

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Final Report: Puerto Rico Child and Family Services Review December 2010

INTRODUCTION

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

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

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Puerto Rico Department of the Family, Administration for Families and Children (ADFAN)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending September 30, 2009
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in Aguadilla, 17 cases in Bayamon, and 31 cases in San Juan
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the central office) 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, and attorneys

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to Puerto Rico'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.

Background Information

The CFSR assesses State performance with regard to its substantial conformity with seven child and family outcomes and seven systemic factors. For the outcome assessments, each outcome incorporates one or more of the 23 items included in the review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on the results of the case reviews. An item is assigned an overall

rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The evaluation options for these outcomes are “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” or “not achieved.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met.

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

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

Rating the Systemic Factor

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

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

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

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases

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

The specific findings regarding the State's performance on safety and permanency outcomes are presented in table 1 at the end of this Executive Summary. Findings regarding well-being outcomes are presented in table 2. Table 3 presents the State's performance with regard to the seven systemic factors assessed through the CFSR. In the following sections, key findings are summarized for each outcome and systemic factor. Information also is provided about the State's performance on each outcome and systemic factor during the Federal FY 2003 CFSR.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

Puerto Rico did not achieve substantial conformity with any of the seven CFSR outcomes during the 2010 CFSR. Puerto Rico did achieve overall ratings of Strength for the following individual items:

- Foster care reentry (item 5)
- Proximity of placement (item 11)

Puerto Rico met the national standard for the national data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence. However, Puerto Rico's performance with regard to the other national data indicators could not be assessed because of data quality concerns identified in the CFSR Data Profile and in the Statewide Assessment.

Although Puerto Rico's performance on the items pertaining to repeat maltreatment and preserving connections did not reach the 90-percent level required for an overall rating of Strength, 84 percent and 85 percent, respectively, of the cases reviewed were rated as a Strength for these items.

The Children's Bureau acknowledges the work and progress that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has achieved since the 2003 CFSR. Puerto Rico is making positive changes in both its practice and operations to better serve children and families. ADFAN leadership is forging a new spirit of collaboration with key partners at regional and local levels in order to better coordinate and integrate key services. Puerto Rico's commitment to improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children, youth, and families that it serves is evident by the new initiatives and reform efforts, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The implementation of the Safety Model and the development of new policy and procedures to improve safety outcomes
- The development of a formalized training program for new caseworkers
- The development and implementation of a Quality Assurance (QA) unit and process

- The use of family conferences in an effort to improve decision-making, case practice, and service delivery
- An increased focus on achieving timely adoptions
- The development and implementation of two systems to improve the data collection for ADFAN: the Central Registry and Services Information System (SIRCSe) and the Information System of Foster Care and Adoption (SICStA), which, when fully implemented, will be an islandwide case management system

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

- Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect) was substantially achieved in only 39.1 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Safety Outcome 2 (Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate) was substantially achieved in only 36.9 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations) was substantially achieved in only 12.5 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs) was substantially achieved in only 23.1 percent of the applicable cases.
- Item 3, pertaining to services to protect children in home, was rated as a Strength in only 34 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 4, pertaining to risk of harm, was rated as a Strength in only 38 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 8, pertaining to reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives, was rated as a Strength in only 36 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 9, pertaining to adoption, was rated as a Strength in only 7 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 16, pertaining to the relationship of the child in care with parents, was rated as a Strength in only 17 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 17, pertaining to needs and services of the child, parents, and foster parents, was rated as a Strength in only 28 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 18, pertaining to child and family involvement in case planning, was rated as a Strength in only 30 percent of the applicable cases.
- Item 19, pertaining to caseworker visits with the child, was rated as a Strength in only 34 percent of applicable cases.
- Item 20, pertaining to caseworker visits with parents, was rated as a Strength in only 18 percent of applicable cases.

Puerto Rico's low performance with regard to these CFSR outcomes may be attributed in part to the following key factors:

- The implementation of Puerto Rico Law 7, which provides for the reduction of Puerto Rico's government workforce and funding cuts to key services, has negatively affected Puerto Rico's ability to provide child welfare services to children and families,

including, but not limited to, case management services, assessments, preventive services, legal services, and services to promote permanency for children.

- Some key services lack accessibility and quality throughout Puerto Rico, particularly mental health services, therapeutic placement resources, and transportation.
- The lack of a clearly defined family-centered practice model that promotes engaging parents, including noncustodial parents, consistently in case planning, assessment of needs and services, and visitation with their children, affects safety, permanency, and well-being of families.
- Some key policies and procedures have not been consistently implemented or practiced.
- There is a lack of ongoing safety and risk assessments and unaddressed safety concerns.
- There are significant delays in making face-to-face contact with children in reports of child maltreatment as well as cases receiving in-home services, especially when there is a case transfer between regions.
- Quality and quantity of caseworker visits with both children and parents are insufficient to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being of children. The lack of visits between caseworkers and children in in-home cases affected all well-being outcomes for in-home cases.
- ADFAN is not consistently seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) in a timely manner, which may contribute to delays in achieving permanency, and, for some children, increase the possibility of leaving foster care without a permanent home or permanent connections.
- There is a need for ADFAN to engage in more collaborative efforts with the court to jointly assess and address systemic barriers that have a direct impact on ensuring safety and achieving permanency for children.

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

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

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

Safety Outcome 1 incorporates two items. One pertains to the timeliness of initiating a response to a child maltreatment report (item 1), and the other relates to the recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month time period (item 2). Safety Outcome 1 also incorporates two national data indicators for which national standards have been established. These data

indicators measure the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 39.1 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 43 percent of applicable Aguadilla cases, 33 percent of applicable Bayamon cases, and 40 percent of applicable San Juan cases. In addition, Puerto Rico met the national standard for the national data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence. However, Puerto Rico's performance with regard to the national data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff cannot be assessed because of data quality concerns identified in the CFSR Data Profile and in the Statewide Assessment.

The key finding for this outcome in the 2010 CFSR is that the case reviews identified inconsistent practice in regard to initiating a response to child maltreatment reports in a timely manner and establishing face-to-face contact with children. Additionally, in 3 of the 19 applicable cases, there were two substantiated maltreatment reports, involving similar circumstances, within a 6-month period.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that Puerto Rico was not effective in preventing maltreatment recurrence. To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Recomputed the baseline for the data indicator absence of maltreatment recurrence
- Developed and implemented child protective services (CPS) case review processes
- Designed, piloted, and implemented the Safety Model to reduce the incidence of maltreatment recurrence
- Implemented the Intensive Home Preservation Services (SIPH) to reduce the incidence of maltreatment recurrence

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

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

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 36.9 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. This outcome was

substantially achieved in 53 percent of applicable Aguadilla cases, 41 percent of applicable Bayamon cases, and 26 percent of applicable San Juan cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- Appropriate services were not provided to families to safely maintain children in their homes.
- The lack of services in some communities and the lack of sufficient ADFAN staff made it difficult for ADFAN to provide the services needed by families.
- There was a lack of ongoing safety and risk assessments.
- There were safety concerns in the children's homes that were not addressed by the agency.
- New incidents of child maltreatment reported on cases already opened for services were not investigated consistently.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico was not effective in providing services to families to prevent removal or to address the risk of harm to children.
- There was a lack of services in the communities to meet the needs of children and families.
- There was a lack of comprehensive assessments of needs, due primarily to infrequent contact between caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Designed, piloted, and implemented the Safety Model to improve the assessment of family safety and risk
- Implemented an intensive in-home services program in the San Juan region using the Homebuilders Model
- Developed review instruments to assess compliance with caseworkers' and families' interactions and with case documentation
- Developed, implemented, and revised a supervisory case review process for CPS investigations
- Created and maintained an electronic directory of public, private, and community services that are available throughout Puerto Rico so that caseworkers can easily identify resources for families

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

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

Six items are incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all of the foster care cases reviewed. The items pertain to State efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner, as well as seeking TPR in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining items focus on an assessment of State efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship,

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 12.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. This outcome was substantially achieved in 20 percent of applicable Aguadilla cases, 10 percent of applicable Bayamon cases, and 10 percent of applicable San Juan cases. Additionally, the Puerto Rico CFSR Data Profile and the Statewide Assessment identified significant data quality concerns that affect the ability to assess Puerto Rico's performance on the national data indicators relevant to this outcome.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that foster care reentry was a rare occurrence. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- Puerto Rico was not consistent with regard to ensuring placement stability for children in foster care.
- Children's permanency goals were either not appropriate or not established in a timely manner.
- Puerto Rico had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.
- There was a lack of concerted effort to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner.
- There were delays in achieving adoptions in a timely manner.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent with regard to ensuring that children with a goal of OPPLA had a permanent placement and/or were receiving services to ensure a successful transition from foster care to independent living.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico did not consistently establish appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- Puerto Rico did not make diligent efforts to achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner.
- There were multiple barriers to achieving timely permanency, including the following:
 - Granting of continuances by the court
 - Delays in changing a permanency goal from reunification to adoption due to a general reluctance to seek termination of parental rights (TPR)
 - Delays in completing paperwork and filing for TPR
 - Permanency alternatives with children and their relative or non-relative foster parents not fully explored
 - Lack of understanding by the courts of the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regarding permanency
 - Absence of Puerto Rico law that reinforced and required adherence to the ASFA requirements

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Collaborated with the Court Improvement Project (CIP) to improve court processes regarding permanency for children

- Revised and strengthened ADFAN policies on establishing permanency goals and on permanency planning
- Hired new ADFAN attorneys to provide legal counsel to caseworkers for court proceedings
- Established a process for ADFAN attorneys to appeal judicial determinations that extend reasonable efforts beyond 12 months in cases in which the Child Protection Unit has determined that those efforts are no longer appropriate and/or contrary to the best interests of the child
- Reviewed all cases with the permanency goal of adoption to improve the timeliness of adoptions
- Developed policy requiring that all other permanency options be deemed inappropriate prior to establishing the goal of long-term foster care for a child and requiring that the court approve the permanency goal of long-term foster care
- Created and implemented standards, policies, and a procedure manual that incorporate Federal legislation regarding the Independent Living (IL) program, including the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the program, and provided training to regional and local ADFAN staff on the IL standards and policies
- Monitored the provisions of IL services as well as permanency outcomes for youth in foster care through onsite visits and case consultation

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

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

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50.0 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. This outcome was substantially achieved in 50 percent of applicable Aguadilla cases, 60 percent of applicable Bayamon cases, and 45 percent of applicable San Juan cases.

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

- Children were not consistently placed with their siblings.
- The frequency and quality of visitation between children in foster care and their parents and siblings were insufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.

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

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico did not consistently place siblings together in foster care.
- Puerto Rico was not consistently effective in promoting visitation between children in foster care with their parents or with their siblings in foster care.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent with regard to concerted efforts to preserve connections of children in foster care.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent in promoting the relationship between children and their parents.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico ensured compliance with visitation plans to maintain significant connections for children in foster care.

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

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

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 23.1 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. This outcome was substantially achieved in 35 percent of applicable Aguadilla cases, 12 percent of applicable Bayamon cases, and 23 percent of applicable San Juan cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 30 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 12 percent of the 25 in-home services cases.

The 2010 CFSR identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- ADFAN did not make concerted efforts to assess and address the service needs of mothers, fathers, foster parents, or children, although children in foster care were more likely to have their needs assessed and met than parents or children in the in-home cases.

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to involve children, mothers, and fathers in case planning in both the foster care and in-home services cases.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children, particularly children in the in-home services cases, were not sufficient to ensure the child's safety and well-being.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were not sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico was not consistent in assessing and addressing the service needs of children, parents, or foster parents.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent in involving parents and children in the case planning process.
- Caseworker contacts with children and parents were not of sufficient quality or frequency to ensure the children's safety or well-being.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Created and maintained an electronic directory of public, private, and community services available throughout Puerto Rico
- Established and implemented policy on timelines for family involvement in case planning
- Implemented a process in which the Permanency Plan Review Boards would examine parental involvement in case planning
- Designed a brochure on the rights and responsibilities of parents, children, and caseworkers in development of the case plan
- Revised the *Family Service Policy Manual* to align it with Federal and State regulations and to:
 - Incorporate standards and procedures for caseworker contacts with children
 - Establish the frequency of contacts between the office where the case originated and the office in the area where the child is placed to ensure the service needs of the child are being met
 - Establish procedure for periodic evaluations of services provided to children and overall case contacts
- Established and implemented policy related to caseworker visits with parents

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

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

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 74.5 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. This outcome was

substantially achieved in 83 percent of applicable Aguadilla cases, 79 percent of applicable Bayamon cases, and 67 percent of applicable San Juan cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 81 percent of the 37 applicable foster care cases and 50 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, in general, the educational needs of children in foster care were assessed and addressed. However, in 50 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases, educational needs were not assessed or addressed, although education-related concerns were apparent and a reason for agency contact.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that Puerto Rico did not consistently assess children's educational needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs. To address the identified concern, Puerto Rico implemented interagency agreements with the Department of Education as required under Puerto Rico law to ensure the provision of services to children.

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

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

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50.9 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. This outcome was substantially achieved in 69 percent of applicable Aguadilla cases, 54 percent of applicable Bayamon cases, and 41 percent of applicable San Juan cases. The outcome was substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 20 percent of the 15 applicable in-home services cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that the physical, dental, and mental health needs of children are not assessed and/or addressed consistently; however, children in foster care are more likely to have needs assessed and addressed than children in the in-home cases.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico was not consistent in meeting the physical or dental needs of children being served by the agency.
- Puerto Rico was not effective in meeting children's mental health needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented a policy requiring case record documentation of the evaluation and provision of physical and mental health services.

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

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The 2010 CFSR determined that Puerto Rico does not have a statewide information system that readily identifies or captures information regarding the status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals for all children in foster care.

Additionally, information gathered during the 2010 CFSR indicates that there are concerns about the accuracy of data pertaining to placements, permanency goals, legal status, and demographics because of the month-long delay between manually completing data entry forms at the local level and inputting the data into the Information System and Follow-Up for Children Located Outside of the Home (SIS) at the regional level.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that Puerto Rico did not have a statewide system that could accurately and reliably report on the legal status, location, goals, and characteristics of all children in foster care. To address these concerns, the State implemented the following strategies:

- Provided web access to the local and regional offices to fully integrate a communication system within ADFAN
- Implemented a comprehensive information system that incorporated the Central Registry database and a case management system to allow staff to monitor and report data
- Integrated QA measures for piloting the various components of the system and for monitoring data

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

Case Review System

Five items are included in the assessment of State performance for the systemic factor of Case Review System. The items examine development of case plans and parent involvement in that process (item 25), the consistency of 6-month case reviews (item 26) and 12-month permanency hearings (item 27), implementation of procedures to seek TPR in accordance with the timeframes established in ASFA (item 28), and notification of foster and pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers about case reviews and hearings to be held regarding the children in their care and about their right to be heard in those proceedings (item 29).

