a non-involved third party participant, often the permanency specialist for the region. A written report is sent to the court.

Some stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that there is redundancy in the case review process due to the combination of internal administrative reviews and external reviews such as citizen reviews regularly conducted by the CFCRBs and Interested Party Reviews through AOC.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as a Strength because permanency hearings are consistently held in a timely manner. Although the Statewide Assessment did not provide aggregate data related to this item, the stakeholders interviewed indicated that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner and that they are substantive in moving children toward permanency.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, SOP require a dispositional or annual permanency hearing for all children in the custody of CHFS no later than 12 months from the date the State obtained legal custody, and every 12 months thereafter until the child achieves permanency. Once the court establishes the permanency goal, it can be changed only through a dispositional hearing.

The Statewide Assessment notes that in one-half of the counties in the State, a Family Court Model has been implemented in which a single judge hears all court cases related to the family. This model is designed to promote a cohesive approach to working with families and to improve the timeliness of scheduling permanency reviews and termination hearings, when necessary. The Statewide Assessment notes that, when a Family Court Model is not used, there may be delays due to difficulties in scheduling child welfare-related hearings on the court's docket. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, "there is significant competition on the court calendar for child welfare issues."

The Statewide Assessment indicates that there are two systems that currently track the annual permanency hearings; TWIST creates several tickler reports and AOC uses the Court-Net system to track annual hearings. However, the Statewide Assessment did not provide data relating to the timeliness of permanency hearings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are held in a timely manner. They noted that in recent years, Kentucky has emphasized the importance of the timeliness of permanency hearings and has provided training to address this issue. A few stakeholders indicated that although continuances were a problem in the past, they currently occur only infrequently.

Various stakeholders identified the following strategies that have been implemented to improve the timeliness of permanency hearings:

- The agency and courts have collaborated to eliminate continuances of permanency hearings.
- The Kentucky Family Court Model has been pivotal in achieving timely annual reviews.
- There are tickler systems at both DCBS and AOC providing advance notification to caseworkers and attorneys for the annual permanency hearings.

Jefferson County stakeholders reported that, in that county, caseworkers are responsible for requesting a date for a permanency hearing and that there is a pre-court meeting where the county attorney and DCBS staff obtain consensus on recommendations to the judge at the permanency hearing. Some Laurel County stakeholders said that the Family Court Model has triggered a pivotal change in achieving timely permanency in this county. Laurel County stakeholders also expressed that the permanency hearings are effective in moving cases toward permanency.

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

_____ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as an ANI because the TPR process is not conducted in accordance with ASFA requirements. According to the data from the case review results for item 7, the State was in compliance with ASFA requirements related to TPR in 76 percent of the applicable cases.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, for children who have been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months, DCBS determines if TPR is in the best interests of the child and if there are compelling reasons not to file TPR. Prior to filing for involuntary TPR, the caseworker explores the possibility of a voluntary surrender from the parents. Acceptable exceptions to filing a TPR petition are documented in the SOP. A request for an exception to filling TPR is in the annual permanency hearing report and must have the court's approval.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the State has dedicated significant time and resources to create a process for TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements. Following are some (but not all) of the projects/workgroups implemented to achieve better performance:

- Family Court is now located in half of the counties in the State. The concept of having a single judge hear all legal issues for a family is intended to minimize delays in TPR.
- The Termination Barriers Project, which is sponsored by the ABA Center on Children and the Law, studied and evaluated potential barriers to the speedy resolution of permanency planning and TPR hearings.
- A Blue Ribbon Panel on Adoption is in the process of reviewing the policies and practices of both the judicial and executive branch related to foster care and adoption.
- There is a SWIFT Adoption Service Process, in which each child with a goal of adoption is monitored within 10 days of the goal change to adoption and every 6 months thereafter to identify barriers to achieving permanency. Two TWIST reports were created

- In 2004, the Court Improvement Project implemented training with AOC on ASFA requirements and State policy regarding TPR. This training is offered to judges at their annual judicial college.

The Statewide Assessment also identified the following barriers to seeking TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements:

- Delays in the timeliness of hearings caused by an increased volume of court cases
- The opposition to TPR by some judges because of their philosophical viewpoints
- The lack of a Family Court in some counties—cases must be transferred from District Court to Circuit Court when petitioning for TPR
- A financial disincentive for PCP agencies to encourage their foster parents to adopt children in their homes
- The lack of an interface of data between DCBS and the courts
- Negative media attention

Stakeholder Interview Information

Although many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCBS and the courts are making progress with regard to filing for TPR in a timely manner, holding hearings in a timely manner, and documenting compelling reasons when a TPR petition is not filed, there remain frequent delays in holding the TPR hearings, due primarily to the courts' granting of continuances. Stakeholders also identified the following as additional factors contributing to delays in TPR hearings:

- There is a lack of diligent efforts to identify fathers or establish paternity until the time that TPR is filed (Davis County and Jefferson County only).
- TPR cases necessitate a transfer of the case between District and Circuit Courts for counties without Family Courts. When the Circuit Court finds that reasonable efforts were not made, the case is returned to the District Court, which will then have to repetition for TPR, thus resulting in delays.
- There are requests for continuances to give parents more opportunities to make reasonable efforts, especially in substance abuse cases.
- Court dockets often are overcrowded so that scheduling hearings becomes difficult.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an ANI because information from both the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that there are inconsistencies in practice with regard to how foster and adoptive parents are notified of reviews and hearings, and afforded the opportunity to be heard.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCBS is to inform the court of the name and address of the child's foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, or relatives providing care for children. The court is responsible for scheduling the hearing within 60 days and notifying the appropriate parties. The Chief Justice issued a memo in June 2007 to all District and Circuit Court Judges and the Circuit clerks, reminding them of the persons who are entitled to notice and must be afforded an opportunity to be heard.

The Statewide Assessment reports that neither the courts nor DCBS have a systematic method for tracking notifications of hearings. However, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, DCBS conducted a survey of all foster parents in 2006, with 43.9 percent of the foster parents responding. The findings of this survey were the following:

- Only 69 percent of responding DCBS foster and pre-adoptive parents and 68 percent of responding PCC foster parents said that they have been consistently invited to hearings.
- Only 63 percent of all DCBS foster and pre-adoptive parents and only 53 percent of PCC foster homes agreed that they were consistently invited to meetings and hearings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders at the State level and in Daviess County expressed the opinion that although the agency makes every effort to provide notices of hearings and reviews to relatives, foster parents, and adoptive parents, there are still inconsistencies in notification, especially regarding notification of permanency hearings. In addition, the stakeholders reported that there are inconsistencies in providing these caregivers an opportunity to be heard in reviews and hearings. In family courts, judges routinely request the participation of caregivers. However, in other courtrooms and especially when the judge does not know the caregivers are present in the courtroom, caregivers may not have the opportunity to be heard.

In Jefferson County stakeholders commenting on this item stated that relatives and foster parents consistently attend the hearings and are given the opportunity to be heard. Stakeholders commented that notification is delivered via letter, phone call, or sometimes the appropriate caseworker, but that notification consistently occurs and that the opportunity to be heard depends on the judge and the nature of the hearing. The court has recently developed a form to ensure notice is given to the pertinent parties.

Laurel County stakeholders commenting on this item stated that notice is provided by the clerk's office and is consistent. They expressed the opinion that foster parents are able to speak during court hearings and provide a written daily journal to the bench.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

Status of Quality Assurance System

Kentucky is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance (QA) System. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under QA System are presented below.

Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder comments indicate that the State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State instituted various policies that guide frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with children in foster care to ensure their safety and health. For instance, caseworkers are required to conduct, at a minimum, monthly face-to-face visits with children in DCBS foster homes and to use the CQA during home visits to assess safety and risk.

The Statewide Assessment indicated that in addition to monitoring caseworker visits, the CQI Case Review Tool is used to monitor assessment and provision of physical and mental health services to children in foster care. The State also conducts random exit interviews with children leaving foster care in order to evaluate the quality of services provided to them.

DCBS implements and maintains standards for foster and adoptive home approval, including completion of criminal background checks on all prospective foster and adoptive parents prior to approval. The Division of Licensing and Regulation (DLR) establishes and monitors the standards for all residential facilities and child care/child-placing agencies. When a report of abuse or neglect is received for a foster home or residential facility, specially trained and experienced CPS investigative caseworkers complete the investigation. These investigations are coordinated with the relevant licensing entity(ies) to ensure that appropriate action or follow-up takes place on any identified licensing issues.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the local CFCRB contributes to ensuring quality services for children in foster care by reviewing the status of each child and his or her family and the efforts made by DCBS for permanency. The CFCRB reviews are sent to the presiding judge and placed in the court file and the DCBS file. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the Kentucky Citizen Review Panel evaluates the extent to which DCBS is effective in providing quality services to clients. This panel produces an annual report that goes to both DCBS and to the legislature.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health. Various stakeholders identified the following practices and standards as promoting services for children in foster care that protect their safety and health:

- A medical passport is developed for each child in foster care to ensure that his or her medical needs are met.
- The CQI process empowers the caseworkers and provides the central office with needed feedback on quality issues with regard to services.
- The State's system of having different levels of foster care is effective in ensuring that children's needs are appropriately and safely met.
- The SOP prescribe the requirements for each area of quality care and are updated frequently, and comprehensive training on the SOP is provided to all new caseworkers.
- Licensure staff makes quarterly visits with foster homes to assure quality.
- Investigations of reports of abuse or neglect in foster homes are conducted by a specialized investigation caseworker from outside of the county in order to avoid bias.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented

X Strength _____ Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength because the State has a clearly identifiable and functioning quality assurance system that includes feedback to all staff via the “Data at a Glance” report that is designed to improve practice.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the agency’s CQI process continually measures the State’s ability to provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. The monthly CQI meetings, stakeholder interviews, customer satisfaction surveys, Children’s Review Program, Kentucky’s version of the CFSR, CFRBs, and statistical data contribute to a process that keeps services in alignment with best practices. The CQI Case Review Tool uses the Federal CFSR methodology to ensure that data collected by the tool are linked to outcomes for children. This tool is used to teach staff how specific casework tasks support outcomes.