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The 2010 CFSR identified the following concerns:

- Parents are not consistently involved in the development of the case plan.
- Although Puerto Rico has a statutory framework for conducting periodic reviews, 6-month reviews do not occur in every foster care case.
- There is a process in place for conducting permanency hearings; however, most hearings are not held in a timely manner.
- ADFAN is not consistent in filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.
- Findings of the onsite CFSR case review indicate that ASFA requirements for filing TPR were met in 58 percent of applicable cases.
- There is no clearly established process for notifying caregivers about hearings or reviews, and Puerto Rico law allows courts to use their discretion in deciding whether caregivers who have had a child in care for 1 year or longer can be heard in any court proceedings.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Parents were not consistently involved in the case planning process.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent in conducting periodic case reviews or timely permanency hearings.
- Puerto Rico did not require ongoing periodic reviews over the life of a case.
- There was no consistent and routine process for filing for TPR for children in care for 15 of the most recent 22 months as provided in ASFA, and cases were not routinely reviewed for the appropriateness of TPR.
- The court would often close the court case before the child's permanency goal was achieved and would have to reopen the case for the child welfare agency to file for TPR. This process resulted in considerable delays in achieving permanency for children.
- There was no formal process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers about case hearings and reviews or for providing them with the opportunity to be heard during reviews and hearings.

To address these concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Established and implemented policy on timelines for family involvement in case planning

- Implemented a process in which the Permanency Plan Review Boards would examine parental involvement in case planning
- Designed a brochure on the rights and responsibilities of parents, children, and caseworkers in developing the case plan
- Hired new ADFAN attorneys to provide legal counsel to caseworkers for court proceedings
- Collaborated with the CIP to improve court processes regarding permanency for children
- Revised and strengthened ADFAN policies on establishing permanency goals and on permanency planning
- Established a process for ADFAN attorneys to appeal judicial determinations that extended reasonable efforts beyond 12 months in cases where the Child Protection Unit determined that those efforts were no longer appropriate and/or contrary to the best interests of the child

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

Quality Assurance System

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2010 CFSR determined the following:

- Although Puerto Rico has standards and procedures in place to protect the safety and health of children, foster home standards are not implemented consistently.
- Although Puerto Rico has implemented an islandwide QA case review process and regions are encouraged to complete a corrective action plan after the regional review, there is not a process in place to evaluate corrective action plans or to monitor the progress each regional office makes in implementing the strategies of the plan.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The primary concern identified in the 2003 review was that Puerto Rico did not have an identifiable QA system. To address these concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Involved various stakeholders in examining and improving the quality of care for children in foster care
- Designed and implemented a QA process that assesses child welfare practice as well as outcomes for children and families

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

Staff and Provider Training

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The 2010 CFSR determined that ADFAN has developed and implemented a training program for new caseworkers that addresses the skills needed for caseworkers to perform their jobs and that the agency can track participation in training. However, information from the stakeholder interviews indicates that initial training has not been provided over the past 2 years because of a hiring freeze in the agency.

The 2010 CFSR identified the following concerns with regard to training:

- Puerto Rico does not have minimal ongoing training requirements for all ADFAN staff responsible for providing direct child welfare services to children and families.
- Although ADFAN policy requires initial and ongoing training for foster parents, the training is not provided to foster parents consistently, nor, in practice, is initial training required for a foster home to be licensed or certified.
- The failure of a foster parent to complete ongoing training, as required by Puerto Rico law, does not affect the status of the foster home.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico did not have a uniform preservice training for new child welfare staff.
- Puerto Rico did not have an ongoing training program and did not require child welfare staff to participate in ongoing training.
- Foster parents were not required to receive preservice training prior to having a child placed in their home.
- Although Puerto Rico had developed child development training modules for foster parents, the training had not been offered consistently in all 10 regions; thus, not all foster parents were trained.

To address these concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Developed a child welfare training curriculum that includes components relevant to the CFSP
- Trained new ADFAN personnel on child welfare practices, processes, and outcomes
- Designed and implemented pre- and posttests for each training module
- Designed and implemented feedback forms to assess participant satisfaction with the training content and facilitators
- Developed a training catalogue and a quarterly training itinerary that provides information on available trainings

- Prepared monthly reports on attendance and completion of trainings
- Revised policy and practice to require foster parents complete a minimum of 18 hours of training per year

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

Service Array and Resource Development

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

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

- Many of the services in Puerto Rico's service array are not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions.
- There are waiting lists for such key services as psychiatric services, special education services, and housing.
- There also is an insufficient supply in the following areas: substance abuse treatment services, mental health treatment services, medical and dental services, IL services, placement resources, therapeutic placement resources, and transportation.
- Although Puerto Rico's use of family conferences promotes the individualization of services to meet the unique needs of children and families, family conferences are not conducted routinely in every case.
- The scarcity of many services, insufficient fiscal resources, and insufficient number of ADFAN staff make it difficult to meet the individualized needs of families and children on a consistent basis.

Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Many critical services were not available to children and families, and the scarcity of these services was a barrier to achieving permanency goals in a timely manner.
- Some critical services were not available in rural areas of Puerto Rico.
- In some communities where services were available, there were long waiting lists for families to access the services.
- The scarcity of services hindered the agency's ability to meet the individual and unique needs of the children and families throughout Puerto Rico.

To address these concerns, Puerto Rico created and maintained an electronic directory of public, private, and community services available throughout Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico met its goal for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Performance with regard to the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community incorporates an assessment of the State's consultation with external stakeholders in developing the CFSP and producing Annual Progress and Service Reports (APSRs) (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).

Puerto Rico is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The 2010 CFSR determined the following:

- Puerto Rico engages in ongoing consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in developing the goals and objectives for the CFSP and in preparing the APSRs.
- Puerto Rico passed a law requiring key public agencies, particularly those that implement Federal or Federally-assisted programs, to coordinate their service delivery efforts for families receiving child welfare services.

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

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

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

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with this systemic factor. The 2010 CFSR determined that Puerto Rico complies with Federal requirements for criminal background checks for foster and adoptive parents and is effective in using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns:

- Although Puerto Rico has standards for foster family homes and child care institutions, these standards are not consistently implemented nor are standards consistently applied to all family foster homes.
- The Statewide Assessment indicates that Puerto Rico needs to focus on the recruitment and retention of foster parents, including assigning ADFAN personnel dedicated to developing activities for the recruitment and retention of foster parents.

Puerto Rico was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CF SR and was not required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Table 1. Puerto Rico 2010 CFSR Ratings for Safety and Permanency Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings			Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved*	Met National Standards?	Rating**	Percent Strength
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	No	39.1	1 Yes 1 Invalid		
Item 1. Timeliness of investigations				ANI	43
Item 2. Repeat maltreatment				ANI	84
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	36.9			
Item 3. Services to protect children in home				ANI	34
Item 4. Risk of harm				ANI	38
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	12.5	4 Invalid		
Item 5. Foster care reentry				Strength	100
Item 6. Stability of foster care placements				ANI	67.5
Item 7. Permanency goal for child				ANI	42.5
Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	36
Item 9. Adoption				ANI	7
Item 10. Other planned living arrangement				ANI	57
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	50.0			
Item 11. Proximity of placement				Strength	96
Item 12. Placement with siblings				ANI	77
Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	40
Item 14. Preserving connections				ANI	85
Item 15. Relative placement				ANI	70
Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	17

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

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

Table 2. Puerto Rico 2010 CFSR Ratings for Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes and Items

Outcomes and Indicators	Outcome Ratings		Item Ratings	
	In Substantial Conformity?	Percent Substantially Achieved	Rating**	Percent Strength
Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children’s needs	No	23.1		
Item 17. Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	28
Item 18. Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	30
Item 19. Caseworker visits with child			ANI	34
Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	18
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	74.5		
Item 21. Educational needs of child			ANI	74
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	50.9		
Item 22. Physical health of child			ANI	70
Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of child			ANI	49

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

** Items may be rated as Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANIs). 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. Puerto Rico 2010 CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	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 parent(s) that includes the required provisions			ANI
Item 26. The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review			ANI
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			ANI

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
12 months thereafter			
Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act			ANI
Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child			ANI
Quality Assurance System	No	2	
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			ANI
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			ANI
Staff and Provider Training	No	2	
Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services			Strength
Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP			ANI
Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children			ANI

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

** Items may be rated as Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANIs).

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Service Array and Resource Development	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 Progress and Services Reports delivered pursuant to the CFSP			Strength
Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs serving the same population			Strength
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention	No	2	
Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			ANI
Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds			ANI
Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children			Strength
Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed			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 Strengths or as Areas Needing Improvement (ANIs).

Final Report
Puerto Rico Child and Family Services Review
December 2010

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

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

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Puerto Rico Department of the Family, Administration for Families and Children (ADFAN)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending September 30, 2009
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in Aguadilla, 17 cases in Bayamon, and 31 cases in San Juan
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the central office) 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, and attorneys

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

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

Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

Case Characteristics	Foster Care	In-Home Services
Total Number of Cases	40	25
Date case was opened		
Opened prior to the period under review	36 (90%)	17 (68%)
Opened during the period under review	4 (10%)	8 (32%)
Child entered foster care during the period under review	10 (25%)	N/A
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than 10	18 (45%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	8 (20%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	5 (12.5%)	*
16 and older	9 (22.5%)	*
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	0	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	0	*
Black Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hispanic (of any race)	40 (100%)	*
White Non-Hispanic	0	*
Unknown/Unable to Determine	0	*
Two or More Races Non-Hispanic	0	*
Primary reason for opening case		
Physical abuse	4 (10%)	6 (24%)
Sexual abuse	5 (12.5%)	2 (8%)
Emotional maltreatment	0	3 (12%)
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	21 (52.5%)	7 (28%)
Medical neglect	1 (2.5%)	0
Abandonment	0	0
Mental/physical health of parent	1 (2.5%)	0
Substance abuse by parent	7 (17.5%)	0
Child's behavior	1 (2.5%)	0
Domestic violence in child's home	0	6 (24%)
Child in juvenile justice system	0	0
Other	0	1 (4%)

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

SECTION A: OUTCOMES

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

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

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95-percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review or the national standards for the six data indicators by the end of their Program Improvement Plan implementations. The Children’s Bureau recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often take time to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with the Children’s Bureau to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their Program Improvement Plans. That is, for each outcome that is not in substantial conformity or item that is rated as an Area Needing Improvement, each State, working with the Children’s Bureau, specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the Areas Needing Improvement, and (2) the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its Program Improvement Plan and still not perform at the 95-percent (for outcomes) or the 90-percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

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

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

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

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

For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of Puerto Rico’s status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of Puerto Rico’s first CFSR report (held in fiscal year 2003), Puerto Rico’s status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Performance of individual sites included in the Onsite Review is presented in the tables. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate.

I. SAFETY

Safety Outcome 1

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	3	2	4	9	39.1
Partially Achieved	3	3	2	8	34.8
Not Achieved	1	1	4	6	26.1
Total Applicable Cases	7	6	10	23	
Not Applicable Cases	10	11	21	42	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	43%	33%	40%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (%)	State's Percentage	Meets Standards?
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6+	97.2	Yes
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68+	Invalid	

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 39.1 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to the case review findings, Puerto Rico met the national standard for the national data indicator pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence. However, Puerto Rico's performance with regard to the national data indicator pertaining to the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff cannot be assessed because of data quality concerns identified in the CFSR Data Profile and in the Statewide Assessment. Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that Puerto Rico was not effective in preventing maltreatment recurrence.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Recomputed the baseline for the data indicator absence of maltreatment recurrence
- Developed and implemented case review processes of child protective services.
- Designed, piloted, and implemented the Safety Model to reduce the incidence of maltreatment recurrence.
- Implemented the Intensive Home Preservation Services (SIPH) to reduce the incidence of maltreatment recurrence.

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented and discussed 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 23 (35 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 Puerto Rico's child welfare agency policy requirements.

ADFAN policy requires that a response priority be assigned to each case accepted for investigation. The response time for each priority is based on specific criteria established by the Safety Model. The following is a summary of the response time priorities:

- Response to Present Danger requires immediate intervention or within a few hours.
- Response to Imminent Danger requires intervention within 24 hours.
- Response to Allegation of Maltreatment requires intervention within 48 hours.
- Response to Risk of Maltreatment requires intervention within 5 days.

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

Item 1 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	3	3	4	10	43
Area Needing Improvement	4	3	6	13	57
Total Applicable Cases	7	6	10	23	
Not Applicable	10	11	21	42	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	43%	50%	40%		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 10 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. The 13 cases rated as Areas Needing Improvement included 26 reports that were not investigated in a timely manner, including 7 reports that, although assigned, were not investigated. Of these 26 reports, 2 were assigned as Response to Present Danger, 13 were assigned as Response to Imminent Danger, 6 were assigned as Response to Allegation of Maltreatment, 1 was assigned as Response to Risk of Maltreatment, and there were 4 cases in which reviewers were unable to ascertain the response priority.

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 43 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 1 was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law requires that reports of child abuse and neglect must be investigated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Statewide Assessment notes that all reports of maltreatment are registered through the Hotline, which operates 24 hours a day. ADFAN has 10 Child Abuse Investigation Centers across Puerto Rico that are staffed by child protection investigators. The Statewide Assessment also reports that ADFAN policy requires that the investigator make face-to-face contact with all alleged child victims and with parents or other responsible persons within the established timelines for the assigned response priority level.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Quality Assurance (QA) Unit conducts case record reviews across Puerto Rico. Where relevant, the most recent case review data reported in the Statewide Assessment are presented in this Final Report. Findings reported in the Statewide Assessment from the November 2006 to October 2008 review cycle indicate that investigations were not initiated in a timely manner in 41 percent of in-home cases reviewed and in 51.2 percent of foster care cases reviewed. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that in September 2007, there were 8,015 child protection services (CPS) reports for which the investigation had not been initiated. By September 2008, this number had decreased to 1,434, and in October 2008, the number of CPS reports for which an investigation had not been initiated was 877. The Statewide Assessment reports that approximately 3,030 CPS reports are received monthly and that, on average, for 814 CPS reports filed per month, an investigation is not initiated.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that generally ADFAN is punctual in its response to reports of alleged abuse and neglect. A few San Juan stakeholders reported that, although responses to maltreatment reports generally are punctual, a barrier to timely response is insufficient transportation for investigating caseworkers.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

Strength **Area Needing Improvement**

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 19 (29 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review, and if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. The results of the assessment of item 2 are presented in the table below.

Item 2 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	6	4	6	16	84
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	1	3	16
Total Applicable Cases	7	5	7	19	
Not Applicable	10	12	24	46	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	86%	80%	86%		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 16 cases when there was only one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in three cases when there were at least two substantiated maltreatment reports on the family within a 6-month period.

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

- In 48 cases there were three or fewer reports.
- In 13 cases there were between four and nine reports.
- In four cases there were between 10 and 17 reports.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 84 percent of the applicable cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 2 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers at the local level are responsible for the investigation of child maltreatment reports received on active cases, except for emergency reports received after working hours that are investigated by CPS investigators.

Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive stakeholder comments on this item during the onsite CFSR.

Safety Outcome 2

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	9	7	8	24	36.9
Partially Achieved	1	1	4	6	9.2
Not Achieved	7	9	19	35	53.8
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	53%	41%	26%		

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 36.9 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico was not effective in providing services to families to prevent removal or to address the risk of harm to the children.
- There was a lack of services in the communities to meet the needs of children and families.
- There was a lack of comprehensive assessments of needs, due primarily to infrequent contact between caseworkers and the children and parents in their caseloads.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Designed, piloted, and implemented a Safety Model to improve the assessment of family safety and risk
- Implemented an intensive in-home services program in the San Juan region using the Home Builders Model
- Developed review instruments to assess compliance with caseworker and families' interactions and with case documentation
- Developed, implemented, and revised a supervisory case review process for CPS investigations
- Created and maintained an online directory of public, private, and community services available throughout Puerto Rico so that caseworkers can identify resources for families easily

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 35 (54 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were excluded if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review, and there were no other children in the home, or if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report or identified risk of harm to the children in the home during the period under review. For applicable cases, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety. The results of the assessment of item 3 are presented in the table below.