According to the Statewide Assessment the “Data at a Glance” report incorporates case quality review scores as well as data generated from TWIST to provide a quarterly report that focuses on key service delivery indicators. The report is available at the State, regional, and county levels. The CQI process utilizes a stakeholder group to gain input about agency operations.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The majority of stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the CQI processes are very effective in identifying Strengths and Areas Needing Improvement in the system and in providing feedback to all levels of agency operations, including case-specific feedback to individual caseworkers and supervisors. Corrective action plans are utilized when program improvements are indicated and the results of CQI reviews are used to drive practice to exceed minimum standards.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

Status of Staff and Provider Training

Kentucky is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Staff and Provider Training are presented and discussed below.

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as a Strength because the State provides initial training for staff who delivers services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E. Training is completed prior to assignment of a caseload.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, new caseworkers participate in an orientation and three P&P Academy courses. Nine hours of graduate school credit can be earned for the three courses. The 251 hours of initial training occur during the first 4 months of employment. A new training cohort is started each month, so the wait time to begin the series is minimal. Training sites are rotated among major cities throughout the State to balance out the travel for the participants. After completion of Academy Course 1, which focuses on foundations of child welfare practice, and Academy Course 2, which focuses on Adult Protective Services, new employees are assigned caseload responsibility. However, because Academy Course 3 focuses on child sexual abuse, no cases of sexual abuse are assigned until after this academy course is completed.

The Statewide Assessment reports that feedback from staff suggest that the academy courses are more philosophical than practical. This feedback resulted in a gap analysis by DCBS and training staff to determine needs related to practical issues. The Statewide Assessment reports that P&P Academy training will be modified when the results of this analysis are obtained. In addition, field staff are requesting more hands-on training for dealing with casework issues in the field. This has resulted in the development of more coaching and mentoring opportunities for trainees.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the training sessions are evaluated by the University of Louisville (U of L), Kent School of Social Work. Participants in training are tested for gains in knowledge using pre-tests and post-tests. Participants also are evaluated with regard to the transfer of training information to practice. The U of L obtains feedback for the trainers to improve their teaching techniques and evaluates the effectiveness of the training using case quality review scores. In addition, U of L is analyzing outcomes of Public Child Welfare Certification Program (PCWCP) graduates compared to new employees participating in the traditional training program. New staff training for all three courses is approximately 88 work days, consisting of 37 days in the classroom and 51 days in the field office.

The State agency also uses the PCWCP, which is a component of undergraduate social work curriculum at State universities, and includes a required practicum with an agency during the last semester. Tuition is paid by the State and the State requires that participants in the program make a 2-year commitment to work in the agency after graduation. By the time the student graduates, they have completed Academy Course 1 and part of Academy Course 2, so they can accept a caseload more quickly than other new hires.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the P&P Academy prepares new caseworkers adequately for their jobs. In particular, stakeholders praised the on-the-job portion of new employee training and especially the “ride-alongs” (accompanying a tenured caseworker during service provision) and the mentoring by tenured caseworkers. A few stakeholders commented that cultural competency is part of the academy training and is presented both as a separate training lesson and is interwoven into other lessons and case scenarios.

Some stakeholders said that the Training Records Information System (TRIS) tracks all training and notifies staff when additional training is needed. Some stakeholders also said that agency staff appreciates the graduate school hours that are earned as part of the completion of academy courses.

Despite the mostly positive views, various stakeholders identified the following concerns with regard to the effectiveness of new caseworker training:

- There is a need for more on-the-job shadowing of tenured caseworkers to ensure that new caseworkers are adequately prepared to handle a full caseload.
- The training does not include the skills needed by specialty caseworkers such as skills for doing adoptions.
- There is a need for more training in time management because of the high caseloads.
- Supervisors cannot directly obtain new employees’ grades in academy courses due to confidentiality, so they have to rely on the new employee to share the grades.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as a Strength because the State provides for ongoing training that addresses the skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out the services included in the CFSP.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, although DCBS does not require a minimal number of yearly ongoing training hours, it does require caseworkers to participate in required courses that are offered during a given year. The DCBS Training Branch, in the Division of Staff Resource Development, provides the design and delivery of all ongoing required training. However, staff may elect to participate in cross training efforts coordinated by the region. Additional specialty trainings may be offered through grants or special initiatives.

In 2007, the CHFS required Substance Abuse and Forensic Interviewing Training. In the past 2 years, a concerted effort has been made to offer trainings on a regional basis to limit the travel for employees. The CQI initiative includes a graduate course, Supporting Child and Family Welfare Outcomes through Program Evaluation. This course was offered three times in the past 2 years and trained approximately 110 staff in data management and use skills. DCBS offers an M.S.W. stipend program which had 81 M.S.W. students and 26 M.S.W. graduates during calendar year 2007.

New and tenured P&P supervisors are required to go to three trainings: Effective Leadership Habits, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, and Personnel Management. All supervisory trainings are also evaluated by the U of L.

The DCBS Training Branch uses TRIS to track training requirements and to provide a real-time certified individual training record for any employee. The Training Branch management staff meets quarterly with P&P's Child Safety, OOHC, and Adoptions branches to assess training needs and review revisions in SOP to keep instructional delivery current.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that there is no set number of required ongoing training hours for either caseworkers or supervisors, although there is a recommendation of 20 hours per year. In the past, the agency tried the 20-hour requirement for ongoing training but decided to instead require specific training courses focused on identified knowledge and skills needed to carry out casework services.

Several stakeholders commented that the regions have established cross training opportunities in the communities with domestic violence and law enforcement providers, although others commented that refresher courses in these areas should be mandatory. Web courses also are available for ongoing training and reduce both travel time and expense when used. There has been training of private agency staff, specifically in the FTM concept and accompanying DCBS forms. The CQI process is used to identify training needs at both the individual and regional levels. In addition, supervisors can request specific training from their regional training coordinators.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength because the pre-service training for foster and adoptive parents, which consists of the Permanence and Safety-Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP), and the ongoing training requirements support the skills and knowledge base needed to effectively parent foster and adoptive children.

Statewide Assessment Information

The State requires an orientation session, a session on DCBS billing procedures and the PS-MAPP pre-service training for foster parents, a total of 30 hours. PCP agencies are licensed by the OIG. Prospective foster and adoptive parents of PCP agencies are required to complete 24 hours of pre-service training with a similar curriculum.

Additional pre-service hours are required for advanced resource homes (24), emergency shelters (10), Care Plus home parents (24), and medically fragile home parents (24). Medically fragile and Care Plus home parents are required to hold valid certification in CPR and first aid.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ongoing training requirements range from 6 hours for basic homes to 24 hours for Care Plus and medically fragile homes. Some examples of ongoing training topics are concurrent planning, sibling relationships, reactive attachment disorder, and lifebooks. Ongoing training is available either through the agency or through community resources. Training hours are stored in TRIS, as are the evaluations of the training. The Resource Home applicant must have completed the required CHFS-approved training prior to earning a recommendation for approval as a Resource Home Parent.

Regarding ongoing training for foster homes that belong to PCP agencies, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, PCP foster parents and staff are eligible to attend the DCBS medically fragile training, as well as most other DCBS trainings for foster parents and R&C staff.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR noted that foster and adoptive parents are required to complete the pre-service training prior to becoming approved. No formal training is required for non-licensed relative caregivers, although they are allowed to attend pre-service training. Stakeholders reported positive perceptions of the training and noted that there is little delay in getting into classes. Ongoing training conferences are offered twice a year, each providing 12 to 15 hours of training. Input for offerings is solicited from resource parents. University resources offer support for resource parents through Adoption Support for KY, Resource Parent Mentor Program, Special Advocate for Education, The Network, and University of Kentucky Training Resource Centers.

Stakeholders also noted that newly approved homes are supported by a mentoring relationship with veteran parents. This is a 6-month coaching experience with weekly contacts and 24-hour availability for emotional support and resources.

Regarding foster parent training for homes overseen by PCP agencies, a few stakeholders commented that ongoing training is required for these homes and is provided for them.

Various stakeholders identified the following areas where training could be improved:

- Provide child care during training
- Offer training on nights and weekends
- Include training on reimbursement policies and procedures during pre-service training

V. SERVICE ARRAY

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

Status of Service Array

Kentucky is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array. The State was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that although the State had services to access the strengths and needs of clients, there were significant gaps in services and in the availability of services.

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

- DCBS and DMHMR management staff collaborated to address service array issues for families and children.
- DCBS regional staff partnered with community mental health centers and collaborated to address service needs and service array related to P&P families and children.
- DCBS increased effective targeting and utilization of contract services.
- DCBS expanded the Targeted Assessment Program (TAP) to Madison, Fayette, and Hardin counties.
- The State promoted transportation access.
- Regional Community Connections for Children identified services gaps, determined needed resources, and refined contracts to align with service needs in each region.
- The Regional Community Connections for Children contracting process clearly addressed safety, permanency, and well-being.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed for this systemic factor are presented below.

Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as a Strength because the State has a broad array of services to assess the strengths and needs of children and families.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, since the 2003 CFSR the State worked diligently to improve service availability and accessibility through expansion of existing services, implementation of new initiatives, collaboration with communities for needs assessments, and revision of practice protocols to better serve the needs of children in OOHC. Strategies implemented included, but were not limited to, the following;

- An analysis of risk factor data captured in the CQA was used to address specific services needs. An example of a program originating from this analysis is START, the Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Team program, which focuses on services for parental substance abuse in families with children age 3 and younger.
- Needs assessment surveys were used to identify the greatest service needs for clients. This resulted in, among other things, the establishment of a support group for fathers in several counties, funded through the Community Collaborations for Children (CCC), which is an initiative to build community capacity to protect children.
- Data were analyzed to identify counties with unmet needs, such as a need for more family preservation services. Administrative data analysis was used to identify profiles of clients with unmet needs, such as adolescents in need of an adoptive home.
- Tip sheets were developed to assist staff in assessing strengths and needs of children and families that were used in conjunction with SOP and the CQA to assess the needs of each individual in the family.

The Statewide Assessment reports that also since the last CFSR, Kentucky has expanded its FPP and analyzed data related to this population to better target available services. As cited in the Statewide Assessment, since the last CFSR, the State contracted with National Toxicology Specialist, Inc. to provide drug testing statewide for clients with substance abuse issues, however the State was in the process of renegotiating the contract resulting in many areas of the State without any drug testing. In 2007, a one million dollar line item passed by the 2006 legislature was implemented to fund the Youth Transition Assistance program, which contracts with private providers to work with youth who have aged out of foster care to help them secure housing, tuition, medical, dental, transportation, and clothing assistance. Also, the State received a grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation to implement the Wendy's

Wonderful Kids adoption program in 2006. This program focuses on finding families for waiting children in the Special Needs Adoption Project (SNAP).

Stakeholder Interview Information

State -level stakeholders gave additional examples of the State’s expansion of service array since the 2003 CF SR. One example is the University of Kentucky Center on Drug and Alcohol Research/TAP now operating in 32 counties with 58 targeted specialists located in DCBS offices. Another example is CCC, a contract provider that assesses areas of the State to evaluate service resources needed. The State offers FTMs, supervised visitation, intensive in-home services, and support services to relative families. Also mentioned was the Health Access Nurturing Development program for first-time parents, the CATS program, IL services, adoption subsidies, a crisis stabilization unit to prevent adoption disruptions and dissolutions, and an adoptive support group.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an ANI because services are not accessible in all jurisdictions. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates a lack of essential services in some parts of the State, including mental health and substance abuse treatment services.

Statewide Assessment Information

The Statewide Assessment notes that needed services are not accessible in all political jurisdictions. According to the Statewide Assessment, the following drug treatment service are lacking in various areas of the State: in-patient treatment, drug testing services, and out-patient substance abuse counseling programs. The Statewide Assessment notes that in particular there are very long waiting lists to enter substance abuse treatment services in some parts of the State, and many areas of the State are without any means to provide drug testing services. Lack of drug testing services can result in children remaining in homes where there are unresolved safety issues or prevent children from returning home.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that both the availability and the quality of mental health services are problematic in some areas of the State, which results in a serious barrier to achieving safety, permanency, and well-being for children. In addition, in some locations where mental health services are available, there may be long wait times for services. Lack of access to psychiatric services for children results in months on a waiting list, and in rural areas there are virtually no psychiatric hospitals, causing children to be separated from their families to obtain treatment. There also is a dearth of specially trained therapists to work with children, especially very young children, who have experienced the trauma of abuse and neglect.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that there are waiting lists for family preservation services, due primarily to an inadequate level of funding. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the State hopes to address this problem with funding requests in the upcoming legislative session.

Finally, due to the rural nature of many parts of the State, lack of transportation is frequently a barrier to accessing services.

The Statewide Assessment states that among the efforts to address accessibility since the last CFSR is CCC, a program that promotes safety and well-being for children and families with funding to support a network of prevention-focused services. The State addressed substance abuse treatment resources through a collaborative effort called Recovery KY, which will open 10 substance abuse treatment centers.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Community Stakeholders Advisory Group (CSAG) identified the following barriers to service accessibility: DCBS has limited time to research and apply for grants, there is a lack of community service information, there is legislative ignorance of service gaps, and there is no single entity to assess gaps in services and attempt to close them. The advisory group recommended creation of a position in the CHFS to enable communities to evaluate service gaps and apply for and manage grants.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Regarding service availability in all political jurisdictions, State-level stakeholders commented that the lack of local mental health services in the western portion of the State requires very long drives to access services. In addition, there may be long wait lists to be interviewed at the Child Advocacy Centers in large metropolitan areas. State-level stakeholders commenting on community mental health services expressed the opinion that the centers need to do a better job of marketing their services; caseworkers seem to be unaware of the available services. In some parts of the State it is more difficult to recruit mental health professionals, despite offers to pay off school loans, because salaries paid to professionals are not competitive.

Other State-level stakeholders commented that some areas of the State have a wealth of services, while other areas have practically nothing. Generally there are not enough substance abuse services in any part of the State. In addition, although the domestic violence service array is better than in the past, the program is severely underfunded. Vocational and rehabilitation services are not available in all areas of the State, either. The quality of services around the State is also an issue.