Item 3 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	5	3	4	12	34
Area Needing Improvement	6	5	12	23	66
Total Applicable Cases	11	8	16	35	
Not Applicable	6	9	15	30	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	45%	37.5%	25%		

Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 12 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (one case).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (six cases).
- Services were provided after reunification (one case).
- Efforts were made to provide services; however, children were subsequently removed (four cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. This included but was not limited to the following: referrals for housing assistance, parenting education services, SIBH, daycare services, substance abuse treatment, medical evaluations for children, domestic violence services, couples counseling, transportation, and psychiatric services.

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

- Services were not provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (18 cases).

- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home (one case).
- Services were not provided to protect the children in the home, and the children were subsequently removed (four cases).

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 34 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 3 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law requires that reasonable efforts are made to protect the child in the home and preserve the family prior to the removal of the child from the home. The Statewide Assessment notes that over 90 percent of the children for whom maltreatment has been substantiated remain in their homes, and their families receive family preservation services. The Statewide Assessment also notes that once safety threats have been identified through the completion of a safety evaluation, services are provided or arranged for the family with the explicit goal of ensuring the child's safety within the home and preventing removal or reentry into foster care. ADFAN policy describes the characteristics of the services delivered pursuant to a Protective Action Plan as immediate, sufficient, and short term, while the services delivered pursuant to a Safety Plan are characterized as immediate, sufficient, and in place for as long as the parents' protective capacities are not sufficient to ensure the child's safety. Additionally, as reported in the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy establishes that the Safety Plan should specify the following:

- The existing threats of danger
- The services, actions, and/or tasks that will be provided or completed to control for safety
- The people who will participate in the plan—their suitability, accessibility, and availability
- The circumstances, agreements, and timeframes established for the protective actions and services

The Statewide Assessment reports that to prevent removal of a child from the home, ADFAN often assists a family in identifying a support group to participate actively in the child's protection in the home. One example in the Statewide Assessment was of a situation in which ADFAN would assist a grandmother move into to her daughter's home during the daughter's hospitalization for substance abuse detoxification to take care of the children; ADFAN also ensured that the grandmother remained in the home after the daughter is discharged and during the daughter's outpatient treatment program.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that ADFAN developed and implemented the SIPH model to maintain children safely in their own homes. ADFAN policy requires that the SIPH caseworker visit the family a minimum of twice per week, and that the length of these visits be no less than 2.5 hours. A standardized instrument, the Inventory for the Scrutiny of Multiple Problems, is used to evaluate family well-being during these frequent visits. The Statewide Assessment also reports that a psychologist is contracted specifically for the SIPH and is available 24 hours a day to provide crisis intervention services in the family's home and to provide

case consultation and training to SIPH caseworkers. Results from focus groups conducted for the preparation of the Statewide Assessment indicate that participants view SIPH as a successful intervention process.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the number of children removed from the home and placed in foster care as a result of substantiated child maltreatment referrals decreased from 2,058 children in 2007 to 1,718 children in 2008 and 1,094 children in 2009. The Statewide Assessment notes that stakeholders interviewed in preparation of the Statewide Assessment reported that the decrease in the number of children being placed in foster care is because ADFAN investigators are more conscious of the maltreatment situations that require ADFAN intervention and are more accurate in identifying situations in which there is a threat to a child's safety and where removal from the home is the most appropriate safety action. However, QA case reviews conducted during the past 2 years indicate that this item continues to be an Area Needing Improvement for in-home services cases not being served by SIPH.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review indicated that ADFAN is effective in providing services to families to prevent children's removal from the home and placement into foster care. Various stakeholders expressed the following opinions:

- SIPH (which some stakeholders refer to as Homebuilders) is used in cases in which intensive intervention is needed to keep children safely in their homes.
- SIPH services are effective in preventing foster care placements and providing family support services.
- SIPH caseworkers have extensive supervision to ensure quality services.
- SIPH caseworkers receive specialized Homebuilders training on using a strength-based approach to engaging families.

Despite these positive comments, various stakeholders identified the following concerns:

- The availability of SIPH services is limited, so that not all families can benefit from the program.
- The lack of services in some communities makes it difficult for ADFAN to provide the services to families that are needed to maintain children in their homes.
- The lack of sufficient ADFAN staff makes it difficult for the agency to meet the needs of many families.

Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management

Strength **Area Needing Improvement**

Case Review Findings

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

Item 4 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	9	7	9	25	38
Area Needing Improvement	8	10	22	40	62
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	53%	41%	29%		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 25 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was addressed appropriately by the agency through the following: conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children’s home or in the children’s foster home and addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment.

Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 40 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial risk assessment (two cases).
- There was no ongoing risk assessment (40 cases).
- There was no initial safety assessment (four cases).
- There was no ongoing safety assessment (39 cases).
- There were safety concerns in the child’s home that were not addressed by the agency (20 cases).
- There were safety concerns regarding the child’s visitation with the parents (one case).
- There were safety concerns regarding the child’s placement that were not addressed by the agency (three cases).
- A safety assessment was not completed when the child was discharged from foster care (three cases).
- There were significant delays (up to 1 year) in transferring the case from the investigator to in-home services caseworker (five cases).
- Significant gaps in caseworker contacts with the child did not allow for ongoing assessment of safety and risk (one case).
- A new incident of child maltreatment was reported while the case was open, but the report, although assigned, was not investigated (five cases).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 38 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 4 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN’s Safety Model policy requires that a safety evaluation/assessment must be completed for all alleged child victims and other children in the household during the investigation process and throughout the life of the case. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following features of the Safety Model:

- If a child is determined to be unsafe, the investigator is required to implement immediately a Protective Action Plan or Safety Plan using standardized criteria to assess the safety of the child based on the present and/or imminent danger criteria.

- The Protective Action Plan or Safety Plan must take into account the least restrictive response.
- When a Protective Action Plan or a Safety Plan is implemented, the investigator is required to monitor the child’s safety the day after the implementation of the plan and at least once a week thereafter.
- Once assigned to an in-home or foster care caseworker, the plan must be incorporated into the Services Plan and continually monitored to ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of the safety actions.
- A safety evaluation must be conducted every 3 months when the Services Plan is reevaluated.

The Statewide Assessment notes that although Puerto Rico does not conduct a formal risk assessment, an evaluation of the presence of risk factors in the family situation is required at various points in the life of a case, including at the conclusion of the investigation; during the assessment process, which occurs prior to the design of the Services Plan; every 3 months; at the point of case transfer; and prior to case closing.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the Safety Model guides the safety and risk assessment process. Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that ADFAN generally is effective in conducting and monitoring Safety Plans.

A few Bayamon stakeholders reported that safety and risk are unknown for some families because there is a backlog of investigations from 2009 to 2010. Although initial contact was made on the cases, the investigations are not completed. Additionally, Bayamon stakeholders also reported that more than 100 reports of abuse in residential child care facilities have not been assigned for investigations and that investigations in the Institutional Abuse Unit dating back to 2008 had not been completed at the time of the Onsite Review, although the initial contact had been made.

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	2	1	2	5	12.5
Partially Achieved	8	8	15	31	77.5
Not Achieved	0	1	3	4	10.0
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	20%	10%	10%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (Scaled Score)	State Score (Scaled Score)	Meets Standards?
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6+	N/A	
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4+	N/A	
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7+	N/A	
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5+	N/A	

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 12.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Information pertaining to the national data indicators relevant to this outcome is not reported in the table above because the Puerto Rico CFSR Data Profile and the Statewide Assessment identifies significant data quality concerns that affect the ability to assess Puerto Rico's performance accurately on these data indicators.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico did not establish appropriate permanency goals consistently or in a timely manner.
- Puerto Rico did not make diligent efforts to achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner.
- There were multiple barriers to achieving timely permanency, including the following:
 - Granting of continuances by the court
 - Delays in changing a permanency goal from reunification to adoption due to a general reluctance to seek termination of parental rights (TPR)
 - Delays in completing paperwork and filing for TPR
 - Permanency alternatives with children and their relative or non-relative foster parents not fully explored
 - Lack of understanding by the courts of the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regarding permanency
 - Absence of Puerto Rico law that reinforced and required adherence to the ASFA requirements

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Collaborated with the Court Improvement Project (CIP) to improve court processes regarding permanency for children
- Revised and strengthened ADFAN policies on establishing permanency goals and on permanency planning

- Hired new ADFAN attorneys to provide legal counsel to caseworkers for court proceedings
- Established a process for ADFAN attorneys to appeal judicial determinations that extend reasonable efforts beyond 12 months in cases for which the Child Protection Unit has determined that efforts are no longer appropriate and/or against the best interests of the child
- Reviewed all cases with the permanency goal of adoption to improve the timeliness of adoptions
- Developed policy requiring that all other permanency options be deemed inappropriate prior to establishing the goal of long-term foster care for a child and requiring that the court approve the permanency goal of long-term foster care
- Created and implemented standards, policies, and a procedure manual that incorporate Federal legislation regarding the Independent Living (IL) program, including the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the program, and provided training to regional and local ADFAN staff on the IL standards and policies
- Monitored the provisions of IL services as well as permanency outcomes for youth in foster care through onsite visits and case consultation

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 5. Foster care reentries

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 10 (25 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

Item 5 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	3	2	5	10	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	2	5	10	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	8	15	30	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	100%		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in all 10 applicable cases when the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode.

Rating Determination

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the cases reviewed. Item 5 also was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, QA case review results from the period 2007–2008 show this item as a Strength in 96.3 percent of the cases reviewed. The Statewide Assessment reports that the following policies and procedures contribute to the low number of reentries into foster care:

- Family conference: The family conference includes the participation of all family members, including extended family, and community supports. Participants are involved in services planning to ensure the safety and reunification of children and continue to provide the family with needed support after reunification.
- Safety assessment of the child’s foster placement and prior to reunification: Caseworkers conduct a safety assessment on the family to ensure that no threats of danger are present or imminent within the child’s prospective home.
- Trial visitation under court supervision: Children are reunited with their parents and the placement is supervised for up to 3 months to ensure that parents have the capacity to care for the child, that needed services are provided, and that other family and community supports are in place to ensure the child’s safety.
- Support services after the child’s discharge from foster care: ADFAN provides home visitation and aftercare services to families as a standard procedure in the family reunification process.
- Community referrals: In the final stage of the case, the caseworker provides information to the family about the prevention services offered in their residential or municipal area.

Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive stakeholder comments on this item during the Onsite Review.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 6 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	7	8	12	27	67.5
Area Needing Improvement	3	2	8	13	32.5
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	70%	80%	60%		

Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 27 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The child’s current placement was stable, and the child did not experience a placement change during the period under review (23 cases).
- The child’s current placement was stable, and the placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests (i.e., they were intended to advance the achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child) (four cases).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to attain the child’s permanency goal (11 cases).
- The child’s placement setting at the time of the onsite CFSR was not stable (six cases).

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 25 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in eight cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in seven cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the agency has established the following policies and procedures to ensure placement stability for children in foster care:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of the child’s needs
- Consider the foster parents’ ability to provide for the child’s unique needs
- Evaluate the placement provider
- Place the child with a relative when possible and appropriate
- Place the child in the least restrictive placement

- Place siblings together
- Place children in therapeutic foster homes when needed
- Conduct at least monthly face-to-face visits in the foster home with the child and the foster parent

The Statewide Assessment notes that ADFAN developed a manual to assist foster parents and guardians in their daily lives with the children in their care. The manual provides information on obtaining medical care for children in foster care, the role of the courts, how to exercise discipline, and how to establish a lifetime relationship with biological parents.

Additionally, the Statewide Assessment notes that in 2008, ADFAN contracted with a private agency to provide workshops to foster parents to increase their knowledge about children in foster care, to enhance their protective capacities, and to ensure the stability and adjustment of the child to the foster home.

The Statewide Assessment reports that this item was rated as a Strength in 69.4 percent of the applicable cases during the QA case reviews conducted during the 2007–2008 review period. According to the Statewide Assessment, there are insufficient therapeutic foster homes and challenges in ensuring stability in foster care placements when children have multiple physical, mental, and emotional conditions and when caregivers do not have the knowledge and expertise to address the special needs of the children in their care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that there is a lack of placement resources available in Puerto Rico, which makes it difficult to ensure placement stability for children in foster care. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that there is a lack of specialized foster homes to meet the needs of children with special needs, which causes instability in placements for these children. A few stakeholders identified the following barriers to placement stability:

- Lack of commitment from foster parents to keep children in their homes
- Lack of understanding by foster parents about the needs of children in foster care

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 7 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	4	5	8	17	42.5
Area Needing Improvement	6	5	12	23	57.5
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	40%	50%	40%		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 17 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 23 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s permanency goal at the time of the onsite CFSR was not appropriate given the situation and the needs of the child (13 cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (14 cases).
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, particularly with regard to documenting compelling reasons in the case file for not seeking TPR (10 cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 58 percent of 24 applicable cases.

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

- Adoption only (12 cases)
- Reunification only (including reunification with relatives) (nine cases)
- Guardianship only (two cases)
- Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) only (13 cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and adoption (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and guardianship (one case)
- Concurrent goals of OPPLA and adoption (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with relatives and adoption (one case)

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 42.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements when relevant. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 7 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy requires that permanency goals must be based on the best interests of the child and must comply with the requirements established by ASFA.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ADFAN implemented concurrent planning standards to increase the number of children who have appropriate permanency goals established in a timely manner. The Statewide Assessment indicates that concurrent planning begins at the time of the children's removal from their homes. ADFAN standards indicate that the primary permanency goal is identified as being the most appropriate and the preferred permanency option for the child given the individual circumstances of the case and that the efforts of the caseworker and the family must be focused on that goal. However, at any time in the case, the secondary permanency goal may be shifted to become the primary goal, and the primary goal may become the secondary goal. The Statewide Assessment reports that Puerto Rico data suggest that reunification is the primary goal established for the majority of children receiving foster care services.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the concurrent planning process is not used effectively on a consistent basis. This was attributed to the following:

- Some caseworkers do not understand concurrent planning.
- The objectives of concurrent planning are not adequately communicated to families.
- Caseworkers often are reluctant to change the primary goal of reunification to the secondary permanency goal without the court's approval.
- Some judges are reluctant to change the goal from reunification to another permanency goal until TPR has occurred.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there are delays in TPR because the court sometimes allows caseworkers to continue engaging in reasonable efforts to reunify a family past the required time period. The Statewide Assessment also acknowledges that in some cases the determination of the courts, in the final disposition hearing, is to adjudicate permanent custody of the child to ADFAN. Although this does not represent achievement of a permanency goal, at this point the case is closed at the court level.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The key issues addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether goals are appropriate to the needs of the child, whether concurrent goals are being used appropriately, and whether petitions for TPR are being filed in a timely manner.

Many of the stakeholders who commented on the appropriateness of goals indicated that ADFAN generally is effective in establishing timely and appropriate initial permanency goals. However, according to some stakeholders, permanency goals sometimes remain in place longer than case circumstances warrant. Some stakeholders note that a law implemented in January 2010 allows parents 6 months to achieve reunification, with the court allowed to grant a 3-month extension, before ADFAN must pursue other permanency options.