Other gaps in services identified by State-level stakeholders were inpatient and outpatient mental health services, a shortage of child psychiatrists, a lack of sex offender treatment services, too few IL caseworkers to manage the workload, a lack of available transportation, long wait lists for parenting classes, a lack of services for incarcerated mothers, and inadequate substance abuse services. In addition, many stakeholders also commented that recent funding cuts affect the availability of services and cause providers to create wait lists for services.

Daviess County stakeholders commented that there are wait lists to access services, especially substance abuse and mental health services. In addition, more funding is needed for drug testing. There is a shortage of psychiatrists, therapists, and crisis mental health services, dentists and orthodontists who will accept Medicaid, domestic violence services, services for sexual abuse offenders, and Spanish-speaking service providers.

Jefferson County stakeholders commented that there are gaps in the following: affordable housing, truancy services, funding for drug testing, parenting classes, counseling services, and prevention services. In addition, there are long wait lists for Neighborhood Place services, and the quality of some services is an issue. Stakeholders expressed the opinion that the lack of resources is a source of frustration for the courts and that services appear to be more readily available for children in OOHHC than for in-home services cases. There are also long wait lists for many needed services, and providers are being challenged as funding and resources are being cut or drying up.

Laurel County stakeholders commented that there are gaps in the following: transportation, funding for drug testing, substance abuse services (especially assessments), foster homes willing to take teenagers, and there are waiting lists for mental health services and family counseling. In addition the county does not have treatment providers for sexually aggressive juveniles or domestic violence evaluation services.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as an ANI. The services needed to meet the unique needs of children and families cannot be individualized because essential services are not available in many areas of the State, and the State does not have flexible funding to purchase individualized services.

Statewide Assessment Information

Policy requires an assessment of each family member's needs and risk factors, which are then addressed in the FTM. The CQA is the instrument used by caseworkers to determine needs and risks. The Statewide Assessment states that while individualization of services seems to occur appropriately in many cases, a focus group expressed that there are some concerns related to culturally sensitive and individualized needs assessments for Native American children and a lack of Spanish-speaking caseworkers.

Stakeholders expressed concerns about "cookie-cutter" service plans. The service plan may require parents to attend parenting classes or be assessed for domestic violence even if there is no indication that these topics are problematic.

The Statewide Assessment also discusses the lack of mental health service availability for children, especially very young children and children in need of psychiatric services, resulting in out-of-State psychiatric placements, or worst yet, no service provision.

The Statewide Assessment addresses the growth of the Spanish-speaking population, which has resulted in an increasing need for bilingual caseworkers, foster parents, and service providers. DCBS offers qualified interpreters for clients who are not proficient in English. In addition, online training was developed and is mandatory for direct delivery staff to ensure they are appropriately trained in the procedures for providing language access to clients with limited English proficiency. Although CHFS has a unit designated to provide translations of forms and to provide short-term interpreter services, there is a serious language barrier for investigation, assessment, case planning, and treatment implementation for families with limited English proficiency.

Stakeholder Interview Information

State-level stakeholders commented that the State allows for individuality in its programs and service delivery; however, when services are not readily available the State is unable to create individualized services.

- Daviess County stakeholders commented that the ability to provide individualized services is dependent on the effectiveness and availability of the caseworker.
- Several Jefferson County stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that referrals to services are not truly specific to the client's identified needs. Families are referred to any available services due to long waiting lists for the needed services.
- Some stakeholders in Laurel County report that the case plans do not individualize either the child's or parents' service needs and that budget cuts have affected service availability. Lack of funding for drug screens was cited as especially problematic. The region does have some flexible funds available to assist in the individualization of service provision.
- Stakeholders believe that because funding cuts were so recent, the full impact on case progress will come in the future.

A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that the CQA tool supports individualization of services, and that DCBS caseworkers are effective in individualizing services.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

DCBS is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Kentucky also was in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under this factor are presented below.

Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength because the State engages in ongoing consultation to develop and update the CFSP through various surveys, special studies, and collaborative efforts with internal and external partners.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the primary vehicle for engagement of stakeholders, including consumers and providers, is the child and family services CSAG. DCBS and the CSAG meet regularly, usually quarterly, to address safety, permanency, and well-

being outcomes for the State’s children. CSAG provides a forum for open communications, solicitation of input from a State perspective, and initiation of collaborative efforts. The major concerns of CSAG are included in the CFSP.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders mentioned several other groups that provide input into the agency’s CFSP, such as the Regional Network Meeting, Citizen Review Panels, the Children’s Alliance, Blue Ribbon Panel, and the Multi-Disciplinary Group. Stakeholders held the opinion that their input is solicited by DCBS, and many of the recommendations from stakeholders are implemented.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength because the State consults with the community stakeholders to update the CFSP annually and develop the Annual Progress and Service Reports (APSRs).