With regard to concurrent planning, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that ADFAN establishes concurrent goals in cases and that when concurrent goals are established, they tend to be pursued sequentially rather than simultaneously. However, a few stakeholders reported that concurrent goals are pursued simultaneously.

Stakeholders expressed varied opinions on Puerto Rico’s effectiveness in ensuring that TPR petitions are filed in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Some stakeholders reported that TPR is filed punctually, and other stakeholders reported that Puerto Rico generally is not effective in ensuring that TPR petitions are filed punctually.

Additionally, stakeholders expressed different opinions on whether ADFAN documents compelling reasons when TPR is not filed. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that compelling reasons are presented to the court when TPR is not filed. However, other stakeholders reported that agency documentation and presentation of compelling reasons to the court is inconsistent.

Additional stakeholder information pertaining to the TPR process is provided under item 9 and item 28 of this report.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 14 (35 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

Item 8 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	3	0	2	5	36
Area Needing Improvement	1	3	5	9	64
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	3	7	14	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	7	13	26	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	75%	0	29%		

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in five cases when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in nine cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner. Some of the concerns identified pertained to a lack of effort to identify appropriate relatives for placement, lack of follow-up with service providers, and a general lack of effort to achieve reunifications.

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 36 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN provides services to ensure that children can return to their own homes in a safe and stable family as soon as possible. ADFAN provides traditional and intensive family reunification services. However, the Statewide Assessment notes that staff turnover, the limited availability of community-based services, and administrative changes affect the agency's ability to expedite reunification and other permanency goals.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that reunification would occur more expeditiously if community based services were readily available to families. A few stakeholders reported that delays in achieving permanency can be attributed in large part to the fact that families often must wait for key services.

Item 9. Adoption

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 15 (37.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results of the assessment of item 9 are presented in the table below.

Item 9 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	1	0	0	1	7
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	10	14	93
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	2	10	15	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	8	10	25	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	33%	0	0		

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in one case when reviewers determined that Puerto Rico had made diligent efforts to achieve the finalized adoption in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 cases when reviewers identified one or more of the following:

- Delays in filing for TPR (five cases)
- Delays in the TPR process after filing (one case)
- Delays in finalizing adoptive placement (two cases)
- Delays in the identification of an adoptive home (five cases)
- Delays in searching for absent parents (one case)
- Delays in the adoption process due to lack of concerted efforts by the agency (seven cases)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 15 children with a goal of adoption, one achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the 14 children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, 10 had been in foster care more than 24 months.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 7 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 required for a rating of Strength. Item 9 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following policies and procedures are in place to reinforce the provisions of ASFA regarding timely adoption:

- Regular and subsidized adoption services must be provided to facilitate adoption as a permanent plan.
- The agency must make an early identification of children who will have the permanency goal of adoption.
- Adoptive families must be identified that can accept a siblings group to avoid the separation of siblings.
- Special foster care homes must be established that are certified as foster homes but that can also accept children with a high possibility for adoption.
- A resource bank containing information about prospective foster/adoptive parents from States is maintained for children who have the permanency plan of adoption.
- An adoption subsidy is offered to every child 7 years or older and to children with special needs who are free for adoption.

The Statewide Assessment reports that there is an educational program geared toward adopted children, prospective adoptive parents, adoptive parents in the supervision period, and adoptive parents receiving adoption subsidy. Children are offered a training that explains the adoption process. Adoptive parents are offered a family support group module that consists of 12 workshops and post-adoption training.

The Statewide Assessment reports that delays in the TPR process affect the timeliness of adoption finalizations and also that delays occur because of insufficient follow-up by ADFAN attorneys to ensure that hearings are placed on the court docket.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Various stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported the following as barriers to achieving timely adoptions:

- Extensions of reunification efforts by the court
- Delays in filing for TPR
- Delays in locating absent parents
- The length of time required to publish for absent parents
- Delays in serving legal papers to parents
- The complexity of documentation requirements
- The requirement that older children must consent to adoption
- Inadequate preparation of children for adoption
- The insufficient number of attorneys to represent ADFAN in TPR proceedings

A few stakeholders reported that after TPR is granted, finalization of adoption is expeditious if an adoptive resource is in place.

According to some stakeholders, a law implemented in January 2010 requires that a petition for TPR must be filed when a child has been in custody for 6 months and the parents have not made reasonable efforts toward reunification, unless there is a compelling reason not to file for TPR. Additionally, these stakeholders noted that the law requires that once TPR is granted, Puerto Rico has 75 days to finalize the adoption. The law was enacted to address the backlog of cases for which adoption had not been finalized.

Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 14 (35 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

Item 10 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	2	3	3	8	57
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	2	6	43
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	5	5	14	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	6	5	15	26	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	50%	60%	60%		

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

- The child was not in a permanent placement (five cases).
- The child was not receiving adequate services to prepare for independent living (six cases).

The table below provides the ages of the children when the goal of OPPLA was established.

Age of Child When OPPLA Was Established	Number of Children
6 to 12 years of age	4*
13 to 15 years of age	8
16 years of age or older	2
Total	14

*OPPLA is the concurrent (secondary) goal for one 6-year-old child included here. The foster parent has signed an agreement to maintain the child in the home until an adoptive placement is located for the child.

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 57 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 10 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, as of July 2009, of the 6,699 children in foster care, 823 youth had the permanency goal of long-term foster care, and 1,470 youth had the permanency goal of economic independence or emancipation. The Statewide Assessment reports that ADFAN provided IL services to 878 youth in 2008 and to 919 youth in 2009.

The Statewide Assessment reports that IL services must be offered to youth who are aged 16 to 21, in the custody of the Commonwealth, and who have a primary or concurrent permanency plan of economic independence. The Statewide Assessment notes that youths’ participation in IL services is voluntary. ADFAN has developed an Independent Living Unit at each regional office with designated staff to coordinate services for youth and to establish collaborative regional agreements with agencies that offer services to youth. The services are provided to individuals or in group settings and are based on the youth’s chronological age and level of maturity.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the availability of services in relevant areas as follows:

- Education: Study courses and training for vocational interest tests, general test taking, a ninth-grade diploma, and a high school equivalency test, as well as counseling services on education alternatives
- Post-secondary education: Economic assistance through Educational and Training Vouchers
- Employment: Resume preparation services, interview preparation courses, guidance on how to search for and retain employment, job education and training, and computer camps
- Daily life skills: Instructions on skills such as meal preparation, money management, home management, and how to access community services
- Physical health: Workshops on nutrition, pregnancy prevention, abuse of controlled substances, and preventing sexually transmitted diseases
- Mental health: Individual and group counseling, crisis management, self-esteem management, and strengthening communication skills
- Legal: Workshops about rights and responsibilities as citizens

When a youth has disabilities that will require services beyond the age of 21 years, the caseworker, in collaboration with Adult Services Program personnel, begins planning for the youth’s transfer to Adult Services 1 year before the youth’s 21st birthday.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on IL services expressed the opinion that services are not readily available to all youth across Puerto Rico. However, a few stakeholders expressed the opinion that the services provided generally are beneficial to the youth who participate in them.

Permanency Outcome 2

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	5	6	9	20	50.0
Partially Achieved	5	4	10	19	47.5
Not Achieved	0	0	1	1	2.5
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	50%	60%	45%		

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50.0 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico did not consistently place siblings together in foster care.
- Puerto Rico was not consistently effective in promoting visitation among children in foster care with their parents or with their siblings in foster care.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent with regard to concerted efforts to preserve connections of children in foster care.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent in promoting the relationship between children and their parents.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico ensured compliance with visitation plans to maintain significant connections for children in foster care.

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 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 24 (60 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if TPR was attained prior to the period under review, contact with parents was not considered to be in the child's best interests, and/or parents were deceased or their whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child's most current foster care setting was near the child's parents or close relatives. The results of the assessment of item 11 are presented in the table below.

Item 11 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	7	5	11	23	96
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	0	1	4
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	6	11	24	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	4	9	16	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	100%	83%	100%		

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 in close proximity (23 cases). Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the child was not placed in close proximity to the parent’s last known address.

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 96 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 11 also was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN created a placement unit in each regional office and one at the central office. These units search for placements that are in close proximity to the child’s residence and family. The Statewide Assessment also notes that ADFAN uses relative placements in an effort to maintain children close to their homes.

The Statewide Assessment notes that it is often difficult to locate placements in close proximity to the child’s home when children have special needs and/or behavioral problems because there is a lack of sufficient placement resources for these children. The Statewide Assessment reports that one of the main reasons children are placed outside of Puerto Rico is because of the lack of residential mental health treatment centers for children. However, it was noted in the Statewide Assessment that placements outside of Puerto Rico must be well documented in order to justify the decision.

Stakeholder Interview Information

During the Onsite Review, there were insufficient substantive stakeholder comments on proximity of foster care placement.

Item 12. Placement with siblings

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 30 (75 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were currently, or had been, placed together, and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of the assessment of item 12 are presented in the table below.

Item 12 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	4	5	14	23	77
Area Needing Improvement	4	0	3	7	23
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	5	17	30	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	5	3	10	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	50%	100%	82%		

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

- The child was placed with siblings (10 cases)
- The separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child's best interests (13 cases).

Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in seven cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. In three cases rated as Area Needing Improvement there were three siblings, and in four cases there were four siblings.

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 77 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 12 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the ADFAN Procedures Manual requires that reasonable efforts must be made to place children together when possible. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that ADFAN places sibling groups in certified relative foster homes to increase the number of siblings placed together. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that there is a lack of licensed foster homes in which to place siblings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that siblings are not consistently placed together even when it is appropriate.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 35 (87.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child's life or were deceased; or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child.

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate sufficient visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The results of the assessment of item 13 are presented in the table below.

Item 13 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	3	3	8	14	40
Area Needing Improvement	5	5	11	21	60
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	8	19	35	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	2	1	5	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	37.5%	37.5%	42%		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 14 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 21 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (10 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (11 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings in foster care (11 cases).

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

Typical Frequency of Child’s Visits During the Period Under Review	With Mother	With Father	With Siblings in Foster Care
Visits occurred at least once a week	0	3 (19%)	5 (26%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	6 (32%)	1 (6%)	2 (11%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	4 (21%)	0	2 (11%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (37%)	3 (19%)	4 (21%)
There were no visits during the period under review	2 (11%)	9 (56%)	6 (32%)
Total Applicable Cases	19	16	19

The data indicate that children visited at least once per month with their mothers in 53 percent of the 19 applicable cases, with their fathers in 25 percent of the 16 applicable cases, and with their siblings in 47 percent of the 19 applicable cases.

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 40 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following policies and laws relevant to this item have been established:

- A visitation plan for parental and sibling visitation must be developed that meets the needs of the child in foster care.
- The visitation plan must include information pertaining to supervised visitation, authorizations for day or overnight visits for the child, and authorizations for extended trial home visits.
- The initial visit with the parents and siblings must be held no later than 1 month after a child’s placement in foster care, unless it is considered harmful to the child.
- The biological parents or caregivers have the right to visit children placed in foster care at a minimum of two visits per month in order to maintain a connection to their children.
- ADFAN is required to ensure that two visits per month are conducted for siblings in foster care who are not placed together.

The Statewide Assessment reports that results from QA case reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 65.5 percent of the applicable cases. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following barriers to ensuring sufficient visitation:

- The common practice of scheduling visits only during business hours
- The fact that many parents lack access to transportation

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions on Puerto Rico’s effectiveness in promoting visitation among the child in foster care, his or her parents, and siblings in foster care. Although some stakeholders indicated that visitation occurs on a consistent basis with parents and siblings, other stakeholders reported that visits do not occur. Some stakeholders reported that older youth arrange their own visits with parents and siblings.

Item 14. Preserving connections

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 14. 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 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	8	9	17	34	85
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	3	6	15
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	80%	90%	85%		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 34 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends.

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

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

Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 85 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 14 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy requires that the Services Plan include information relevant to maintaining family connections for children in foster care. The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2007–2008 QA case reviews, this item was rated as a Strength in 49.3 percent of the cases reviewed.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the lack of foster homes in every region may be a barrier to placing children close to relatives and to their communities.

Stakeholder Interview Information

During the Onsite Review, there were insufficient substantive stakeholder comments on preserving children’s connections.

Item 15. Relative placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 37 (92.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 15 are presented in the table below.

Item 15 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	6	7	13	26	70
Area Needing Improvement	3	2	6	11	30
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	9	19	37	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	1	1	1	3	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	67%	78%	68%		

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

- The child was placed with relatives (11 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (15 cases).

Item 15 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (nine cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (nine cases).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law establishes that under any judicial action related to abuse and neglect a child will be ordered placed in the temporary custody of a relative resource. Additionally, ADFAN has the following policies and procedures in place relevant to placement with relatives:

- Before a child is placed in foster care, a diligent search must be conducted to determine whether any of the child's relatives are a possible placement resource.
- The evaluation of available relatives should occur when the child is removed from the home.
- The permanency goal of placement with a relative should be considered prior to any other permanency goal except for reunification with parents.
- All family members will be included in the development and implementation of the Services Plan.
- When reunification with parents is not an option, relative foster care providers will receive information to help them decide whether to adopt the child or to become legal custodian of the child.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ADFAN historically has placed children with relatives in accordance with the traditional Latin commitment to caring for relatives. Additionally, according to the Statewide Assessment, placement with relatives maintains the bonding between the biological family and the child, thus preventing the child from experiencing additional loss of family connections.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following barriers to placing children with relatives:

- Caseworkers have a tendency to work with maternal relatives more than with paternal relatives.
- Many relatives do not meet the requirements to become a certified foster care provider.
- Available relatives do not have the financial resources to accept the child into their home without economic assistance.
- In many cases, relatives are not available as placement resources because they also are receiving services from ADFAN.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2007–2008 QA case reviews placement with family resources was rated as a Strength in 74.1 percent of the applicable cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on relative placements during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that there is a strong commitment by Puerto Rican people to care for relatives.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 24 (60 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child; a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child’s best interests throughout the period under review; or both parents were deceased.

In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of the assessment of item 16 are presented in the table below.

Item 16 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	0	1	3	4	17
Area Needing Improvement	5	5	10	20	83
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	6	13	24	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	4	7	16	
Total Foster Care Cases	10	10	20	40	
Strength by Site	0%	17%	23%		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in four cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 20 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother (14 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father (12 cases).

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

Efforts Made	With Mother Number of Cases	With Father Number of Cases
Encouraging the parents' participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	3	6
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	0	1
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	3	3
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	2	3
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	0	0
Total Applicable Cases	19	17

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 17 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 16 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Services Plans must address how ADFAN will maintain the bond between the child and the parents. Although no data were provided, the Statewide Assessment reports that information obtained during the QA case reviews indicates that preserving the parent/child bonds is an Area Needing Improvement for ADFAN.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that to strengthen the parent and child relationship, ADFAN, in collaboration with a private agency, developed the curriculum for the Psycho-educative Model and the Workshops for Family Reunification Services. Some families are referred by ADFAN to the workshops and some families are mandated to attend by the court.

Stakeholder Interview Information

There were insufficient substantive stakeholder comments on this item during the Onsite Review.

I. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	6	2	7	15	23.1
Partially Achieved	1	6	5	12	18.5
Not Achieved	10	9	19	38	58.5
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	35%	12%	23%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was determined to be substantially achieved in 23.1 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 30 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 12 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico was not consistent in assessing and addressing the service needs of children, parents, or foster parents.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent in involving parents and children in the case planning process.
- Caseworker contacts with children and parents were not of sufficient quality or frequency to ensure the children's safety or well-being.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Created and maintained an electronic directory of public, private, and community services available throughout Puerto Rico
- Established and implemented policy on timelines for family involvement in case planning
- Implemented a process in which the Permanency Plan Review Boards will examine parental involvement in case planning
- Designed a brochure on rights and responsibilities of parents, children, and caseworkers in development of the case plan

- Revised the *Family Service Policy Manual* to align it with Federal and State regulations and to:
 - Incorporate standards and procedures for caseworker contacts with children
 - Establish the frequency of contacts between the office where the case originated and the office in the area where the child is placed
 - Ensure that the service needs of the child are being met
 - Establish procedure for periodic evaluations of services provided to children and overall case contacts
- Established and implemented policy related to caseworker visits with parents

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 17 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	6	3	9	18	28
Area Needing Improvement	11	14	22	47	72
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	35%	18%	29%		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 35 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 16 percent 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 Area Needing Improvement in 47 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was an inadequate assessment of children’s needs (32 cases: 14 foster care, 18 in-home).
- There was an inadequate assessment of mothers’ needs (25 cases: 8 foster care, 17 in-home).
- There was an inadequate assessment of fathers’ needs (29 cases: 11 foster care, 18 in-home).

- There was an inadequate assessment of foster parents' needs (18 foster care cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address children's needs (31 cases: 13 foster care, 18 in-home).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address mothers' needs (27 cases: 11 foster care, 16 in-home).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address fathers' needs (31 cases: 12 foster care, 19 in-home).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address foster parents' needs (19 foster care cases).

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

Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable	Yes	Applicable
Mother's needs assessed and met	8 (42%)	19	8 (32%)	25
Father's needs assessed and met	4 (25%)	16	4 (17%)	23
Foster parents' needs assessed and met	17 (47%)	36	N/A	N/A
Child's needs assessed and met	26 (65%)	40	6 (24%)	25

The data indicate that ADFAN is not assessing and meeting the needs of children, parents, or foster parents consistently. However, for foster care cases, ADFAN was more likely to assess and meet the needs of children than it was to assess and meet the needs of foster parents, mothers, and fathers. For the in-home services cases, the mothers were more likely to have their needs assessed and met than were children and, particularly, the fathers. In general, fathers were less likely than mothers, children, or foster parents to have their needs assessed and met.

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 28 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 17 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico implemented the Safety Model to assess the needs of children and families to support time-limited family preservation services. The Statewide Assessment notes that the assigned caseworker is responsible for ensuring that the needs of children in foster care are met. The Statewide Assessment also notes that services indicated in the Safety Plan must be incorporated into the Services Plan. The implementation of the Services Plan, according to the Statewide Assessment, requires caseworkers to monitor the family to ensure that the tasks are performed, services are provided, and the plan is modified as case circumstances require.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that families are not receiving all the required services and/or interventions needed to eliminate the circumstances for which ADFAN is involved due to insufficient fiscal resources and insufficient number of ADFAN staff .

In a survey conducted in preparation of the Statewide Assessment process, respondents identified the following barriers to service provision:

- Limited accessibility of the services in residential areas
- Lack of professional resources
- Lack of caseworker knowledge of the services offered
- High cost of services
- Lack of family financial resources to pay for services
- Lack of agency human resources and high caseworker caseload

The QA Report for 2008 indicates that this item was rated as a Strength in 42.5 percent of the applicable cases. The Statewide Assessment reports that information gathered during the QA case reviews reflects that this is an Area Needing Improvement and indicates that caseworkers are not consistently ensuring that the family and the children are receiving the needed services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions on Puerto Rico’s effectiveness in assessing and meeting the needs of children and parents. Although some stakeholders suggested that ADFAN makes concerted efforts to assess needs and match the services to the needs of the family, other stakeholders reported that some caseworkers are more accurate and more skilled than others in assessing child and family needs. Some stakeholders also reported that even when needs are assessed, it often is difficult to meet identified needs because of a lack of services in the community.

A few stakeholders said that in some cases the court will order an agency to provide services to a child and/or family because a delay in the family receiving services has affected the timely achievement of permanency for the child.

While some stakeholders indicated that caseworkers generally address the needs of foster parents, a few stakeholders expressed the opinion that caseworkers are not responsive to the needs of foster parents. Additionally, a few stakeholders expressed concern that foster and pre-adoptive parents are not provided all relevant information about the children placed in their homes.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 18 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	7	3	9	19	30
Area Needing Improvement	9	14	22	45	70
Total Applicable Cases	16	17	31	64	
Not Applicable Cases	1	0	0	1	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	44%	18%	29%		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 41 percent of the 39 applicable foster care cases and 12 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 19 cases when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 45 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process.

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

Person Involved in Case Planning	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services Cases	
	Yes	Applicable Cases	Yes	Applicable Cases
Mother	7 (37%)	19	7 (28%)	25
Father	5 (29%)	17	4 (17%)	23
Children	17 (55%)	31	4 (22%)	18

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 30 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 18 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy requires active involvement and participation of the child and the family in service planning. The Statewide Assessment notes that the Services Plan should be signed by the father, mother, and/or responsible person.

A family Services Plan and a child permanency plan must be completed within 30 days of a child entering foster care. However, for foster care cases, a preliminary Services Plan must be presented to the court at the adjudication hearing, which occurs 20 days after removal. ADFAN policy requires that the Services Plan must be reviewed every 3 months to assess the progress of the family in meeting the case plan goals. If the child is in the permanent custody of ADFAN, an Individualized Service Plan is developed for the child and reviewed every 4 months.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN implemented the family conference process to involve the family and significant others in the service planning process. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that family conferences are not being conducted in all cases and that caseworkers are not consistently engaging children and parents in the case planning process. Data relevant to this item reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate the following:

- In the 2007–2008 QA case reviews, this item was rated as a Strength in 44.5 percent of the 563 applicable cases.
- Services Plans were completed within the required 45 days in 8 percent of the in-home cases reviewed in 2009.
- Family conferences were not completed in any in-home cases reviewed in 2009.
- There was evidence to support that the case plan was accepted or signed by the family in 25 percent of the in-home cases reviewed in 2009.
- Family conferences were conducted in only 7 percent of the applicable foster care cases reviewed.
- There was evidence to support that the case plan was accepted or signed by the family in 46 percent of the foster care cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding ADFAN's effectiveness in engaging parents and children in case planning. Some stakeholders indicated that family conferences are effective in engaging families in case planning activities, but several stakeholders indicated that family conferences are not conducted in every case. In addition, although a few stakeholders reported that parents and age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate children are involved in case planning even when a family conference does not occur, other stakeholders indicated that case plans often are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents and children.

Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that caseworkers attempt to locate absent parents and to involve absent and/or noncustodial parents in case planning.

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

Item 19 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	6	8	8	22	34
Area Needing Improvement	11	9	23	43	66
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	35%	47%	26%		

Item was rated as a Strength in 45 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 16 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 22 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 43 cases when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, and if visits did occur, they did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (35 cases).
- The frequency of caseworker visits with children was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, although when visits did occur, they were substantive (four 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 (two cases).
- There were no caseworker visits with the child during the period under review (two cases).

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

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)	In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)
Visits occurred at least once a week	1 (2.5%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	3 (7.5%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	17 (42.5%)	3 (12%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	17 (42.5%)	22 (88%)
There were no visits during the period under review	2 (5%)	0
Total Cases	40	25

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 34 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 19 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy requires the caseworker to have monthly face-to-face contacts with children. However, face-to-face contacts with children placed outside of Puerto Rico are required every 6 months. Although data were not provided, the Statewide Assessment reports that the 2007–2008 QA case reviews results found this item to be an Area Needing Improvement.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions regarding whether the frequency of caseworker contacts with children is sufficient to meet the needs of children. While some stakeholders expressed the opinion that caseworkers visit regularly with children, others reported that caseworker visits with children are not occurring with sufficient frequency.

With regard to the quality of the visits, some stakeholders indicated that the quality of contacts varies across caseworkers.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 49 (75 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their children. All cases that were not applicable are foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker’s face-to-face contact with the children’s mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of the assessment of item 20 are presented in the table below.

Item 20 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	5	0	4	9	18
Area Needing Improvement	7	13	20	40	82
Total Applicable Cases	12	13	24	49	
Not Applicable Cases	5	4	7	16	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	42%	0	17%		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 25 percent of the 24 applicable foster care cases and 12 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in nine cases when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.

Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 40 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency or quality (25 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency or quality (16 cases).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency but did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning or service delivery (two cases).
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (two cases).
- There were no visits with the mother (four cases).
- There were no visits with the father (15 cases).

Additional information from the case reviews is provided in the table that follows.

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	0	0	0	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	2 (11%)	1 (6%)	0	0
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	6 (32%)	3 (19%)	4 (16%)	2 (9%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (37%)	2 (12.5)	21 (84%)	16 (70%)
There were no visits during the period under review	4 (21%)	10 (62.5%)	0	5 (22%)
Total Applicable Cases	19	16	25	23

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 18 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 20 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy requires caseworkers to visit the biological parent at least once a month and the visits must focus on the family needs, strengths, progress, and the identification of the services and resources that are required to achieve the goals that have been established in the Services Plan.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, information obtained during the 2007–2008 QA case reviews indicate that caseworker and parent visits are an area needing improvement by ADFAN. Of the 563 cases reviewed, 22.2 percent were rated as a Strength for this item.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that caseworker face-to-face contacts with parents are not occurring as required by policy. However, a few key Aguadilla stakeholders reported that caseworkers are visiting with parents, particularly parents with children in foster care. There were insufficient substantive stakeholder comments on the quality of caseworker face-to-face contacts with parents.

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	10	11	14	35	74.5
Partially Achieved	1	0	1	2	4.3
Not Achieved	1	3	6	10	21.3
Total Applicable Cases	12	14	21	47	
Not Applicable Cases	5	3	10	18	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	83%	79%	67%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 74.5 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 81 percent of the 37 applicable foster care cases and 50 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases. Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that Puerto Rico did not consistently assess children's educational needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs. To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented interagency agreements with the Department of Education as required under Puerto Rico law in order to ensure the provision of services to children.

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 47 (72 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age, or children in the in-home services cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. The results of the assessment of item 21 are presented in the table below.

Item 21 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	10	11	14	35	74
Area Needing Improvement	2	3	7	12	26
Total Applicable Cases	12	14	21	47	
Not Applicable	5	3	10	18	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	83%	79%	67%		

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 35 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 12 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child’s educational needs were not assessed (10 cases).
- The child had educational needs that had been identified but not addressed (12 cases).

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 74 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95-percent standard is established for this item because it is the only item assessed for this outcome. Item 21 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Academic History Protocol requires ADFAN to collect and document information regarding the education services and needs of children in foster care and update this information every 6 months. The Statewide Assessment reports that Puerto Rico law mandates that the Department of Education facilitate and guarantee school placement and transportation within 72 hours of the time children are placed in foster care to ensure that educational services are not interrupted. The Statewide Assessment further notes that, in the cases of children with disabilities who require continuity of a special education program or services, the school principal, the special education teacher, and the caseworker will meet and coordinate the child’s educational services as soon as possible after the child’s placement in foster care. The caseworker is required to obtain needed documents for the provision of special educational services for children and to follow-up on progress and performance in school through planned visits.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2007–2008 QA case reviews, this item was rated as a Strength in 51 percent of the 563 applicable cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that ADFAN generally is effective in assessing and meeting the educational needs of children. However, a few stakeholders reported that there sometimes is a delay and/or waiting list for educational services for children with special needs.

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					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	9	7	12	28	50.9
Partially Achieved	2	4	6	12	21.8
Not Achieved	2	2	11	15	27.3
Total Applicable Cases	13	13	29	55	
Not Applicable Cases	4	4	2	10	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	69%	54%	41%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50.9 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 20 percent of the 15 applicable in-home services cases. Puerto Rico also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico was not consistent in meeting the physical or dental needs of children being served by the agency.
- Puerto Rico was not effective in meeting children’s mental health needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases.

To address the identified concerns, Puerto Rico implemented a policy requiring case record documentation of the evaluation and provision of physical and mental health services.

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 22. Physical health of the child

Strength 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 the assessment of item 22 are presented in the table below.

Item 22 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	9	9	15	33	70
Area Needing Improvement	2	3	9	14	30
Total Applicable Cases	11	12	24	47	
Not Applicable Cases	6	5	7	18	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	82%	75%	62.5%		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 75 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 43 percent of the 7 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 33 cases when reviewers determined that children’s medical and dental needs were routinely assessed and necessary services were provided. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s physical health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (eight cases).
- The child’s dental health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (12 cases).
- The child’s physical health needs were assessed but were not adequately addressed (two cases).

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children’s physical health needs. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the agency is required to arrange a physical examination for each child within 24 hours of the time the child is placed in foster care and after any subsequent changes in placement. A physical examination should be completed annually thereafter unless the child has a condition that requires more frequent care. The Statewide Assessment notes that once a child is placed in a foster home, the medical care is a shared responsibility among the caseworker, the supervisor, foster parents, and the biological parents. Additionally, ADFAN policy requires that every child receiving protective services be provided with annual medical and dental evaluations and that all vaccinations be kept current. All children between birth and 36 months of age who present some type of special needs are referred to an early intervention program.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that on July 1, 2008, an agreement was made with the Administration of Health Insurance and Medical Assistance Programs for children in foster care to have access to the government medical plan. Consequently, each child in foster care has a Universal Health Card that ensures the continuity of health services, including medications, no matter where the child is placed in Puerto Rico.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2007–2008 QA case reviews this item was rated as a Strength in 15.1 percent of the 563 applicable cases. Additionally, the Statewide Assessment notes that the results of case reviews indicate that there are delays in the caseworkers' ability to meet the physical health needs of children in foster care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that generally the medical and dental needs of children in foster care are assessed and met. However, a few Bayamon stakeholders reported that foster parents and caseworkers do not understand how to access routine medical care for children in foster care. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported there are delays in Medicaid approval that affect how soon a child can access certain medical services.

Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 41 (63 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and that services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The results of the assessment of item 23 are presented in the table below.

Item 23 Ratings	Aguadilla	Bayamon	San Juan	Total	Percent
Strength	5	6	9	20	49
Area Needing Improvement	4	4	13	21	51
Total Applicable Cases	9	10	22	41	
Not Applicable Cases	8	7	9	24	
Total Cases	17	17	31	65	
Strength by Site	56%	60%	41%		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 67 percent of the 27 applicable foster care cases and 14 percent of the 14 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 20 cases when reviewers determined that children’s mental health needs were appropriately assessed and the identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were neither assessed nor addressed (18 cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but services were not provided to address identified needs (three cases).

Rating Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 49 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 23 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy requires caseworkers to ensure that the mental health of children who enter foster care is evaluated when the child is placed in foster care and that services are provided accordingly. Puerto Rico law mandates that priority be given to children in the child welfare services system who are under treatment for mental health and/or substance abuse from a public agency, e.g., the Administration for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that, due to the lack of services for children with severe mental health conditions, ADFAN developed a procedure to place minors with severe mental health conditions in institutions in the continental United States. The Statewide Assessment notes that the major obstacle to the provision of mental health services for children in foster care is the inability to access mental health services in some areas of Puerto Rico.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in the 2007–2008 QA case reviews, this item was rated as a Strength in 50.2 percent of the 563 cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on mental health services expressed the opinion that accessing mental and behavioral health services, including access to psychologists and psychiatrists, generally is a challenge throughout Puerto Rico. A few stakeholders reported that there is a lack of services for children with severe mental retardation or requiring intensive residential mental health services. These stakeholders reported that children requiring these services often are sent to the continental United States to receive these services.

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

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

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (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 Puerto Rico’s performance on a particular systemic factor.

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

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

Status of Statewide Information System

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that Puerto Rico did not have a statewide system that could accurately and reliably report on the legal status, location, goals, and characteristics of all children in foster care.

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

- Provided web access to the local and regional offices to fully integrate a communication system within ADFAN
- Implemented a comprehensive information system that incorporated the Central Registry database and a case management system to allow staff to monitor and report data
- Integrated QA measures for piloting the various components of the system and for monitoring data

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from stakeholder interviews indicates that there are concerns about the accuracy of data pertaining to placements, permanency goals, legal status, and demographics because of the delay of a month between manually completing data entry forms at the local level and entering the data into the Information System and Follow-Up for Children Located Outside of the Home (SIS) at the regional level. Puerto Rico does not have a statewide information system that readily identifies or captures information regarding the status, demographic characteristics, location, and placement goals for all children in foster care. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN has two information systems, the Central Registry and Services Information System (SIRCSe) and SIS. SIRCSe collects data pertaining to maltreatment referrals, investigations, and in-home cases; SIS collects data pertaining to the children in ADFAN's custody: the child's legal status, demographic characteristics, placement location, permanency goals, and Services Plan. The Statewide Assessment reports that caseworkers must manually complete forms containing the necessary data to be entered into SIS.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN is piloting a third system, the Information System of Foster Care and Adoption, in the Carolina region. This system is designed to collect data on cases in all program areas including investigations, in-home services, and foster care services, and will maintain information on a child from the start of the case up to case closing. The system also will capture all Federally-required data.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Although stakeholders acknowledged that the combined Puerto Rico data information systems do capture demographics, placement information, and permanency goals for children in foster care, many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed concern about the accuracy of information in SIS pertaining to children's placement location and goals at any given point in time. This is due to the fact that caseworkers must manually complete forms and Services Plans, submit the documents to the supervisors who review the information, and send it to the regional office where the information is entered into SIS or the appropriate islandwide data information system. As a result, it can take as long as 1 month for information to be sent from the local office to the regional office and entered into a data system (e.g., SIS) to permit key demographic, legal status, placement information, and permanency goal data to be accessible to ADFAN staff islandwide.

II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

Status of Case Review System

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Parents were not consistently involved in the case planning process.
- Puerto Rico was not consistent in conducting periodic case reviews or timely permanency hearings.
- Puerto Rico did not require ongoing periodic reviews over the life of a case.
- There was no consistent and routine process for filing for TPR for children in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months as provided in ASFA, and cases were not routinely reviewed for the appropriateness of TPR.
- The court would often close the court case before the child's permanency goal was achieved and would have to reopen the case in order for the child welfare agency to file for TPR. This process resulted in considerable delays in achieving permanency for children.
- There was no formal process for notifying foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers about case hearings and reviews or for providing them with the opportunity to be heard during reviews and hearings.

To address these concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Established and implemented policy on timelines for family involvement in case planning
- Implemented a process in which the Permanency Plan Review Boards will examine parental involvement in case planning
- Designed a brochure on the rights and responsibilities of parents, children, and caseworkers in development of the case plan
- Hired new ADFAN attorneys to provide legal counsel to caseworkers for court proceedings
- Collaborated with the CIP to improve court processes regarding permanency for children
- Revised and strengthened ADFAN policies on establishing permanency goals and on permanency planning

- Established a process for ADFAN attorneys to appeal judicial determinations that extend reasonable efforts beyond 12 months in cases where the Child Protection Unit has determined that those efforts are no longer appropriate and/or are against the best interests of the child

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although Puerto Rico provides a process to ensure that each child has a written case plan (called a Services Plan) that is reviewed and updated on a consistent basis, information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that parents are not routinely involved in developing the case plan. During the onsite CFSR, case reviewers determined that ADFAN made diligent efforts to involve mothers in case planning in 32 percent of the applicable cases and to involve fathers in 22.5 percent of the applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN policy requires that a written Services Plan be established for each child in foster care with the active participation of the parents. The Services Plan is to be completed within 30 days of the child entering foster care and should identify the needs of the child and family and the services needed to achieve the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child. Additionally, the Statewide Assessment notes that the Services Plan is to be updated and reviewed every 6 months.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that although policy requires that the Services Plan be drafted during a family conference, family conferences have not been incorporated into case practice on a consistent basis. Data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate the following results from foster care cases reviewed in 2009:

- Initial Services Plans were drafted within the required 30 days in 39 percent of the applicable cases.
- Initial Services Plans were accepted and signed by the parent in 46 percent of the applicable cases.
- Periodic revisions of the Services Plans were signed by the parent in 7 percent of applicable cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

The key concerns addressed by stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR were whether case plans are developed for every child in foster care and whether case plans are developed jointly with the child's parents.

With regard to whether children have case plans, most stakeholders expressed the opinion that case plans are developed for every child in foster care.

With regard to the involvement of parents in developing the case plan, some stakeholders suggested that when family conferences are held, they are effective in engaging parents in case planning. However, as several stakeholders noted, family conferences are not held in all cases and are not held throughout the life of a case. Other stakeholders reported that case plans are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents.

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 X Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although Puerto Rico has a statutory framework for conducting periodic reviews at least every 6 months, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that 6-month reviews do not occur in every foster care case. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law requires that foster care cases be reviewed both judicially and administratively. A judicial review (also referred to as a follow-up hearing) must occur every 3 months for a period of 12 months or until permanency has been achieved. In the cases in which reunification is not achieved within 12 months, the court reviews the case annually after the initial 12 months. In some cases, the court will close its case with a disposition of "Permanent custody to the Department of the Family," which gives ADFAN custody of the child without TPR. Once permanent custody is awarded to ADFAN, the court does not conduct a judicial periodic review of the case.

The Statewide Assessment notes that cases involving children in foster care have an administrative review conducted by the Permanency Plan Review Board every 6 months. The main duties of the Board are as follows:

- Review the Services Plans established for the child
- Provide the parents with an opportunity to present information on the case
- Make recommendations to ADFAN and the court

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following are barriers to the effectiveness of Permanency Plan Reviews:

- The lack of compliance by caseworkers and supervisors in completing the necessary paperwork accurately
- Caseworkers and supervisors not responding to questions sent to them by the Board
- Caseworkers and supervisors not taking into consideration the recommendations, observations, and directives of the Board

SIS data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that from May 2008 to April 2009 the Permanency Plan Review Boards reviewed 58 percent of the cases of children in foster care with 76 percent of the cases reviewed within the required 6-month timeframe. According to the Statewide Assessment, although Puerto Rico has a process in place for periodic review of cases, ADFAN needs to improve the percentage and timeliness of cases it reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the Commonwealth generally is effective in holding a periodic review for every child in foster care in a timely manner. Various stakeholders across the sites expressed the following opinions about periodic reviews:

- Judicial reviews generally occur every 3 to 6 months.
- Judicial reviews generally are effective in reviewing the status of the child and issues affecting permanency.
- Permanency Plan Review Boards occur every 6 months.
- The Board reviews the appropriateness of the permanency plan and the Services Plan.
- Information from the Permanency Plan Review Boards is submitted to the court for review.

Many stakeholders reported that the Permanency Plan Review Boards are effective in addressing issues in the case. A few key stakeholders reported that if the Board and the caseworker do not agree on the best permanency plan for a child, a case conference is held to evaluate the case further. However, various stakeholders expressed the opinion that the Permanency Plan Review Boards are not beneficial to the case process for the following reasons:

- The Board meets twice a month and reviews up to 300 cases a month.
- Parents are invited to the meetings but frequently do not attend.
- Caseworkers generally are not required to attend the meetings.
- The required paperwork does not always contain sufficient information to assess the child's situation adequately.
- The courts do not always follow the recommendations of the Board.

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 an Area Needing Improvement. Although information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Puerto Rico has a process in place for conducting permanency hearings, data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that most hearings are not being held in a timely manner. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law, which was revised in 2007, requires that a permanency hearing must be held within 12 months of the child entering foster care and every 12 months thereafter until permanency is achieved. Additionally, a permanency hearing must be held within 30 days of the court relieving ADFAN of making reasonable efforts for reunification. Data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that the first permanency hearing for the child was held within 12 months in only 27 percent of the applicable cases.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment indicates that in some cases the determination of the court is to grant permanent custody of the child to ADFAN, which does not represent achievement of a permanency goal. Once permanent custody of the child is given to ADFAN, the court closes its case.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency is reviewed within 12 months of the child entering foster care and that permanency hearings generally are held in a timely manner. Some stakeholders reported that at the conclusion of the adjudicatory hearings, the courts schedule the permanency hearing to ensure that cases meet statutory timelines. Other stakeholders reported that ADFAN's Legal Division files a motion for the permanency hearing.

There were some stakeholders, however, who expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are not occurring in a timely manner for the following reasons:

- Insufficient number of attorneys to represent ADFAN
- ADFAN not requesting the permanency hearings
- Continuances and extensions granted by the court

Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that Services Plans and permanency plans are reviewed during the permanency hearings. A few stakeholders indicated that permanency hearings do not promote permanency due to a lack of services available to the parents to meet reunification plan goals.

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 Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that ADFAN is not consistent in filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, reviewers determined that ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 58 percent of applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law is in compliance with the ASFA requirement for TPR and requires that TPR processes be initiated in those cases in which the child has been in foster care 15 of the most recent 22 months, except when the child is placed in a safe environment with family members, when a compelling reason exists as to TPR not being in the child's best interests, or when the family has not received the services which are part of the Services Plan. However, the Statewide Assessment also reports that the practice of filing for TPR is not in accordance with the statutory requirement.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed varied opinions on Puerto Rico's effectiveness in ensuring that TPR petitions are filed in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Some stakeholders reported that TPR is filed in a timely manner in some cases while other stakeholders reported that Puerto Rico generally is not effective in ensuring that TPR petitions are filed in a timely manner. Various stakeholders identified the following barriers to the agency's timeliness in filing TPR petitions:

- There is no mechanism in place to track and/or ensure the timeliness of TPR petitions.
- There are delays in preparing the paperwork for TPR.
- Courts routinely grant additional time to allow parents to continue to work toward reunification. During this time, TPR is not filed in accordance with ASFA provisions.
- There are a limited number of ADFAN attorneys, and many of the attorneys currently under contract with ADFAN do not have child welfare expertise.
- The agency is unable to locate absent and unknown parents and in some cases will not file TPRs on unidentified fathers.
- There are not enough process servers to serve TPR papers to parents.
- TPR often is not filed on older children because it is more difficult to locate adoptive homes for older children.

Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that it is the sentiment of many Puerto Ricans that TPR is not in the best interests of children.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions on whether ADFAN documents compelling reasons when TPR is not filed. Some stakeholders said that compelling reasons are presented to the court when TPR is not filed. However, other stakeholders reported that agency documentation and presentation of compelling reasons to the court is inconsistent.

According to some stakeholders, a law implemented in January 2010 requires that, unless there is a compelling reason not to file, a petition for TPR must be filed when a child has been in custody for 6 months and the parents have not made reasonable efforts toward reunification.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that there is no clearly established process for notifying caregivers about hearings or reviews, and Puerto Rico law allows courts to use their discretion in deciding whether caregivers who have had a child in foster care for 1 year or longer can be heard in any court proceedings. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN does not notify foster parents, adoptive parents, and relative caregivers consistently of court hearings, and when caregivers are notified it generally is done by mail. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that Puerto Rico law does not guarantee that the court will allow caregivers to be heard; the law states that foster parents, adoptive parents, and relative caregivers who have or had a child in the custody of ADFAN under their care for a term equal to or greater than 1 year may be heard at the discretion of the court in any protection proceedings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders expressed varied opinions on ADFAN’s effectiveness in notifying foster, relative, and pre-adoptive parents about court hearings. Some stakeholders reported that foster parents will typically receive notice of hearings either verbally or in written form. Other stakeholders reported that there is no formal process for notifying foster parents of court hearings and administrative reviews and that notice is not consistently received by caregivers. A few stakeholders reported that caregivers are not a party to the case and, therefore, are not notified.

Stakeholders also expressed different opinions about whether caregivers have the opportunity to be heard in court reviews. Some stakeholders said that caregivers are given the opportunity to be heard in court hearings, other stakeholders reported that caregivers choose not to speak in court proceedings, and still other stakeholders reported that caregivers are not provided the opportunity to be heard.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

Status of Quality Assurance System

Puerto Rico is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The Commonwealth was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The primary concern identified in the 2003 review was the Puerto Rico did not have an identifiable QA system.

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

- Involved various stakeholders in examining and improving the quality of care for children in foster care
- Designed and implemented a QA process that assesses child welfare practice as well as outcomes for children and families

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Puerto Rico has standards and procedures in place to protect the safety and health of children, information from stakeholder interviews indicates that foster home standards are not implemented consistently, particularly with regard to certified foster homes. This item was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the protection and safety of children is supported by the laws, regulations, and procedures manuals that apply to the care of children in foster care and to the requirements and procedures that are in place for the licensing or certification of foster care providers. The following are some of the foster care policies and standards designed to ensure quality services for children:

- Child abuse background checks must be conducted for all foster care providers.
- Criminal background checks must be conducted for foster care providers.
- Corporal punishment in foster care is prohibited.
- Caseworkers must have at least monthly face-to-face contacts with children in foster care.
- Health services are provided to all children in foster care.
- Children may be placed only in licensed or certified homes or institutions.
- Visits from licensing/certification staff occur at least quarterly.
- Children younger than 12 years of age cannot be left in the home without adult supervision.
- Children older than 6 years of age cannot sleep in the same bedroom with adults.
- Children older than 4 years of age must be separated by gender in bedrooms.
- There are ongoing QA case reviews.
- Criminal background and child abuse checks must be conducted at recertification and relicensure.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that children alleged to be victims in reports of institutional child abuse are to be seen by investigators within 24 hours of the assignment of referral.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that Puerto Rico has effective standards in place to address the quality of services provided to children in foster care consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that the health and well-being of children in their placements is reviewed by the Permanency Planning Review Boards, during supervisory case reviews, and supervisory case staffings.

Additionally, a few stakeholders, including a key State-level stakeholder, expressed concerns about the quality of some foster homes, particularly certified foster homes. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the lack of training provided to foster parents is affecting the quality of services provided by foster parents to children in foster care.

Additionally, Bayamon stakeholders also reported that more than 100 reports of abuse in residential child care facilities have not been assigned for investigations and that investigations in the Institutional Abuse Unit dating back to 2008 had not been completed at the time of the Onsite Review, although the initial contact had been made.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Puerto Rico has implemented an islandwide QA case review process and that regions are encouraged to complete a corrective action plan after the regional review, there is no process in place to evaluate corrective action plans or to monitor the progress each regional office makes in implementing the strategies of the plan. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2005 ADFAN established a QA system that includes a case review process designed to identify strengths and needs in the provision of services. The QA case review process currently in operation is as follows:

1. A random sample of cases is selected from each local office.
2. Of the cases reviewed, 40 percent are in-home services cases, and 60 percent are foster care cases.
3. The data are collected from the case records; there are no interviews with case-level stakeholders.
4. The review instruments and a report are completed on each case.
5. The results from each case report are compiled, and the data are summarized using the Statistic Program for Social Science.
6. The data elements are used in the analysis regarding compliance with the child welfare outcomes and indicators.