Statewide Assessment

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCBS works collaboratively with stakeholders to assist in the APSRs. A 2-day retreat was held to solicit input from the following stakeholders: the CSAG, the CFCRB, TAP, Kentucky Youth Advocates, Citizen Review Panels, Kentucky Commission on Volunteerism, DJJ, Division of Child Care, Commission on Children with Special Health Care Needs, DMHMR, AOC, and health services and public health staff.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State regularly collaborates on developing the APSR. Stakeholders noted, in particular, that the CQI network solicits input at the county level to pass on to State-level representatives.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength because the State has mechanisms in place to ensure coordination of services and benefits.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, CHFS actively coordinates and facilitates services and benefits among child welfare and other Federal programs, such as child support, assistance for needy families, mental health, early intervention, public health, and Medicaid. Management staff from child welfare, income maintenance, and child support and child care meet in weekly leadership meetings in an effort to understand each agency's roles and responsibilities that promote improved coordination.

DCBS also maintains Memoranda of Understanding with other State agency partners such as DJJ to ensure coordination of services to overlapping populations.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCBS services are well-coordinated with other public and private services and benefits. Examples of coordination of services were the following:

- Fatherhood initiatives
- Jefferson County Network for Child Safety and co-housing of law enforcement and caseworkers
- Child Advocacy Centers and various multidisciplinary teams

Other stakeholders commenting on coordination of services and benefits commented that DCBS coordinates with the Child Care division, Children's Advocacy Centers, and the Division of Child Support. Regional network meetings were discussed as a mechanism for the service providers in a community come together to discuss how to coordinate services to meet the needs of the community. Other stakeholders discussed the eight Citizen Review Panels that meet in the fall to do strategic planning and goal setting and then submit an annual report to DCBS offering suggestions to strengthen relationships for collaboration and improve services for clients. Collaboration is strong between members of the Children's Alliance, composed of for-profit and nonprofit agency staff, and DCBS via monthly meetings focused on data-driven problem solving.

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

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

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

Kentucky is in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. The State was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its PIP.

Key Findings of the 2008 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under this systemic factor are presented below.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength because the State has established and implemented clear standards for foster family homes and child care institutions.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCBS maintains and implements standards for foster family homes, and these standards are applied to all DCBS foster family homes and child care institutions. The standards for licensure of child care and child-placing agencies and residential facilities are established by the OIG DLR. Child care and child-placing agencies approve their foster and adoptive homes. The standards are reviewed on an ongoing basis and revised accordingly to reflect State and Federal legislative changes.

Two changes occurred in the standards since the last CFSR review in 2003; applicants must now provide proof of U.S. citizenship or legal immigrant status, and a health information form is required for all adults and household members. DCBS requires that foster and adoptive home studies be completed within 4 months of the first informational meeting, and if there is a delay, the caseworker is to document the reasons for the delay in the case file.

Compliance with standards for PCP agencies is assessed annually by the OIG Division of Regulated Child Care and copies are sent to DCBS. DCBS foster homes are reapproved annually.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated the State has implemented standards that are consistent with national standards.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength because the State applies consistent standards for licensed PCP and PCC agencies and approved foster family homes that receive title IV-E funds.

Statewide Assessment

According to the Statewide Assessment, since the last CFSR, the State has worked diligently with private agency providers to align licensing requirements with DCBS program requirements. The Statewide Assessment reports that completion of the PS-MAPP training and a completed criminal record check is required prior to approval of homes.

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCBS receives a monthly report from the PCC agencies that has all placements in their homes. Included in the report are data on standards compliance. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, recent data show that of 1,485 foster homes, 1,385 (93.3 percent) were in full compliance with standards, and 55 (3.7 percent) had missing standards-compliance information.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that licensing standards are applied equally for all DCBS homes and applied equally within PCP agencies. Although several stakeholders commented that DCBS and PCP homes receive the same training and require completion of training prior to approval, other stakeholders commented that possibly the training requirements are different for private agency homes.

Stakeholders commented that private agency homes and DCBS foster homes are held to the same standards both initially and during the recertification process. Exceptions to standards are approved by the R&C supervisor and the region administrator, and most exceptions are granted to keep siblings together.

Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength because the State is in compliance with the Federal requirements for criminal background clearances and safety requirements for prospective foster and adoptive parents. The title IV-E review conducted in November 2007 found the State to be in compliance with criminal background clearances for foster care placements. This item was rated as Strength in the State's 2003 CFSR. The State did not provide data regarding criminal background clearances.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, criminal records clearance is obtained prior to approval of foster or adoptive homes. Fingerprint cards and ink are currently used and have a response time of 6 to 9 weeks. Delays in the approval process occur when the fingerprint is rejected for poor quality and has to be resubmitted. The State anticipates that the purchase of 30 fingerprint scanners will improve the response time to 3 to 4 days.

DCBS requires the assessment of safety of each child placed in OOHC through a face-to-face contact every 30 calendar days, or more often if the child resides in a DCBS facility. If the child resides in a PCC facility or PCP foster care, face-to-face contact is required at least quarterly. The CQA is the instrument used to assess safety.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCBS requires criminal background clearances on all adult household members prior to approval of the homes and annually thereafter. All adult staff of licensed child care facilities also must have criminal record checks. Stakeholders also noted that LiveScan fingerprinting was to begin by the end of June 2008, and should improve timeliness of fingerprint checks.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as an ANI because the State does not have an informed process in place to ensure diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive homes that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. Although the State requires and monitors regional recruitment plans, according to the Statewide Assessment, there are challenges with data discrepancies regarding the number of DCBS resource homes approved and closed during the year. In addition, the State does not have the necessary information regarding foster parents in homes approved by PCPs. These two issues prohibit the informed development of a statewide DRP that includes both PCP and DCBS resource home capacity. This item was rated as Strength in the State's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, each service region develops an annual plan for diligent recruitment and retention of resource families, which is reviewed and updated on a semiannual basis. The plan is based on the region's assessment of current and projected placement needs and includes strategies that will be used for retention, training, and recruitment. Data on children are collected by age, race/ethnicity, sibling status, and medical needs. The current and projected populations of children are compared to available resource homes by race/ethnicity, acceptable ages, and approval for medical needs children.

The Statewide Assessment reports that there are issues with obtaining accurate data on DCBS homes because the number of homes reported by the regions in their recruitment plan is different from the data in TRIS. TRIS contains the State's data regarding the intake and certification process for resource homes. The State plans to further explore these discrepancies in the coming year. Regarding information related to PCP resource homes, the State does not have the address of placement, family structure, foster parents' dates of birth, and their race/ethnicity. Lack of the placement address for children placed in PCP resource homes affects the ability to analyze issues regarding proximity of placement. According to the Statewide Assessment, these data are needed to better inform diligent recruitment efforts.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State plans to build a PCC TWIST tracking module that will collect the family structure, foster parents' date of birth, and race/ethnicity for PCP resource parents and store the information in TWIST. The Statewide Assessment suggests that "this enhanced data will also enable Kentucky to develop a statewide DRP that includes needs for both PCC and DCBS foster home capacity."

According to the Statewide Assessment, the ratio of African-American children in foster care to African-American foster homes is 4.34 children per home, while the ratio for Caucasian children to homes is 3.02 children per home. The number of African-American homes decreased by 5.5 percent during FY 2007 without a significant decrease in African-American children in foster care. Each region's recruitment plan addresses this disparity. In addition, the Statewide Assessment describes a need for more resource homes for sibling groups of three or more, medically fragile children, and teenagers.

Several areas in the Jefferson region have begun the promising approach of Zip code and neighborhood-specific recruitment of foster and adoptive homes; that is, focusing recruitment in the neighborhoods with the highest removal rates to keep children connected to their schools, families, and neighborhoods.

Regarding diligent recruitment of adoptive families, the Statewide Assessment reports that 572 of the 1,328 children who are free for adoption do not have identified adoptive families. The State funded two additional adoption recruitment staff with grants from the National Network of Adoption Advocacy Programs, which uses the One Church One Child model, and from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, which uses Wendy's Wonderful Kids. Youth who do not have an identified adoptive family within 30 days of TPR are referred to SNAP; it uses a variety of strategies to facilitate recruitment of adoptive homes, including a Wednesday's Child or Thursday's Child feature on television stations; features in print publications; and child profiles posted on the SNAP website, the AdoptUsKids site, or Adoption.com. There are four traveling photo galleries and matching events through the year. The State notes that of the children who were adopted in Federal FY 2007, 88.9 percent were adopted by their foster parents.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that additional home resources are needed for medically fragile children, sibling groups of three or more, teenagers, and African-American children. Promising practices include the use of existing foster parents as recruiters and adoption recruitment flyers sent to schools. In addition, faith-based recruitment is used.

Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength because the State has a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. This item was rated as Strength in the 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State has designated staff to work on cross-jurisdictional placements for waiting children through SNAP. ICPC requirements are enacted in Kentucky Revised Statute 615.030. A system to track ICPC requests was provided at no cost by American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) in 2006. Kentucky is an active member of APHSA and the Association of Administrators of the ICPC. The State intends to comply with the requirement to complete and report on interstate home study requests within 60 calendar days. The Statewide Assessment did not provide data related to use of cross-jurisdictional placements.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that children are placed in adoptive homes across jurisdictions, including in other States. They noted that adoptive resources in other counties or States are used by the State, along with activities such as the Heart Gallery and adoption lists. One example is the SNAP website, which was said to be one of the best resources for out-of-State recruitment of adoptive families. The State also uses AdoptUsKids and Adoption.com websites. The States uses Heart Galleries, Wednesdays' Child features, and it works with Wendy's Wonderful Kids for recruitment of families. The State also has a One Church One Child grant to recruit adoptive families through church attendees.

Most stakeholders agreed that the ICPC presents a barrier in the use of cross-jurisdictional resources for permanent placements because it slows the process considerably. Although DCBS has an ICPC processing system in place, timeliness in completing criminal background checks and lack of immediate response from families being studied are reported as problematic.