The Statewide Assessment notes that another component of the QA case review process is the Reflective Diaries, which are a narrative summary of strengths and areas needing improvement discovered during the case review process. Information in the Reflective Diaries is used to complete critical case reports that are distributed to the corresponding regional offices.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the QA office divides each year into three review cycles. After each review cycle, a findings report is prepared. The three reports, completed annually, provide information on each regional office's child welfare practice and level of performance regarding child welfare outcomes and indicators. Additionally, a formal presentation of results is made at the conclusion of each reading cycle that occurs three times a year. Central-level assistant administrators, regional and associate directors, and regional supervisors are invited to the presentation, and copies of the PowerPoint presentation with the results are distributed to each region. Different ideas and recommendations are discussed to develop improvement plans according to the specific results in each regional office. There is the expectation that regional-level staff will in turn share the information with local office supervisory and caseworker personnel; however, the extent to which this expectation is actually met is not known.

According to the Statewide Assessment, regional offices are encouraged to prepare an improvement plan and possible strategies to address areas that do not meet performance standards based on the QA Office case reviews. The Statewide Assessment notes that no

formal processes exist to evaluate the corrective action plan, to monitor the progress each office makes in implementing the plan and the results obtained between reading cycles, and the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that a procedure is needed at the Central Office level.

In addition to the islandwide QA process, the Statewide Assessment identified the following QA activities:

- **Permanency Plan Review Boards:** The boards review quality issues regarding agency compliance with timeframes for completion of Service Plans and provision of services, the adequacy of the plans based on the identified needs, the adequacy of the intervention with the child and his/her family, and other issues relevant to achieving permanency for a child.
- **Citizen Review Boards (CRB):** CRBs conducted a study of foster children who had three or more foster care placements and made recommendations regarding foster homes certified by ADFAN.
- **Safety Model case reviews:** These are ongoing monitoring efforts that concentrate on evaluating compliance with the Safety Model. Case review results are shared in a written report that is discussed with regional-level staff and then regional supervisors share the results in meetings with the local offices under their supervision.
- **SIPH case reviews:** ADFAN has implemented a systematic supervision process to ensure that a variety of services is provided with the frequency and intensity that these families need. SIPH case review results are shared by the regional supervisory team in meetings that are held at the central level with social work specialists and caseworkers.
- **Practice Reports:** Information obtained through the Safety Model and SIPH reviews are the basis for these reports on child welfare practice issues, including the use of the interviewing protocol by CPS investigators, the use of family conferences, the nature of the first contact between the caseworker and the family, and compliance with timeframes.
- **Compliance Reports:** These reports provide information on the extent of compliance with ADFAN requirements on documentation, organization of the case file, face-to-face contacts, completion of the Social Study Services Plan, and other policy requirements.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review provided information about the QA processes that is consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment. Various stakeholders provided the following additional information on the QA processes:

- Central office QA staff review cases with an instrument modeled after the Federal CFSR instrument as well as other forms designed to capture ADFAN policy requirements.
- Some local staff have access to case review data that help inform practice.
- Supervisors conduct regular case reviews and case conferences to ensure quality casework.
- Supervisors provide feedback to caseworkers on case record reviews.
- Caseworkers receive feedback on case record review findings.

Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the QA processes in Puerto Rico are effective and constructive. Several key State-level stakeholders reported that although each region is required to complete a corrective action plan to address issues identified during the

review, the QA office currently does not have the personnel to monitor compliance with the plan. However, a few State-level stakeholders also reported that improvements have been seen in some regions as a result of the corrective action plans.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

Status of Staff and Provider Training

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Puerto Rico did not have a uniform pre-service training program for new child welfare staff.
- Puerto Rico did not have an ongoing training program and did not require child welfare staff to participate in ongoing training.
- Foster parents were not required to receive pre-service training prior to having a child placed in their homes.
- Although Puerto Rico had developed child development training modules for foster parents, the training had not been consistently offered in all 10 regions, thus not all foster parents were trained.

To address these concerns, Puerto Rico implemented the following strategies:

- Developed a child welfare training curriculum that includes components relevant to the CFSP
- Trained new ADFAN personnel on child welfare practices, processes, and outcomes
- Designed and implemented pre- and posttests for each training module
- Designed and implemented feedback forms to assess participants’ satisfaction with the training content and facilitators

- Developed a training catalogue and a quarterly training itinerary that provide information on trainings
- Prepared monthly reports on attendance and completion of trainings
- Revised policy and practice to require foster parents to complete a minimum of 18 hours of training per year

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that ADFAN has developed and implemented a training program for new caseworkers that addresses the skills needed for caseworkers to perform their jobs and that the agency can track caseworkers' participation in this program. In addition, data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that 82 percent of caseworkers who participated in training viewed the training as excellent. Information from the stakeholder interviews indicates that initial training has not been provided over the past 2 years because of a hiring freeze in the agency. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in 2004 ADFAN created the Office of Training, which offers and coordinates training with contractors throughout Puerto Rico. The Statewide Assessment notes that 92 hours of training are required for newly hired caseworkers, and the training comprises the following:

- Pre-service training: This is an orientation about ADFAN that includes training on the situation of Puerto Rican families from an ecological perspective, basic concepts of the Generalist Model, family situations where domestic violence and child maltreatment coexist, interviewing techniques with adults and children who have survived maltreatment, effective record documentation, the Comprehensive Child Well-Being and Protection Act (Public Law number 177), and the Safety Model.
- Induction training: This training focuses on acquiring knowledge and skills on child development, child rearing, tension management, stress and crisis in the family context, and legal aspects and rights concerning human sexuality.

The Statewide Assessment notes that currently there is no structured on-the-job training or field component to supplement the classroom training. A limited caseload may be assigned to newly hired caseworkers/investigators prior to the completion of training.

New caseworkers are required to complete all the training modules established in each of the training levels and are sometimes allowed and/or required to complete training modules at levels 2 and 3, depending on program/individual staff needs. Posttests are given in each of the modules, and trainees are required to achieve a score of 80 percent or higher to pass.

The Statewide Assessment notes that ADFAN tracks participants' attendance. A training evaluation form is administered at the end of each training. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, for the Pre-service and Induction Training offered from 2007 to 2008, 146 evaluations completed by trainees provided the following information:

- 82 percent of the respondents rated the training as excellent.
- 15 percent of the respondents rated the training as good.
- 2 percent of the respondents rated the training as regular.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the training is evaluated and changed as needed. Changes in the training curricula have been the result of ADFAN staff feedback via training evaluations, QA reports, and observations of training sessions by ADFAN central office staff.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item reported that there is a process in place for new caseworker training. Although stakeholders reported that the initial training program has not been offered since mid-2008 due to the government hiring freeze, local offices are providing initial training as needed to caseworkers who are reassigned and assume new case management duties.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Puerto Rico does not have minimal ongoing training requirements for all ADFAN staff responsible for providing direct child welfare services to children and families, only for those who are licensed social workers. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, licensed social workers are required to complete a minimum of 12 hours of training annually to maintain their licenses. There is no policy requiring social service technicians (SSTs) to complete a minimum of training hours per year.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the Office of Training designs and distributes a training catalogue every 3 months that includes descriptions of the workshops offered at all levels of training. ADFAN has developed training partnerships to supplement staff's

ongoing training needs. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the Office of Training coordinates the dissemination of information about the workshops, the approval for training, and the registration of staff. ADFAN staff also may attend training offered by other agencies or by private providers, with supervisory approval. In some instances, all expenses associated with training are reimbursable.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that although ADFAN does not require ongoing training for caseworkers, the Puerto Rico social worker licensing board requires that licensed social workers (Bachelor's or Master's level) must complete 12 hours of training annually to maintain their licenses. Many child welfare caseworkers are licensed social workers, and maintaining their social work licenses is a job requirement. Stakeholders noted that caseworkers are expected to locate the training opportunities on their own, which often is difficult, and that they also must pay for the training themselves. While some stakeholders said that training must be relevant to the caseworker's current ADFAN work responsibilities, other stakeholders said that relevance to current job responsibilities was not necessary.

Some caseworkers assigned child welfare responsibilities are high-level SSTs. According to some stakeholders, SSTs are not required to have social work licenses and do not have annual training hour requirements.

A few key State-level stakeholders reported that ADFAN was offering very few, if any, in-service and ongoing trainings at the time of the Onsite Review due to budget cuts and the hiring freeze. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that the ongoing training offered is not always beneficial or adequate to ensure that caseworkers have the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their job responsibilities.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that ADFAN policy requires initial and ongoing training for foster parents, the training is not provided consistently to foster parents nor is initial training required for a foster home to be licensed or certified. Additionally, foster parents' failure to complete ongoing training, as required by Puerto Rico law, does not affect the status of the foster home. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Assistant Administrator of Substitute Care and Adoption within ADFAN is responsible for the formal training provided to foster and adoptive parents and is fully in charge of the training content, evaluation, and monitoring of these training workshops. ADFAN does not have different training requirements for relative and non-relative foster parents or for

certified foster parents (with homes for two children or less, unless the children belong to a group of siblings) or licensed foster parents (with homes for more than two but fewer than six children). Additionally, the Statewide Assessment reports that there are no additional or special certification/training requirements for therapeutic foster homes or medically fragile/special needs foster homes.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the training requirements for foster parents are as follows:

- Induction training: 16 hours of Welcoming Homes
- Ongoing training: 18 hours (12 modules lasting 90 minutes each) of Families in Support Groups
- Follow-up: Once ongoing training is completed, an additional round of 12 monthly sessions, 1 hour each, on various topics
- Additional training of foster parents (by San Agustín del Coquí, a nonprofit private agency): This consists of training modules on Families as Self-Esteem Builders and is offered in 7 of the 10 ADFAN regional offices.

The training requirements for adoptive parents are the following:

- Induction training: 16 hours of “In Route to Adoption”
- Ongoing training: a 12-module curriculum (18 hours) of Adoptive Families in Support Groups
- Follow-up: 12 monthly sessions on different topics

The Statewide Assessment reports that the levels of training are completed sequentially for both foster and adoptive training. The Statewide Assessment reports that children may be placed in foster homes before the foster parents receive training. The Statewide Assessment also reports that ADFAN does not require training of potential adoptive parents as a requirement for placement of a child in an adoptive home.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, although attendance of foster and adoptive parents is recorded for each training session, and certificates of attendance are provided to those who complete the training, no reports are produced that indicate the percentage of licensed/certified foster parents and approved adoptive parents who have completed the various levels of training.

In addition, the Statewide Assessment notes that although Puerto Rico law requires foster parents to complete a minimum requirement of 15 hours of training per year in the area of child development, the law is not enforced and that foster parents are able to renew and maintain their licenses or certifications without completing ongoing training requirements. Further, according to a survey conducted during the Statewide Assessment process, not all regions in Puerto Rico offer training to foster and adoptive parents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that there is no formal training curriculum for staff of licensed or approved child care facilities, and there is no policy requiring ongoing training. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the results of a telephone survey conducted in May 2009 indicated that all residential child care facility personnel and caseworkers assigned to the facility are completing the pre-service training offered by the ADFAN Office of Training. The Statewide Assessment notes that there is a lack of uniformity of training requirements among contracted facilities for staff of licensed or approved facilities.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed different opinions on foster and adoptive parent pre-service training. Some stakeholders reported that licensed foster parents are required to complete 12 hours of pre-service training, but adoptive and certified foster parents are not required to complete training. Other stakeholders said that foster and adoptive parents receive only 2 hours of orientation training prior to becoming licensed or certified. Finally, some key State-level stakeholders reported that at the time of the onsite CFSR, Puerto Rico is not offering any foster or adoptive parent training because of the current budget crisis.

Stakeholders commenting on ongoing training for foster parents reported that 15 hours is required but that if foster parents do not meet this requirement, it does not affect the status of the foster home. Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the foster parents need ongoing training that specifically addresses how to care for children with special needs.

V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

Status of Service Array and Resource Development

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Many critical services were not available to children and families, and the scarcity of these services was a barrier to achieving permanency goals in a timely manner.
- Some critical services were not available in rural areas of Puerto Rico.
- In some communities where services were available, there were long waiting lists for families to access the services.
- The scarcity of services hindered the agency's ability to meet the individual and unique needs of the children and families throughout Puerto Rico.

To address these concerns, Puerto Rico created and maintained an electronic directory of public, private, and community services available throughout the Commonwealth.

Puerto Rico met its goal for this systemic factor by the end of its Program Improvement Plan implementation period.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the Commonwealth has an array of services for children and parents that are necessary to ensure children’s safety, permanency, and well-being. However, concerns were noted regarding the accessibility of these services, and will be discussed under item 36. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, many key services are available in Puerto Rico. The local office or Integrated Services Center provides direct service to children and their families in their residential areas, thereby facilitating access to services. At this level, the following services are offered:

- Community-based prevention programs
- Family preservation and reunification services
- Intensive family preservation and family reunification services
- Foster care services
- Guidance and counseling services

The Statewide Assessment reports that to ensure the continuity of health and mental health services to children in foster care, an agreement was made with the Administration of Health Insurance and Medical Assistance Programs and ADFAN to use the government medical plan for children in foster care.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that there is a wide array of services in Puerto Rico, but accessibility is sometimes a problem.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that services included Puerto Rico's service array are not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions. There are waiting lists for such key services as psychiatric services, special education services, and housing. There also is an insufficient availability of: substance abuse treatment services, mental health treatment services, medical and dental services, IL services, placement resources, therapeutic placement resources, and transportation. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, although Puerto Rico has a large array of services, their availability and accessibility varies based on location, even of contracted services. The Statewide Assessment indicates that most services are available in metropolitan areas but not in rural areas.

However, the Statewide Assessment also indicates that even in the metropolitan area there is a scarcity of services, which results in waiting lists for services. The Statewide Assessment further acknowledges that the scarcity of some services is a barrier to achieving children's permanency goals in a timely manner.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, transportation is a significant barrier to accessing services for many families. To address this, a vehicle and a driver have been assigned to each local ADFAN office so that when services are not available in the immediate residential area, the children and the family can access the services through the local or municipal office where the service is available. Also, some administrative staff have been authorized to drive official or ADFAN vehicles to transport clients to or from services when the driver is not available.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that there is in particular a lack of residential therapeutic mental health services for children and services for children with mental retardation or neurological issues. The Statewide Assessment reports that one of the main reasons children are placed outside Puerto Rico is because there is a lack of residential mental health treatment centers for children.

The Statewide Assessment reports the results of a recent ADFAN survey that identified the following services as not being readily accessible and available in all areas of Puerto Rico:

- Psychological, psychiatric, and mental/behavioral health services
- Placement resources for children with specialized needs
- Specialty centers for victims of sexual abuse
- Respite care for mothers and fathers of children with special needs
- Educational services for children with special needs
- Lack of public and Section 8 housing

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the accessibility of services is better in urban areas of Puerto Rico than it is in rural areas. Stakeholders noted that families living in rural areas frequently have to drive long distances to access needed services and that lack of transportation restricts access to these services. Some stakeholders reported that although quality services are available in Puerto Rico, it is sometimes difficult to access these services for children in a timely manner, which affects the ability of ADFAN to provide all the needed services to children in its custody.

Some stakeholders reported that the inability to access services in a timely manner often affects the timely achievement of permanency and the ability of ADFAN to meet the mandates of court orders. Additionally, time-limited services and limitations on service contracts have a negative affect on the service provision to children. Some stakeholders noted that delays in Medicaid approval also are a barrier to children and families being able to access services in a timely manner. A few stakeholders reported that some services provided to children are not of high quality.

A few stakeholders reported that there are a limited number of services for children with severe mental retardation or for youth requiring intensive residential therapeutic services. These stakeholders reported that children requiring these services often are sent to the continental United States for them. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that mental health sessions sometimes are only 10 to 15 minutes in duration and do not meet the needs of the child and/or family. Some stakeholders reported that government layoffs and the hiring freeze have had a negative effect on service provision because they have resulted in a shortage of ADFAN caseworkers as well as other government staff who provide relevant services to children and families.

Although a few stakeholders reported that ADFAN families are to be given priority in receiving services, various stakeholders across the three CFSR sites indicated that many services available in the Commonwealth frequently have waiting lists, including the following:

- Psychiatric and other mental health services for children and adults
- Housing
- Special education services

A few stakeholders reported that the court will sometimes order other agencies to move children and/or families to the top of the waiting list in an attempt to expedite service provision. Stakeholders identified the same services as noted in the Statewide Assessment as insufficient to meet the needs, and added the following:

- Substance abuse treatment
- IL services
- Evaluation and treatment for sexual abuse victims
- Transportation
- Medical services
- Placement resources
- Flexible funding
- Dental services
- Services for children with special needs, including extreme cognitive developmental delays
- Post-adoption 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 **X** **Area Needing Improvement**

Item 37 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although Puerto Rico’s use of family conferences promotes the individualization of services to meet the unique needs of children and families, family conferences are not routinely conducted in every case, and the scarcity of many services, insufficient fiscal resources, and the insufficient number of ADFAN staff make it difficult to meet individualized needs of families and children consistently. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, during the Assessment Phase of a case, ADFAN caseworkers gather information to identify the strengths and needs of the family (which becomes the basis for the Family Service Plan or the foster child’s Form SF-91A) and to establish the actions and activities to resolve issues within the family. However, the Statewide Assessment acknowledges that family conferences are not held consistently.

With regard to the individualization of services, the Statewide Assessment reports the following information, which was gathered during the QA case review process:

- Caseworkers refer most families to the same types of services, which suggests that individual needs are not being considered.
- Families with open cases in child welfare programs are not receiving the services they need to eliminate the circumstances that resulted in the children being placed in foster care.
- Mental health services are scarce or not available in Puerto Rico for children with some diagnoses.

The Statewide Assessment notes that Puerto Rico has not been successful in developing individualized Services Plans for families due to limited funds to create needed services and the lack of flexible schedules of service providers. Additionally, the Statewide

Assessment acknowledges that families are not receiving all the required services and/or interventions needed to eliminate the circumstances for which ADFAN is involved due to insufficient fiscal resources and insufficient number of ADFAN staff.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that individualizing services varies based on the assigned caseworker. Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the lack of services and issues with service accessibility affect caseworkers’ ability to individualize for and to provide service to families. Additionally, the lack of sufficient ADFAN staff makes it difficult for the agency to meet the needs of many families. Some stakeholders reported that more services are needed to meet the individual needs of children and families. Various stakeholders noted that it is more difficult to individualize services for low-income families and for families who do not have Medicaid—certain services are restricted to families that can pay for services or families with health coverage. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that flexible funding is not available to help individualize services for families.

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

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Agency Responsiveness to the Community are presented and discussed below.

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

X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Puerto Rico engages in ongoing consultations with a range of stakeholders in developing the goals and objectives of the CFSP. This item also was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico has formed a standing group of stakeholders that includes representatives of organizations, consumers, service providers, substitute care providers, courts, and other public and private family and child/youth services organizations. The purpose of the group is to provide input to ADFAN regarding the goals and objectives of the CFSP.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that ADFAN has made efforts to engage ADFAN staff, external providers, the Administrative Review Board, the Multisectorial Board, the courts, and other government agencies to address areas of concern with regard to goals and services. Some stakeholders reported being involved in the development of the CFSP.

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

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) is completed with input from various stakeholders. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law created the Multisectorial Council, which is a primary mechanism to ensure that key stakeholders are consulted with the development of the APSR. The Statewide Assessment also reports that stakeholders are aware of the importance of their increased participation in the process of evaluating services offered to children and families and of the importance of improving services that address children’s safety, well-being, and permanency. The following are some of the stakeholders involved in the APSR process:

- Central and Regional Multisectorial Coordination Boards
- Permanency Plan Review Boards
- Court Improvement Board
- Interagency Group for the Integration of Family Court
- Adoptive Parent Groups
- Juvenile Council Groups
- Death Review Panel

Stakeholder Interview Information

The stakeholders commenting on the APSR during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that ADFAN solicits input from stakeholders in preparing the APSR. A few stakeholders reported that the Multisectorial Board, which is made up of individuals from various private and public agencies, provides input into the APSR.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Puerto Rico passed a law requiring key public agencies, particularly those that implement Federal or Federally-assisted programs, to coordinate their service delivery efforts for families receiving child welfare services. This item also was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law mandates that government agencies, particularly ADFAN and the Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Administration of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Housing department, the Police, the Correction Administration, and the Juvenile Institutions Administration, coordinate services for, and give priority to, children and families experiencing situations involving child abuse and neglect. The Statewide Assessment notes that the law required these agencies to establish and adopt the regulations and collaborative agreements necessary to guarantee the implementation of this Law.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that Puerto Rico law created the Multisectorial Council, whose purpose is to coordinate, support, and promote collaborative efforts among governmental organizations to guarantee the most efficient and effective attention to cases involving child maltreatment. The Statewide Assessment reports that all organizations that receive Federal funds under the Community-Based Child Abuse and Prevention, Community Services Block Grant, Family Violence Prevention and Service Act, and the ASFA programs are required to give priority to families that are referred by ADFAN when providing services.

According to the Statewide Assessment, in addition to the aforementioned agencies, ADFAN has interagency agreements and policies that facilitate the coordination of services with the following departments, agencies, or groups:

- Administration for the Assistance of Community Prevention Services
- Children Support Administration
- Health Insurance Administration
- Medicaid Office

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that Puerto Rico law requires that government agencies coordinate services for children and families. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that Puerto Rico generally is effective in coordinating the services of Federal and Federally-assisted programs for children and families, while other stakeholders reported that coordination does not always occur. A few stakeholders expressed the opinion that coordination of services at the local level is the responsibility of the assigned caseworker. Some stakeholders reported that collaboration between agencies and the coordination of services occur within the regional and local Multisectorial Boards.

In addition to the programs and agencies identified in the Statewide Assessment, stakeholders also reported that ADFAN collaborates with the following agencies:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Head Start
- Section 8 housing

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	2X	3	4

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

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention are presented and discussed below.

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

___ Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although Puerto Rico has standards for foster family homes and child care institutions, these standards are not consistently implemented, particularly in regard to timely recertification of certified homes and the lack of biannual completion of criminal background record checks for certified and licensed foster homes. This item was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Puerto Rico law establishes the Department of the Family as the government agency responsible for the licensing and supervision of foster homes, group homes, shelter homes, and child care institutions. In its organizational structure, the Department of the Family, Office of the Secretary, operates a central office and Licensing Divisions in each regional office. Licensing Divisions receive studies and write evaluations of license requests that are filed with the local office. At the central office, rules and procedures are developed and maintained for monitoring, evaluation of services, and licensing. The Secretary of the Department of the Family delegates the issuance of licenses to regional directors.

The Statewide Assessment notes that all foster homes must be licensed (licensure is required if more than two but fewer than six children are in the home) or certified (certification is required if one or two children are in the home). The Statewide Assessment also notes that the requirements for licensure or certification are the same.

ADFAN's Foster Care Units in the 10 regional offices are responsible for certifying foster homes. Licensing Divisions in the regional offices are responsible for licensing foster homes. Requirements to certify or license a foster home include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Completion of initial training
- Social profiles of foster parents and their families, including the foster parents' capacity and motivation to serve as foster parents
- Health certificates for all family members, which includes lab results for a venereal disease laboratory test, chest x ray, or tuberculosis test
- Certificate of criminal background checks with no priors to be completed before approval and every 6 months thereafter
- Evidence of family income: paycheck stubs, employer certification, tax returns, or other type
- Three letters of recommendation from close neighbors
- Central Registry for Child Abuse Cases check
- Literacy
- Certificate of no priors from the Registry of People Convicted of Sexual Abuse and Assault
- A minimum of 15 hours ongoing child care and child development training annually

According to the Statewide Assessment, licensing requirements for institutions, group homes, and shelter homes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Health certificates for all personnel every year
- Criminal background checks for all personnel every 6 months
- First aid and CPR courses
- Internal workings manual, which delineates the establishment’s objectives, population, rules, criteria and procedures for admission, and exclusion and withdrawal from services
- Licenses from the Environmental Health Division of the Department of Health every year
- Emergency or disaster plan

For homes and other placement types seeking a license, once the social profile or study is completed, a provisional authorization is granted for 6 months and eventually a 2-year license is granted. Certifications also are granted for 2 years. Certified foster homes and establishments/homes with licenses receive visits from the requisite staff, with or without prior notice, at least quarterly to monitor and evaluate performance. The Statewide Assessment reports that adoptive and foster parent files were reviewed during the Statewide Assessment process to verify compliance with criminal background check requirements. A key finding was that the criminal record documents had expired in 28 of 36 adoptive/foster parent files reviewed.

The ADFAN uses placement resources licensed by the Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services Agency (ASSMCA). These resources provide recovery and rehabilitation services to children and youth. For an establishment to be licensed by ASSMCA, it must comply with the licensing requirements to include the safety standards recommended by ADFAN.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on licensing and certification standards during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that Puerto Rico has written standards for foster homes and child care institutions. Many stakeholders provided information about the licensing and certification process consistent with information in the Statewide Assessment. However, some key stakeholders reported that although relicensing foster homes generally is done on time, recertification of foster homes frequently is not. A few stakeholders also reported that Puerto Rico has standards in place for child care institutions.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that standards are not applied consistently to all family foster homes. This item was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, all foster homes must be licensed or certified and the requirements are the same for both. The Statewide Assessment does note that children may be placed with a relative who has been identified as a resource for that child prior to the relative's home being certified. The investigator, caseworker, or other designated ADFAN staff member will evaluate the safety of the resource that is being considered for placement. During the next working day, the designated ADFAN staff will notify the Foster Care Unit at the regional level of the child's placement and the Foster Care Unit will complete the certification study no later than 5 working days from the receipt of the notification.

The Statewide Assessment reports that during the Statewide Assessment process, ADFAN identified that staff from the Licensing Office and the Foster Care Units are approving the renewal of licenses and certifications without the foster care providers completing the required training hours. The Statewide Assessment indicates that only 43 percent of foster care providers comply with the pre-service and ongoing training requirements.

Additionally, ADFAN reviewed randomly selected certified and licensed homes to verify compliance with Puerto Rico law and regulations. This review found that health certificates and child abuse background information were kept up to date. However, first aid certificates, criminal background checks, and verification of sexual abuse priors had expired in the majority of the records. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, staff from the regional Foster Care Units indicated that there is a lack of uniformity in the foster home certification process, such as how capacity is established and whether a case record is made for each child. According to these staff members, the process for certification is unclear because there is no procedures manual.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that although certified and licensed foster parents must meet the same requirements, homes that do not meet the standards are certified or recertified, and homes are being relicensed without meeting all standards, such as updated criminal record checks and annual ongoing training completion.

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

 X Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Puerto Rico law requires that prospective foster and adoptive parents undergo criminal background checks and not be registered on the Registry of Persons Convicted of Sex Crimes and Child Abuse. Additionally, stakeholders reported that the background checks are being completed prior to licensure and certification of foster homes. This item was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a verification of no criminal background of adoption and/or foster parent applicants is required when evaluating, certifying, or licensing homes. A negative certificate of criminal background is required for all applicants age 18 or older who are members of the same family group; these are to be requested every 6 months. In addition, according to Puerto Rico law, no person may function as a foster or adoptive parent or care provider for children unless they have applied for and received a certification indicating that he or she is not registered in the Registry of Persons Convicted of Sex Crimes and Child Abuse.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that Puerto Rico requires criminal background checks, CPS record checks, and sex offender checks for licensed and certified foster care providers. Background checks are completed on other adults (age 18 and older) residing in any family foster home. Most stakeholders reported that the criminal background check is for Puerto Rico only and that fingerprints are not submitted for a national criminal records check.

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

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. The Statewide Assessment indicates that Puerto Rico needs to focus on the recruitment and retention of foster parents, including assigning ADFAN personnel dedicated to developing activities for the recruitment and retention of foster parents. This item was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the racial population of Puerto Rico is heterogeneous, the majority of families are multiracial, and this diversity is represented in most families. The Statewide Assessment reports that there are no racial or ethnic issues that make placement of the child difficult because diverse racial characteristics are accepted and respected.

The Statewide Assessment reports that ADFAN has a toll-free number and a website where people who are interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent can obtain more information about the process. During the past 2 years, ADFAN developed a campaign, "A Child Waits at the Doorway of Your Heart," to promote becoming a foster parent. However, according to a survey distributed as part of the Statewide Assessment, not all regions in Puerto Rico were aware of the campaign. Another campaign, "Adopt Through Your Heart," has been developed to promote adoption. The Statewide Assessment further reports that occasionally a public service announcement about a specific child may play on the radio or appear in written media.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges that foster parent recruitment and retention is an area that needs more focus and support, and that ADFAN needs to assign dedicated personnel to develop activities that encourage recruitment and retention.

Stakeholder Interview Information

A few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that there is no islandwide plan for recruitment and that recruitment is the responsibility of each region, although a few stakeholders reported that ADFAN developed campaigns for regional recruitment efforts. Various stakeholders at the review sites indicated that regional recruitment efforts include media advertisements and presentations at malls and churches. Some stakeholders indicated there is a particular need for foster and adoptive homes for older youth and children with special needs.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 45 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholders indicates that Puerto Rico is effective in using cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. This item also was rated as a Strength in Puerto Rico's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, although Puerto Rico is not part of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, ADFAN has found that States will complete assessments and provide services to Puerto Rico as a courtesy. The Statewide Assessment reports that ADFAN explores the availability of family resources in the United States and will refer the case to the Unit of Interstate Services within the Auxiliary Administration for Foster Care and Adoption to send information to the identified State agency. The Statewide Assessment reports that telephone calls are made to States and volunteer agencies to achieve placements within or outside Puerto Rico, especially for children who are difficult to place.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, ADFAN regulations and procedures establish that a child free for adoption can be adopted by parents in any of the 10 regions of Puerto Rico or by potential adoptive parents who reside in the United States. The Statewide Assessment notes that interstate adoptions are done through individual collaborative agreements, which have been made with several States such as Florida and New York, resulting in successful adoptions of several children. Potential adoptive parents living in the United States have been matched with waiting children in Puerto Rico, and arrangements for the adoption have been made, including the payment of travel expenses.

The Statewide Assessment notes that Puerto Rico does not use the AdoptUsKids website or other Internet sites to place information or pictures of children.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that Puerto Rico generally is effective in its use of cross-jurisdictional resources on behalf of children awaiting an adoptive or permanent placement. Information provided by most stakeholders was generally consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment.