

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Final Report: Utah Child and Family Services Review October 2010

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Utah. 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 Utah CFSR was conducted the week of June 21, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2009, through June 25, 2010. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment prepared by the Utah Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Human Services (DHS)
- 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, 2008
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 31 cases in Salt Lake County, 17 cases in Washington County, and 17 cases in Weber County
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

Background Information

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

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

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

Rating the Systemic Factor

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Outcomes

The Utah 2010 CFSR identified the following areas of high performance with regard to achieving the outcomes assessed during the review:

- Items pertaining to timeliness of investigations, the incidence of reentry into foster care, the proximity of children's placements to parents or close relatives, and meeting the physical health needs of the child were rated as Strengths for the State.
- The State met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to timeliness of adoptions.

Although the State's performance on Safety Outcome 1 (Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect), Well-Being Outcome 2 (Children receive services to meet their educational needs), and Well-Being Outcome 3 (Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs) did not meet the required 95-percent level for substantial conformity, performance on these outcomes was fairly high. Safety Outcome 1 was substantially achieved in 90 percent of the cases; Well-Being Outcome 2 was substantially achieved in 88.4 percent of the cases; and Well-Being Outcome 3 was substantially achieved in 85.2 percent of the cases. In addition, although Utah's performance on the items pertaining to providing services to protect children at home (item 3) and caseworker visits with children (item 19) did not reach the 90-percent level required for an overall rating of Strength, at least 85 percent of the cases reviewed were rated as a Strength for these items.

In addition to these positive CFSR findings, HHS acknowledges Utah's successful exit from the David C lawsuit in June 2007, a child welfare reform class action lawsuit. HHS also recognizes the State's continuing efforts to promote positive outcomes for families by (1) implementing a practice model, (2) enhancing training of workers, (3) decreasing caseloads, (4) building family-centered teams that work with families, (5) ensuring that DCFS practices and performances are consistently assessed to promote the agency's understanding of the outcomes experienced by children and families, and (6) developing program improvement actions to support ongoing enhancement in the level of practice and performance.

Despite these areas of positive performance, the CFSR identified the following key concerns with regard to Utah achieving desired outcomes for children and families:

- The State was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1 (Children have permanency and stability in their living situations), with the outcome substantially achieved in only 47.5 percent of applicable cases.
- The State was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 (The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved), with the outcome substantially achieved in only 52.5 percent of applicable cases.
- The State was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 (Families have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs), with the outcome substantially achieved in only 46.2 percent of applicable cases.
- The items pertaining to stability of foster care placements, maintaining the relationship of the child in foster care with his or her parents, assessing and addressing the needs of children and parents, and caseworker visits with parents were rated as Strengths in fewer than 50 percent of the applicable cases.
- The State did not meet the national standards for five of the six data indicators, specifically the indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence, the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care, the timeliness and permanency of reunifications, achieving permanency for children in foster care for an extended period of time, and placement stability.

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

- The requirement that all cases must have a concurrent plan, which appears sometimes to result in children having permanency goals that are not appropriate given the child's and family's situation and therefore the concurrent goal becomes a "paper" goal with no efforts made to achieve the goal
- The tendency that when there are concurrent goals, they are worked sequentially, not concurrently
- The lack of sufficient engagement or involvement of noncustodial parents in the agency's efforts to achieve desired goals and objectives for the children in both the in-home services and foster care cases
- Lack of focus on preserving connections for children and parents

Key CFSR Findings Regarding Systemic Factors

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

I. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

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

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

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 90 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 87 percent of Salt Lake County cases, 100 percent of Washington County cases, and 86 percent of Weber County cases. In addition, the State did not meet the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence within 6 months and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, in 90 percent of the cases, the agency initiated a response to a maltreatment report within the timeframes established by State policy. However, the CFSR case reviews also found incidences of recurrence of substantiated maltreatment within a 6-month period.

Utah 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:

- The State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period.
- The case reviews revealed inconsistent practices with respect to the timeliness of initiating a response to child maltreatment reports and establishing face-to-face contact with children and families.

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

- Developed enhancements in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (called SAFE) to reduce duplication of maltreatment reports and added alerts to monitor timeliness of responses
- Trained staff on SAFE enhancements and on expanded Practice Model assessment skills

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.

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 80.0 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 74 percent of applicable Salt Lake County cases, 88 percent of applicable Washington County cases, and 82 percent of applicable Weber County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, in many cases, the agency was effective in providing services to the family to prevent the child's removal from the home and in conducting initial and ongoing risk and safety assessments to ensure the child's safety. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in some of the cases reviewed:

- Children remaining in their own homes continued to be at risk because services were not provided to address safety concerns.
- There was a lack of ongoing safety and/or risk assessment in the children's homes.

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

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

Six items are incorporated in the assessment of Permanency Outcome 1, although not all of them are relevant for all of the foster care cases reviewed. The items pertain to State efforts to prevent foster care reentry (item 5), ensure placement stability for children in foster care (item 6), and establish appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care in a timely manner as well as seeking termination of parental rights (TPR) in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) (item 7). Depending on the child's permanency goal, the remaining items focus on an assessment of State efforts to achieve permanency goals (such as reunification, guardianship, adoption, or permanent placement with relatives) in a timely manner (items 8 and 9) or to ensure that children who have a case goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) are in stable long-term placements and are adequately prepared for eventual independent living (item 10).

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 47.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 50 percent of Salt Lake County cases, 60 percent of Washington County cases, and 30 percent of Weber County cases. In addition to case review findings, Utah did not meet the national data indicators pertaining to timeliness and

permanency of reunification, permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and placement stability. However, Utah met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to timeliness of adoptions.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that foster care reentry did not occur in the cases included in the Onsite Review. However, the 2010 CFSR identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

- Children lacked placement stability.
- Children's permanency goals were either not appropriate or not established in a timely manner.
- There was a lack of concerted effort to achieve reunification with parents or relatives in a timely manner.

Utah 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:

- The State did not meet the national standards for the measures of foster care reentry or placement stability.
- The State was not consistent in its efforts to achieve permanency for children in foster care in a timely manner.
- The State was not consistent in establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care.

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

- Developed additional supports and improved licensing processes for kinship providers to reduce foster care reentry
- Expanded the use of family assessments to identify needs of youth prior to placement and to identify foster parent abilities with specific types of child behaviors to ensure better matching and therefore greater placement stability
- Updated the agency's Practice Guidelines to address permanency goals of non-relative guardianship and permanency with relatives, and clarified how to plan for proper goal selection and concurrent planning
- Updated Practice Guidelines and provided training on purposeful caseworker visits to facilitate timely achievement of permanency goals

The State 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).

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 52.5 percent of the foster care cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was

substantially achieved in 65 percent of Salt Lake County cases, 30 percent of Washington County cases, and 50 percent of Weber County cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that the State was effective with regard to placing children in close proximity to their parents and close relatives. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns:

- Concerted efforts were not made consistently to ensure that children were placed with siblings whenever possible.
- The frequency and quality of visitation among children in foster care and their parents and siblings were insufficient to meet the needs of the children and families.
- The agency had not made concerted efforts to search for either maternal or paternal relatives as potential placement resources.
- The agency had not made concerted efforts to support the child's relationships with the mother or father while the child was in foster care.

Utah was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2 during its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- DCFS was inconsistent in its efforts to preserve children's connections to their families and to their racial/ethnic and religious heritage.
- DCFS was inconsistent in its efforts to seek out and evaluate relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care.

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

- Developed Tribal agreements to ensure Indian Child Welfare Act compliance
- Developed and implemented Practice Guidelines for caseworkers relevant to the importance of maintaining cultural connections
- Trained staff on conducting diligent searches for relatives and required documentation in SAFE to record that diligent searches had been conducted

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

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

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

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 46.2 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 42 percent of Salt Lake County cases, 35 percent of Washington County cases, and 65 percent of Weber County cases.

In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 37.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 60 percent of the 25 in-home services cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that for most of the children in the foster care and in-home services cases, the agency was effective in assessing and meeting their service needs, involving them in case planning, and ensuring the frequency and quality of their caseworker contacts and visits. However, the 2010 CFSR also identified the following concerns in many of the cases reviewed:

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

Utah also was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1 during its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The following concerns were identified in the 2003 CFSR:

- DCFS was not consistent in assessing and addressing the service needs of children and their parents, involving parents and children in the case planning process, and establishing sufficient face-to-face contact with children and parents; DCFS was more consistent in achieving these objectives when the children were in foster care than when the children remained in their homes or in the home of a relative.
- There was a general lack of effort to address the father's needs, involve the fathers in case planning, and establish contact with the fathers.

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

- Developed and trained on a Managing to Performance model designed to assist supervisors in coaching and mentoring caseworkers in conducting family assessments
- Provided training to supervisors and staff on the benefits of involving children and parents (particularly fathers) in child and family team (CFT) meetings
- Identified specific staff in each region who would be responsible for locating relatives or kin
- Updated the agency's Practice Guidelines on the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and parents and developed additional training to staff to support this practice

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

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

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

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 88.4 percent of applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 86 percent of Salt Lake County cases, 92 percent of Washington County cases, and 90 percent of Weber County cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 89 percent of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 87.5 percent of the 8 applicable in-home services cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, in general, the educational needs of children in foster care were being assessed and addressed appropriately and adequately. However, in several cases, services were not provided to address identified educational needs.

Utah was in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2 during its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

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

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

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85.2 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 77 percent of Salt Lake County cases, 93 percent of Washington County cases, and 94 percent of Weber County cases. In addition, the outcome was substantially achieved in 87 percent of the 39 applicable foster care cases and in 82 percent of the 22 applicable in-home services cases.

The 2010 CFSR case reviews found that, for the most part, the physical, dental, and mental health needs of children were appropriately assessed and adequately addressed. However, there were several cases in which physical, dental, or mental health needs were assessed, but services were not provided to address identified needs.

Utah also was not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3 during its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan. The key concern identified in the 2003 review was that children were being assessed appropriately for physical and mental health needs, but services to address the needs identified through the assessments were not provided consistently.

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

- Developed functions in SAFE to allow nursing staff to track the physical and mental health-care services provided to children in foster care and to ensure that identified needs are addressed in a timely manner.
- Developed processes to ensure that youth placed in title IV-E funded placements by the Division of Juvenile Justice have access to appropriate mental health services.

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

II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

Statewide Information System

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

Utah is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The 2010 CFSR determined that Utah's statewide information system incorporates data pertaining to the status, demographic characteristics, location, and case goals of children in foster care and can readily identify that information for any child in foster care.

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

Case Review System

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

Utah is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State is holding permanency hearings and 6-month periodic reviews in a timely manner and has a process for filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. However, the CFSR also identified the following concerns:

- Although most children have a case plan and case plans are updated in a timely manner, parents are not consistently involved in the development of the case plan.

- The State does not have a formal or consistent process in place to notify caregivers about hearings and reviews or to ensure that caregivers have the opportunity to be heard in those hearings or reviews.

Utah 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:

- There were inconsistencies in practice with regard to involving parents in the case planning process.
- Case reviews identified a number of children for whom TPR was not sought in accordance with ASFA.

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

- Developed Practice Guidelines regarding locating and involving fathers in case planning
- Developed supervisory training curriculum to help supervisors assist caseworkers in implementing Practice Model skills
- Established a practice of involving parents in case planning through the use of CFTs
- Included a prompt in SAFE that notifies caseworkers when a child has been in custody for 12 of 22 months
- Provided training to caseworkers on how to request and document exceptions to filing for TPR

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

Quality Assurance System

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

Utah is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State has standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided with quality services that protect their health and safety and has a fully functioning QA system that evaluates the quality and effectiveness of services and program improvement measures that have been implemented.

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

Staff and Provider Training

The systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training incorporates an assessment of the State's training provided to new caseworkers (item 32), the ongoing training provided to agency staff (item 33), and both initial and ongoing training provided to foster and adoptive parents (item 34). This systemic factor does not assess the training of service providers other than child welfare agency staff

unless the service providers are private agency caseworkers operating under a contract with the State who have full case management responsibilities.

Utah is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. The 2010 CFSR determined that the State operates initial and ongoing staff development and training programs that support the goals and objectives of the CFSP. The 2010 CFSR also determined that the State ensures that current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of child care facilities receive training that addresses the necessary skills and knowledge.

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

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 meet 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)?

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

- Some key services are not available in rural areas of the State.
- A lack of transportation is a barrier to accessing services in some rural and urban areas.
- There is a scarcity of key services, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment services, which results in waiting lists for these services.
- There are insufficient resources to ensure that the unique needs of children and families can be met, particularly for non-English speaking families.

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

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 reports (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).

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

- The State engages in ongoing consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in developing the goals and objectives for CFSPs and in preparing Annual Progress and Service Reports.
- The State’s child welfare agency services are coordinated with the services and benefits of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs.

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

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

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

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

- The State has implemented licensing standards for foster family homes and child care institutions, and these standards are applied equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds.
- The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances for foster homes.
- The State has a process in place for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care.
- The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive placements.

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

Table 1. Utah’s 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	90.0	No		
Item 1. Timeliness of investigations				Strength	97

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment				ANI	83
Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes when possible and appropriate	No	80.0			
Item 3. Services to protect children in home				ANI	87.5
Item 4. Risk of harm				ANI	83
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	No	47.5	3 not met 1 met		
Item 5. Foster care reentry				Strength	100
Item 6. Stability of foster care placements				ANI	47.5
Item 7. Permanency goal for child				ANI	77.5
Item 8. Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives				ANI	56
Item 9. Adoption				ANI	79
Item 10. Other planned living arrangement				ANI	75
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved	No	52.5			
Item 11. Proximity of placement				Strength	100
Item 12. Placement with siblings				ANI	76
Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care				ANI	55
Item 14. Preserving connections				ANI	74
Item 15. Relative placement				ANI	67
Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents				ANI	41

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

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

Table 2. Utah’s 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	46.2		
Item 17. Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents			ANI	49
Item 18. Child/family involvement in case planning			ANI	55
Item 19. Caseworker visits with child			ANI	88
Item 20. Caseworker visits with parents			ANI	49
Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive services to meet their educational needs	No	88.4		
Item 21. Educational needs of child			ANI	88
Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive services to meet their physical and mental health needs	No	85.2		
Item 22. Physical health of child			Strength	92
Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of child			Strength	91

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

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

Table 3. Utah’s 2010 CFSR Ratings for Systemic Factors and Items

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM	Yes	4	
<i>ITEM 24. THE STATE IS OPERATING A STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM THAT, AT A MINIMUM, CAN READILY IDENTIFY THE STATUS, DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, LOCATION, AND GOALS FOR THE PLACEMENT OF EVERY CHILD WHO IS (OR, WITHIN THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING 12 MONTHS, HAS BEEN) IN FOSTER CARE</i>			Strength
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

Systemic Factors and Items	Substantial Conformity?	Score*	Item Rating**
Item 26. The State provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review			Strength
Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter			Strength
Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act			Strength
Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child			ANI
Quality Assurance System	Yes	4	
Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children			Strength
Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented			Strength
Staff and Provider Training	Yes	4	
Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services			Strength
Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP			Strength
Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children			Strength

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

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

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	Yes	4	
Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards			Strength
Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds			Strength
Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children			Strength
Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed			Strength
Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children			Strength

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

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

**Final Report
Utah Child and Family Services Review
October 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 State of Utah. 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 Utah CFSR was conducted the week of June 21, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2009, through June 25, 2010. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the Utah Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Human Services (DHS)
- 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, 2008
- Reviews of 65 cases (40 foster care and 25 in-home services cases) at three sites: 31 cases in Salt Lake County, 17 cases in Washington County, and 17 cases in Weber County
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

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

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	32 (80%)	12 (48%)
Opened during the period under review	8 (20%)	13 (52%)
Child entered foster care during the period under review	12 (30%)	N/A
Child's age at start of period under review		
Younger than 10	18 (45%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	5 (12.5%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	9 (22.5%)	*
16 and older	8 (20%)	*
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic**	0	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	0	*
Black Non-Hispanic	2 (5%)	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hispanic (of any race)**	14 (35%)	*
White Non-Hispanic	22 (55%)	*
Unknown/Unable to determine	0	*
Two or more races Non-Hispanic	2 (5%)	*
Primary reason for opening case		
Physical abuse	6 (15%)	2 (8%)
Sexual abuse	1 (2.5)	1 (4%)
Emotional maltreatment	0	1 (4%)
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	9 (22.5%)	5 (20%)
Medical neglect	0	2 (8%)
Abandonment	0	0
Mental/physical health of parent	1 (2.5%)	0
Substance abuse by parent	12 (30%)	6 (24%)
Child's behavior	7 (17.5%)	5 (20%)
Substance abuse by child	1 (2.5%)	0
Domestic violence in child's home	2 (5%)	3 (12%)
Child in juvenile justice system	1 (2.5%)	0

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

**In four cases, the child's race was part American Indian. Two of these children also were Hispanic and are included in the total number for Hispanic (of any race), and two were non-Hispanic and are included in the total number for Two or More Races Non-Hispanic.

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 in conjunction with the Children’s Bureau) specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the Areas Needing Improvement and (2) the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its Program Improvement Plan and still not perform at the 95-percent (for outcomes) or the 90-percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

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

The following sections provide information on how Utah 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 Utah's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR report, which was held in fiscal year (FY) 2003, the State'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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	13	8	6	27	90.0
Partially Achieved	1	0	1	2	6.7
Not Achieved	1	0	0	1	3.3
Total Applicable Cases	15	8	7	30	
Not Applicable Cases	16	9	10	35	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	87%	100%	86%		

Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards			
National Data Indicators	National Standard (%)	State's Percent	Meets Standards?
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6+	93.9	No
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68+	99.55	No

Status of Safety Outcome 1

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 90.0 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, the State did not meet the national standards for the national data indicators pertaining to the absence of maltreatment recurrence and the absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. The State 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:

- The State did not meet the national standard for the percentage of children experiencing more than one substantiated or indicated child maltreatment report within a 6-month period.

- The case reviews revealed inconsistent practices with respect to the timeliness of initiating a response to child maltreatment reports and establishing face-to-face contact with children and families. In particular, face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim was not established in accordance with the State’s required timeframes.

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

- Developed enhancements in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (called –SAFE” in Utah) to reduce duplication of maltreatment reports and added alerts to monitor timeliness of responses
- Trained staff on SAFE enhancements and on expanded Practice Model assessment skills

The State 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

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

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 30 (46 percent) of the 65 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the Utah State child welfare agency policy requirements.

The following is a summary of Utah’s policy regarding the timeframes for initiating an investigation of a child abuse or neglect referral:

- The timeframe starts from the time that intake establishes the disposition of the referral. It does not include the time it takes intake to process the referral.
- Face-to-face contact is required for meeting the timeframe requirements, and the contact must be made with the alleged victim —determined to be driving the highest priority rating.”

The priority ratings and corresponding timeframes are as follows:

- Priority 1 – imminent threat to safety and well-being. There must be face-to-face contact between Child Protective Services (CPS) and the alleged victim within 60 minutes of disposition for non-rural areas or within 3 hours for rural areas, which are defined as

areas in which more than 40 miles separates the alleged victim from CPS. Intake has 30 minutes to process this report before the countdown begins for the CPS caseworker.

- Priority 2 – imminent threat criteria are absent but evidence is in jeopardy of being lost or the child is at risk for further child abuse or neglect. There must be face-to-face contact between CPS and the alleged victim with 24 hours of disposition. Intake has 60 minutes to process this report before the countdown begins for the CPS caseworker.
- Priority 3 – risk is low for further harm to the child and/or loss of evidence. There must be face-to-face contact between CPS and the alleged victim by midnight of the third working day following the disposition of the case from intake. Intake has one working day to process the report before the countdown begins for the CPS caseworker.

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

Item 1 Ratings	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	14	8	7	29	97
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	3
Total Applicable Cases	15	8	7	30	
Not Applicable	16	9	10	35	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	93%	100%	100%		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 29 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 one case in which there were two reports that were assigned as a priority 3; reviewers determined that, for both reports, the investigation was not initiated in accordance with policy requirements.

Rating Determination

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 1 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, in Utah a case is considered initiated when a caseworker has face-to-face contact with the child who is the subject of the allegation of abuse and/or neglect. The following table presents the percentage of investigations that met the priority timeframe for face-to-face contact with the alleged victim by priority timeframe category.

Priority Timeframe	Total Referrals	Total on Time	Percent on Time
Priority 1	6	6	100%
Priority 2	3,257	3,119	96%
Priority 3	16,840	14,578	87%
Total	20,103	17,703	88%

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCFS initiates investigations of child abuse and neglect reports in a timely manner.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 18 (28 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	8	5	2	15	83
Area Needing Improvement	2	0	1	3	17
Total Applicable Cases	10	5	3	18	
Not Applicable	21	12	14	47	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	80%	100%	67%		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength 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 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 one case, there were no reports.

- In 19 cases, there was at least 1 report but fewer than 3 reports.
- In 28 cases, there were at least 3 reports but fewer than 8 reports.
- In 12 cases, there were at least 8 reports but fewer than 14 reports.
- In 5 cases, there were 14 or more reports.

Rating Determination

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 83 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 Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, child neglect and domestic violence related to child abuse are the two allegations most often seen in the repeat maltreatment data. The Statewide Assessment notes that the DCFS Practice Guidelines require that a new CPS investigation must be initiated if there are allegations of abuse or neglect while an ongoing case is open. The Statewide Assessment further reports that the percentage of children who do not experience repeat maltreatment has remained relatively stable at around 93-94 percent over the past 7 years since the first Utah CFSR.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that repeat maltreatment does occur. A few stakeholders suggested that repeat maltreatment usually occurs in situations involving neglect, domestic violence, or parent’s drug and/or alcohol use.

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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	23	15	14	52	80.0
Partially Achieved	6	0	1	7	10.8
Not Achieved	2	2	2	6	9.2
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	74%	88%	82%		

Status of Safety Outcome 2

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 80.0 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State was in

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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 Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 40 (62 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	15	11	9	35	87.5
Area Needing Improvement	2	0	3	5	12.5
Total Applicable Cases	17	11	12	40	
Not Applicable	14	6	5	25	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	88%	100%	75%		

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

- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (six cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal or reentry into foster care (29 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: case management, parent education classes, drug screening, drug treatment, individual therapy, therapeutic child care, family therapy, family preservation services, anger management, peer parenting, domestic violence services, protective supervision, group therapy, and parent advocate 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 (two cases).
- Services were not provided to the family while the child was in a trial home visit placement, and the child was at risk (one case).
- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk (one case).
- No services were provided to prevent the children’s removal from the home, although the removal was not immediately necessary to ensure the children’s safety (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 87.5 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 was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, CPS caseworkers use assessment to assist them during an investigation to determine the immediate protection, safety needs, risks, and services needed by the child and family. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, it is expected that the pending implementation of the Safety Model will further enhance CPS caseworkers’ capacity to determine the safety needs of the child and the resources that the family can access to keep the child safe in the home. The Statewide Assessment also notes that Utah State law requires CPS caseworkers to obtain a warrant to remove a child from his or her home for neglect or abuse if the child is not at imminent risk.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, DCFS is partnering with Casey Family Programs to identify an in-home services model that fits with the DCFS Practice Model and can guide caseworkers as they provide services to families to keep children safe in their homes. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that a Systems of Care approach, modeled after Wraparound Milwaukee, has been successful in the Eastern Region of Utah.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that DCFS is effective in providing services to prevent the removal of children from their homes.

Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 4 Ratings	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	24	15	15	54	83
Area Needing Improvement	7	2	2	11	17
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	77%	88%	88%		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 54 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through the following: conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children’s 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 when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial safety or risk assessment (two cases).
- There was no ongoing safety and/or risk assessment in the children’s home during the period under review (10 cases).
- There were continued risk concerns in the home that were not addressed and/or monitored by the agency, and the children were at risk in the home (three cases).
- There were safety concerns in the foster home that were not addressed by the agency (one case).
- The case was closed without any safety and risk assessment (two cases).

Rating Determination

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 83 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 was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS has a risk assessment process that can be found in SAFE. The Statewide Assessment reports that, although the risk assessment completed in CPS cases has been helpful, DCFS is attempting to improve the risk assessment approach through implementing a Safety Model that can be deployed consistently in all locations and that will include Structured Decision Making.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is effective in assessing children’s safety and risk for harm. Stakeholders did not comment on the agency’s effectiveness in reducing the risk of harm to children.

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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	10	6	3	19	47.5
Partially Achieved	8	4	6	18	45.0
Not Achieved	2	0	1	3	7.5
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	50%	60%	30%		

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+	118.1	No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4+	159.0	Yes
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7+	120.1	No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5+	71.9	No

Status of Permanency Outcome 1

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 47.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Utah did not meet the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of reunification, permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods, and placement stability. However, Utah met the national standard for the data indicator pertaining to timeliness of adoptions. The State 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:

- The State did not meet the national standard for the measures of foster care reentry or placement stability.
- The State was not consistent in its efforts to achieve permanency for children in foster care in a timely manner.
- The State was not consistent in establishing appropriate permanency goals for children in foster care.

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

- Developed additional supports and improved licensing processes for kinship providers to reduce foster care reentry
- Expanded the use of family assessments to identify needs of youth prior to placement and to identify foster parent abilities with specific types of child behaviors to ensure better matching, resulting in greater placement stability
- Updated Practice Guidelines to address permanency goals of non-relative guardianship and permanency with relatives and clarified how to plan for proper goal selection and concurrent planning
- Updated Practice Guidelines and provided training on purposeful caseworker visits to facilitate timely achievement of permanency goals

The State 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 12 (30 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

Item 5 Ratings	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	5	3	4	12	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	3	4	12	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	15	7	6	28	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	100%		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength 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 and was rated as a Strength in 100 percent of the cases reviewed. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

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

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

Utah’s performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following: In the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, 14.3 percent of children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is less than the national median of 15.0 percent but greater than the national 25th percentile of 9.9 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah uses a number of supports and strategies to help families make a successful transition to reunification, including trial home visit placements prior to the child’s discharge from foster care and the establishment of the family as an in-home services case after the child’s discharge from foster care. The Statewide Assessment also reports that after the first round of the CFSR, the State conducted an in-depth analysis of foster care reentry data and found that over 50 percent of reentries involved children whom the court had placed in the temporary custody and guardianship of a kin caregiver. In response, DCFS determined that kin caregivers need the same or possibly more supports and services as do foster parents, and implemented a process for placing children with relatives as licensed foster care providers while the State maintained custody. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the percentage of children reentering foster care who were previously discharged to a relative declined from 53 percent in FY 2004 to 20 percent in FY 2009.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that another —case” of reentry was a parent’s relapse in drug abuse and the court determining that relapse was a sufficient reason for returning the children to foster care. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, DCFS responded to this concern by using the Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings to discuss relapse with the parent and to develop a plan for what to do if the parent relapses after reunification; this plan is then presented to the court at the time of reunification and/or prior to the occurrence of a relapse.

Stakeholder Interview Information

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

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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	7	6	6	19	47.5
Area Needing Improvement	13	4	4	21	52.5
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	35%	60%	60%		

Item 6 was rated as a Strength in 19 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s current placement was stable and that the child either did not experience a placement change during the period under review or that the placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests (i.e., they were intended to further achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement 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 (19 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 17 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in 11 cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in 12 cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

Rating Determination

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 47.5 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 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in the State's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C4.1: 73.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is less than the national median of 83.3 percent.
- C4.2: 43.8 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is less than the national median of 59.9 percent.
- C4.3: 15.9 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is less than the national median of 33.9 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah has struggled and continues to struggle with stability in foster care placements. The Statewide Assessment reports that, since the 2003 CFSR, DCFS has altered its practice with regard to the use of shelter placements as an initial placement and has changed practice guidelines to reflect the philosophy that the first placement should not be a temporary placement but, instead, should be the best placement possible at the time. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that crisis placement in temporary care facilities and homes is still available to caseworkers as an option but is not to be viewed as a routine initial placement.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that DCFS has Resource Family Consultants whose job is to support foster care providers and make sure that providers have what they need to care for the children in their homes so that placement disruptions do not occur.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that ensuring placement stability for children in foster care is an ongoing challenge for DCFS. Stakeholders attributed frequent placement changes to a variety of factors, including the following:

- Not holding CFT meetings or seeking services when there is a concern about a possible placement disruption
- Foster parents not being able to handle the issues and behaviors of the children coming into their homes
- An inadequate number of foster parents, which results in placement decisions being made based on the availability of a foster home rather than on matching the needs of the child and the resources of the parent

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 7 Ratings	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	17	9	5	31	77.5
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	5	9	22.5
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	85%	90%	50%		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 31 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

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

- The child’s permanency goal at the time of the onsite CFSR (or prior to discharge from foster care) was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (seven cases).
- The child’s permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (five 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 (three cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 84 percent of 19 applicable cases.

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

- Adoption only (eight cases)
- Reunification with parents only (two cases)
- Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) only (one case)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and guardianship (seven cases)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and reunification with parents (five cases)
- Concurrent goals of guardianship and reunification with parents (one case)
- Concurrent goals of adoption and OPPLA (two cases)
- Concurrent goals of guardianship and OPPLA (six cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents or relatives and OPPLA (eight cases)

Rating Determination

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 77.5 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 Utah's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C3.1: 12.7 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is less than the national median of 25.0 percent.
- C3.2: 96.9 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is greater than the national median of 96.8 percent but less than the national 75th percentile of 98.0 percent.
- C3.3: 27.3 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is less than the national 25th percentile of 37.5 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, a primary permanency goal and a secondary permanency goal must be selected for each case within 45 days of case opening. Caseworkers are required to enter the goals in SAFE and provide a reason for each goal selected if the goal is not reunification. The Statewide Assessment also notes that CFTs are expected to discuss the primary and secondary permanency goals in their meetings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR primarily addressed the issues of concurrent planning and the use of OPPLA, called the Individualized Permanency Plan (IPP) in Utah, as a case goal. With regard to concurrent planning, all stakeholders addressing this issue noted that —concurrent” permanency goals are established in all cases, with one goal being the primary goal and the other the secondary goal. Several stakeholders also reported that foster parents are dually licensed as adoptive parents and are expected to adopt the children in their care if that should become the plan. A few stakeholders, however, reported that although the structure for concurrent planning is in place, the agency is not consistent in working toward both goals concurrently and often the secondary goal becomes a backup goal that caseworkers turn to only when it appears that the primary goal will not be achieved.

With regard to the goal of OPPLA or IPP, a few stakeholders suggested that this goal is used for older youth who do not want to be adopted or are not interested in guardianship. A few stakeholders suggested that this is a default goal when there is no other possible goal.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 25 (62.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

Item 8 Ratings*	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	9	3	2	14	56
Area Needing Improvement	3	4	4	11	44
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	12	7	6	25	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	8	3	4	15	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	75%	43%	33%		

*Four cases with concurrent goals of reunification/adoption or guardianship/adoption are not included here because the goal of adoption was achieved during the period under review and in less than 24 months from the time of the child’s entry into foster care.

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 14 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 11 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 children having the goal of guardianship in place for a long period of time (longer than 2 or 3 years) without achieving the goal, a lack of sufficient services to prevent disruptions during trial reunifications, and insufficient services to biological parents to make reunification possible.

Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 56 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 Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

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

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

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Utah’s performance on the individual timeliness measures included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following:

- C1.1: 75.8 percent of the reunifications occurred in at least 8 days but less than 12 months of the child’s entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 75.2 percent.
- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 7.7 months. This length of stay is greater than the national median of 6.5 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)

- C1.3: 35.8 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in more than 7 days but less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, 45.03 percent of the children in foster care on February 11, 2010, had a permanency goal of reunification. The Statewide Assessment notes that reunification is the first primary permanency goal in all foster care cases unless there is a compelling reason for not seeking reunification. The Statewide Assessment also notes that for children age 3 years and older, reunification must occur within 15 months or reunification services must be terminated. (This timeframe accounts for a 90-day extension that may be granted by the court at the 12-month point if conditions warrant an extension.) For children younger than age 3, if reunification does not occur within 8 months, reunification services must be terminated. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, these deadlines were established so that children can have a permanent family and not languish in foster care. However, the Statewide Assessment also acknowledges that these deadlines put pressure on the CFT to bring about sufficient change in the family in a relatively short amount of time so that reunification can be successful.

Stakeholder Interview Information

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

Item 9. Adoption

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 9 was applicable for 19 (47.5 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*	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	9	4	2	15	79
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	2	4	21
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	5	4	19	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	10	5	6	21	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	90%	80%	50%		

*Three cases with concurrent goals of reunification/adoption or guardianship/adoption are not included here because the goal of reunification or guardianship was achieved during the period under review and in less than 12 months from the time of the child's entry into foster care.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in 15 cases when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner. There were two cases in Washington County in which concerted efforts were made to ensure timely adoptions for Tribal children. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in four cases. Concerns identified pertained to the following:

- A failure to provide adequate support to foster parents who were considering adoption but had concerns about the child's behavior or issues related to the biological family (two cases)
- Insufficient discussion with the child to address the child's reluctance to be adopted (one case)
- Delays due to the appeals process (one case)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 19 children with a goal of adoption, 12 achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the 12 children who had a finalized adoption during the period under review, 9 had been in foster care for less than 24 months.
- Of the seven children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, two had been in foster care for longer than 24 months.

Rating Determination

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 79 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 was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

For the target 12-month CFSR period established for the data indicators, Utah's performance on the individual measures included in Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions was the following:

- C2.1: 84.7 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 14.7 months. This median length of stay is less than the national 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 13.8 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage is less than the national median of 20.2 percent.
- C2.4: 5.5 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is less than the national median of 8.8 percent.

- C2.5: 81.1 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 53.7 percent.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, over the past 5 years, the percentage of adoptions that occur within 24 months of the child's removal from the home has remained at 80 percent or more. The Statewide Assessment provides the following reasons for timely adoptions in Utah:

- The number of Juvenile Court judges and attorneys was increased in 1997 so that permanency hearings for children in State custody can be processed in a timely manner.
- If a child is not reunited with his/her parent(s), reunification services must be terminated at 8 months for children who are 36 months of age or younger and at 12 months for children older than 36 months of age.
- The court can extend reunification services for 90 days if there is substantial evidence that the child will be able to be reunited with his/her parent(s) within the extended time period.
- In Utah, because these parents are working in the context of a CFT, parents are aware when they are not attaining their goals for reunification, and many voluntarily relinquish their rights. In cases in which TPR goes to trial, Utah laws have established legal parameters that help define grounds for termination. Although a parent has the right to appeal a court decision to TPR, few appeals are upheld.
- In Utah, a dual home study is used for foster care licensure and adoptive home approval. Foster families are licensed at the higher adoption criteria so that moving to adoption is virtually seamless.
- Although the law requires that children must live in an adoptive home for 6 months prior to adoption finalization, if the child is adopted by his or her foster parents, the law allows the time a child lives with his or her foster parents to count toward the requirement of 6 months in the adoptive home.

The Statewide Assessment acknowledges, however, that for many of the children free for adoption, it has been difficult to accurately identify which children are in a family who will adopt them and which are in need of an adoptive family. Although a process was put in place in November 2009 to remedy this problem, the Statewide Assessment notes that this new process is still in the implementation stages and, as of February 2010, there were 173 children who were free for adoption and for whom it is unclear if they currently live with the families who will adopt them or whether efforts should be made to actively recruit adoptive families.

The Statewide Assessment notes that Utah needs adoptive families for older children and sibling groups.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR indicated that adoptions are occurring quickly, particularly for younger children. Although a few stakeholders suggested that the timeliness of adoptions is appropriate, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that adoptions sometimes are happening too quickly and that there are not enough prevention resources available to help families.

Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 16 (40 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*	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	5	3	4	12	75
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	3	4	25
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	3	7	16	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	14	7	3	24	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	83%	100%	57%		

*One case with concurrent goals of reunification/OPPLA is not included here because the goal of reunification was achieved during the period under review and in less than 12 months from the time of the child’s entry into foster care.

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in 12 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 four cases when reviewers determined that the child was not in a permanent placement (four cases) and/or the agency did not make concerted efforts to ensure that the child received the necessary services to prepare for independent living (one case).

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
Younger than age 13	3
At least age 13 but younger than age 16	8
Age 16 or older	5
Total	16

Rating Determination

Item 10 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 75 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the goal of OPPLA was being addressed in an appropriate way. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 10 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Federal permanency goal of OPPLA, called IPP in Utah, can be assigned to a child only when all other permanency goals have been eliminated. The Statewide Assessment notes that approximately 25 percent of all children in foster care have a goal of IPP, and as of February 1, 2010, 55.8 percent of children in foster care age 15 and older had a goal of IPP.

The Statewide Assessment reports that Utah requires independent living services through the Transition to Adult Living (TAL) program for all children age 14 and older who are in foster care, regardless of their permanency goals. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment tool is used to identify strengths and needs for all children age 14 and older and serves as a basis for the development of a TAL plan. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that practice guidelines outline the services to be provided at each age from 14 years to discharge from DCFS custody.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR primarily addressed the issue of the sufficiency and effectiveness of services to prepare youth for independent living. All stakeholders addressing this issue expressed the opinion that the TAL program has access to a large array of services for youth, is effective in preparing youth for independent living, and makes concerted efforts to ensure that youth have a support system in place when they are discharged from DCFS custody. A few stakeholders indicated that there is a lack of affordable and safe housing for youth once they leave the system and a lack of services for youth who are low functioning but who do not meet the criteria for special needs.

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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	13	3	5	21	52.5
Partially Achieved	7	7	5	19	47.5
Not Achieved	0	0	0	0	0
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Substantially Achieved by Site	65%	30%	50%		

Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 52.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State 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:

- DCFS was inconsistent in its efforts to preserve children’s connections to their families and to their racial, ethnic, and religious heritage.
- DCFS was inconsistent in its efforts to seek out and evaluate relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care.

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

- Developed Tribal agreements to ensure Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) compliance
- Developed and implemented Practice Guidelines for caseworkers relevant to the importance of maintaining cultural connections
- Trained staff on conducting diligent searches for relatives and required documentation in SAFE that diligent searches had been conducted

The State 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 31 (77.5 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	16	8	7	31	100
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	0
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	16	8	7	31	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	2	3	9	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	100%	100%		

Item 11 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed either in the same community or county as the parents or near the parents' community or county (19 cases). The item also was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that even though the child was placed out of his or her community, the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child and/or support attainment of the permanency goal (12 cases).

Rating Determination

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 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 Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS makes a concerted effort to place children in close proximity to their parents, extended family, and community if it is necessary to remove them from their homes. The Statewide Assessment also notes that proximity to family is one of the most important considerations for placement of a child because reunification is difficult when there are great distances between the child and his or her family members.

Stakeholder Interview Information

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

Item 12. Placement with siblings

 Strength **X** Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 12 was applicable for 25 (62.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	11	1	7	19	76
Area Needing Improvement	0	4	2	6	24
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	11	5	9	25	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	9	5	1	15	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	100%	20%	78%		

Item 12 was rated as a Strength in 19 cases when reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings, or the separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs, or placement with siblings was not in the child’s best interests. Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. In two cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement for this item, there were two siblings in foster care, and in four cases, there were four siblings in foster care.

Rating Determination

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 76 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 was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, placing siblings together is a top priority in Utah and the Practice Guidelines require caseworkers to place siblings together unless there is a safety concern. The Statewide Assessment also notes that when siblings cannot be placed together, they usually are placed in very close proximity.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCFS makes concerted efforts to place siblings together unless there is a justifiable reason for separating them.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 33 (82.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child’s life or were deceased, or visitation with a parent

was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	11	3	4	18	55
Area Needing Improvement	5	6	4	15	45
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	16	9	8	33	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	1	2	7	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	69%	33%	50%		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 18 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 15 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote sufficient visitation with the mother (6 of 30 applicable cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote sufficient visitation with the father (10 of 22 applicable cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings in foster care (4 of 13 applicable 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	17 (57%)	5 (23%)	7 (54%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	2 (7%)	1 (5%)	1 (8%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	4 (13%)	2 (9%)	1 (8%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	6 (20%)	8 (36%)	4 (31%)
There were no visits during the period under review	1 (3%)	6 (27%)	0
Total Applicable Cases	30	22	13

The data indicate that visits between children and their mothers occurred at least once a month in 77 percent of the cases, and sibling visits occurred at least once a month in 69 percent of the cases. In comparison, visits between children and their fathers occurred at least once a month in 36 percent of the cases.

Rating Determination

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 55 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 was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS Practice Guidelines state that, unless contact is documented to be clinically contraindicated, purposeful and frequent visitation with parents and siblings is a child's right and not a privilege or something to be earned or denied based on the behavior of the child or parent. The Statewide Assessment notes that visitation is expected to occur as often as possible, with once per week as the minimum general guideline. The Statewide Assessment also notes that a Family Visitation Plan is a part of the Child and Family Plan and is in SAFE; the Child and Family Plan cannot be finalized without a completed Family Visitation Plan.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the annual Case Process Review (CPR) assesses evidence in the case file that there is an expectation and plan for weekly visitation and that all parties are aware of the plan. The 2009 CPR resulted in the following findings:

- In 85 percent of the cases reviewed, the child was provided the opportunity to visit with his/her parents weekly.
- In 72 percent of the cases reviewed, the child was provided with the opportunity to visit with his/her siblings weekly.

Stakeholder Interview Information

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

Item 14. Preserving connections

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 14 was applicable for 38 (95 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Two cases were not applicable because the child entered foster care as an infant and there were no connections to be maintained. 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	13	8	7	28	74
Area Needing Improvement	6	2	2	10	26
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	19	10	9	38	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	1	0	1	2	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	68%	80%	78%		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 28 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends. Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 10 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family, particularly siblings remaining in the home or adult siblings (nine cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to school and community (four cases).

An additional finding was that for the four cases in which the child had partial Native American heritage, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connection to his or her Native heritage.

Rating Determination

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 74 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 Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, since Utah’s 2003 CFSR, the State has addressed the issue of maintaining the connections of Native American children in foster care with their appropriate Tribes, primarily through agreements with six Native American Tribes in Utah and a focus on recruiting more Native American families as foster parents. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the State has made concerted efforts to maintain the connections of children in foster care with their schools. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in 2009, the Utah State Legislature passed legislation to ensure that students can remain in their schools even if there is a placement change to another school district.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR primarily addressed the issue of whether the agency follows ICWA requirements with regard to notifying the Tribe when a child enters foster care. Most stakeholders expressed the opinion that DCFS is notifying Tribes in a timely manner when there is information that a child entering foster care may be an enrolled member of a Tribe. One key stakeholder, however, indicated that notification is not consistent.

Item 15. Relative placement

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 30 (75 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	9	6	5	20	67
Area Needing Improvement	5	2	3	10	33
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	14	8	8	30	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	6	2	2	10	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	64%	75%	62.5%		

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

- The child was placed with relatives (six cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (14 cases).

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

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (6 of 24 applicable cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (8 of 22 applicable cases).
- Although the child was placed with a relative, the placement was not stable or appropriate (one case).

Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 67 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS is required to engage in active efforts to identify and locate kin families (including relatives and non-relatives who are family friends) with whom children may be placed in temporary or permanent placements. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCFS provides informal and formal supports to kinship caregivers.

Data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that the percentage of children in foster care who were placed with a kinship caregiver increased from 19 percent in 2004 to 31 percent in 2009.

Stakeholder Interview Information

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

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 16 was applicable for 29 (72.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	6	2	4	12	41
Area Needing Improvement	8	6	3	17	59
Total Applicable Foster Care Cases	14	8	7	29	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	6	2	3	11	
Total Foster Care Cases	20	10	10	40	
Strength by Site	43%	25%	57%		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 12 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 17 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother (11 of 28 applicable cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father (11 of 21 applicable 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 parent’s participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	13	8
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	4	1
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	13	4
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	7	3
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	2	2
Total Applicable Cases	28	21

Rating Determination

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 41 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 Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah expects parents to be notified of medical appointments, school meetings, and other activities in the child’s life so that the parent can attend and participate in these events. In addition, DCFS is expected to provide parents with encouragement and transportation to support attendance at these events. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, these events are often planned or announced at CFT meetings.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholder commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR reported that there is a Peer Parent program in the State and that part of what the peer parent does is work with the biological parents to help them rebuild or strengthen the parent-child relationship.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Well-Being Outcome 1

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs					
Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement					
Degree of Outcome Achievement	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	13	6	11	30	46.2
Partially Achieved	15	10	5	30	46.2
Not Achieved	3	1	1	5	7.7
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	42%	35%	65%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 46.2 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 37.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 60 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The State 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:

- DCFS was not consistent in assessing and addressing the service needs of children and their parents, in involving parents and children in the case planning process, and in establishing sufficient face-to-face contact with children and parents. However, DCFS was more consistent in achieving these objectives when the children were in foster care than when the children remained in their homes or in the home of a relative.
- There was a general lack of effort to address the father’s needs, involve the fathers in case planning, and establish contact with the fathers.

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

- Developed and trained on a —Managing to Performance” model designed to assist supervisors in coaching and mentoring caseworkers in conducting family assessments
- Provided training to supervisors and staff on the benefits of involving children and parents (particularly fathers) in CFT meetings
- Identified specific staff in each region who would be responsible for locating relatives or kin

- Updated the agency’s Practice Guidelines on the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children and parents and developed additional training for staff to support this practice

The State 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	13	7	12	32	49
Area Needing Improvement	18	10	5	33	51
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	42%	41%	71%		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 40 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 64 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 when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not assess the needs of the child or provide services (3 of 65 applicable cases).
- The agency did not assess the needs of the mother or provide services (13 of 54 applicable cases).
- The agency did not assess the needs of the father or provide services (19 of 46 applicable cases).
- The agency did not assess the needs of the foster parents or provide services (6 of 36 applicable cases).
- The agency assessed the needs of the mother but did not provide services to address identified needs (4 of 54 applicable cases).
- The agency assessed the needs of the father but did not provide services to address identified needs (4 of 46 applicable cases).
- The agency assessed the needs of the foster parents but did not provide services to address those needs (3 of 36 applicable 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	18 (60%)	30	19 (79%)	24
Father's needs assessed and met	7 (32%)	22	16 (67%)	24
Foster parents' needs assessed and met	27 (75%)	36	N/A	N/A
Child's needs assessed and met	40 (100%)	40	22 (88%)	25

The data indicate that children are considerably more likely to have their needs assessed and receive services to meet identified needs than are mothers, fathers, and foster parents. Fathers of children in foster care are least likely to have their needs assessed and be offered services.

Rating Determination

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 49 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 Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Utah Practice Model requires DCFS to work with children and families to identify any needs that are compromising the children's safety, and identify and provide the resources and/or services that can address those needs. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the SAFE database contains a functionality called the Child and Family Assessment that is designed to help the caseworker record the information used in determining the course of action required to provide enduring safety and permanency for the child.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the Qualitative Case Review (QCR) is used to evaluate the Child and Family Assessment process by determining whether the children's and families' strengths and needs are identified through formal and informal assessments and from progress notes of the CFT. The Statewide Assessment reports that the Child and Family Assessment score on the QCR is one of the lowest scoring indicators, and in FY 2009 only 77 percent of the cases reviewed passed this indicator.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review addressed the issue of assessing and meeting the needs of foster parents, kin caregivers, parents, and youth. With regard to the agency's effectiveness in assessing and meeting the needs of foster parents, stakeholders expressed different perspectives. Several stakeholders indicated that caseworkers generally are responsive to foster parents' needs, and, in some agency offices, Resource Family Consultants are responsible for ensuring that the needs of foster

parents are assessed and met. However, other stakeholders indicated that foster parents have support and service needs that are not being met, particularly the need for respite services.

With regard to kin caregivers, a few stakeholders reported that there is a Kinship Specialist Program in the State and that Kinship Specialists get involved with kin families at the onset of the licensing process and work with them on an ongoing basis. However, this program focuses primarily on helping families become licensed relative foster parents, rather than supporting them after they are licensed. Some stakeholders also expressed the opinion that the agency is assessing and meeting the needs of children and parents. A few stakeholders identified the Peer Parent Program as particularly effective in this regard.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 18 was applicable for 62 (95 percent) of the 65 cases. A case was not applicable if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review, parents were not involved with the child in any way, and/or the child was too young or had cognitive delays or other conditions that were barriers to participation in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether parents and children (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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	16	8	10	34	55
Area Needing Improvement	13	9	6	28	45
Total Applicable Cases	29	17	16	62	
Not Applicable Cases	2	0	1	3	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	55%	47%	62.5%		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 49 percent of the 37 applicable foster care cases and 64 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 34 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 28 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 involved in case planning?	19 (68%)	28	19 (79%)	24
Father involved in case planning?	7 (33%)	21	17 (71%)	24
Children involved in case planning?	28 (93%)	30	15 (83%)	18

Rating Determination

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 55 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 Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah Practice Guidelines require that all parents and children, if age or developmentally appropriate, have the opportunity to participate in and provide input to the development of the Child and Family Plan through CFT meetings and/or monthly interviews between the caseworker and parent or caseworker and child. Exceptions to the requirement to involve both parents in case planning may be made if a parent is deceased, parental rights have been terminated, parent’s whereabouts are unknown, a parent persistently refuses to participate, or parent’s participation in case planning would be detrimental to the well-being of the child.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the involvement in case planning of parents and children age 12 years and older is evaluated in both the CPR and the QCR. The Statewide Assessment notes that the CPR assesses the involvement of the mother, father, child older than age 12 years, as well as any step-parent(s). The following findings for the 2009 CPR were presented in the Statewide Assessment:

- The natural parent was involved in creating the current child and family plan in 81 percent of the applicable cases.
- The step-parent was involved in creating the current child and family plan in 57 percent of the applicable cases.
- The child (age 12 or older) was involved in creating the current child and family plan in 85 percent of the applicable cases.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the QCR looks even more broadly than just participation by parents and children in case planning and includes extended family members who are involved in the family’s life and foster families.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the effectiveness of the agency in involving children in the development of the case plan. Some stakeholders indicated that the agency does a good job engaging older youth in developing their case plans. However, several stakeholders suggested that participation of children in case planning is not consistent and tends to vary across agency offices and caseworkers, depending on their skills in working with teenagers. A few stakeholders reported that parents have an opportunity for input into the case plan during the CFT meetings.

Additional information on stakeholder perceptions of the involvement of parents in the case planning process is provided under item 25 in the Systemic Factors section of this report.

Item 19. Caseworker visits with child

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

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

Item 19 Ratings	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	26	15	16	57	88
Area Needing Improvement	5	2	1	8	12
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	84%	88%	94%		

Item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of the foster care cases and 84 percent of the in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 57 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- The frequency of caseworker visits was not sufficient to meet the needs of the child, and if visits did occur, they did not focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment (4 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 (4 cases).

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

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	2 (5%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	3 (7.5%)	4 (16%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	34 (85%)	19 (76%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	1 (2.5%)	2 (8%)
There were no visits during the period under review	0	0
Total Cases	40	25

Rating Determination

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 88 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 Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, agency policy at the time of preparation of the Statewide Assessment was the following:

- Caseworkers must visit with children in foster care at least once a month in the foster home and have a conversation with the child outside the presence of the caregiver. The conversation during these private visits must include asking the child if he or she feels safe in his or her foster home and in other settings, such as during visits with parents and at school. The caseworker also is expected to talk with the child about things that are going well as well as any concerns the child may have.
- For children in the in-home services cases, caseworkers must visit the home and enter the home for the visit. Until recently, there was no requirement for the caseworker to have contact with all children in the home receiving services. As of 2010, caseworkers are now expected to visit with each child being served through in-home services. They also must have a conversation outside the presence of the caregiver just as is required in a foster care case.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following 2009 CPR data with regard to this item:

- During the first 6 months of the review period, caseworkers visited the child in his or her out-of-home placement at least once each month in 91 percent of the cases.
- During the second 6 months of the review period, caseworkers visited the child in his or her out-of-home placement at least once each month in 95 percent of the cases.
- During the first 3 months of the review period, caseworkers visited the children in the in-home services cases at least once a month in 90 percent of the cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that caseworkers are meeting with the children in the children’s foster home at least once a month, and most stakeholders indicated that the caseworker has a private

conversation with the child away from the foster parents. However, several stakeholders also suggested that the visits often are not of sufficient quality and that the quality of the visits is an area needing improvement.

Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 20 was applicable for 55 (85 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 were foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker’s face-to-face contact with the children’s mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	12	6	9	27	49
Area Needing Improvement	14	9	5	28	51
Total Applicable Cases	26	15	14	55	
Not Applicable Cases	5	2	3	10	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	46%	40%	64%		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 40 percent of the 30 applicable foster care cases and 60 percent of the 25 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 27 cases when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency and quality to meet the needs of parents and children.

Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency, and when they did occur, they were not of sufficient quality (11 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency, and when they did occur, they were not of sufficient quality (9 cases).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency but not sufficient quality (one case).
- Visits with the father were of sufficient frequency but not sufficient quality (two cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency, but when they did occur, they were of sufficient quality (one case).
- There were no visits with the mother (three cases).
- There were no visits with the father (10 cases).

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

Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review	Foster Care Cases		In-Home Services	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Visits occurred at least once a week	4 (14%)	0	0	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	3 (10%)	2 (9%)	3 (12.5%)	1 (4%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	10 (34%)	5 (23%)	16 (67%)	13 (54%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	10 (34%)	7 (32%)	4 (17%)	8 (33%)
There were no visits during the period under review	2 (7%)	8 (36%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)
Total Applicable Cases	29	22	24	24

Rating Determination

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 49 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 Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah Practice Guidelines require the out-of-home caseworker to visit with the parents of the children in their caseloads no less than once every month. The Statewide Assessment reports that the visit must be a face-to-face meeting between the parent and the caseworker that includes the following elements:

- The environment of the location of the visits must be conducive to open and honest conversation.
- The length of the visit must be of sufficient duration to address key issues.
- The content of the interview should focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal achievement.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in 2009 a special study was done by the Office of Services Review to assess caseworker contact with fathers and with mothers. Reviewers selected random cases from various offices within each of the five regions. A total of 101 in-home services cases and 130 foster care cases were examined. The review found that face-to-face contact with mothers occurred only 34 percent of the time, while face-to-face contact with fathers occurred only 28 percent of the time.

Stakeholder Interview Information

During the onsite CFSR, this item was discussed only with stakeholders in Weber County and Washington County. Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed the opinion that for in-home services cases, caseworkers go to the family home at least once a month, and that monthly contact also is now being emphasized for parents of children in foster care.

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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	18	11	9	38	88.4
Partially Achieved	1	0	1	2	4.7
Not Achieved	2	1	0	3	7.0
Total Applicable Cases	21	12	10	43	
Not Applicable Cases	10	5	7	22	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	86%	92%	90%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 88.4 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 89 percent of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 87.5 percent of the 8 applicable in-home services cases. The State was in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 43 (66 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	18	11	9	38	88
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	1	5	12
Total Applicable Cases	21	12	10	43	
Not Applicable	10	5	7	22	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	86%	92%	90%		

Item 21 was rated as a Strength in 38 cases when reviewers determined that the child’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and services were provided, if necessary. Item 21 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in five cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

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

Rating Determination

Item 21 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 88 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for 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 was rated as Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah expects teachers and other relevant school personnel such as counselors to be members of the CFT for children in foster care and for those children served through an in-home services case if learning progress is an issue. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the CPR assesses compliance with the following Practice Guideline: If at any time during the child’s placement, the CFT has reason to suspect that the child may have a disability requiring special education services, the child will be referred for assessments for specialized services. Special education services may include services such as resource classes, speech services, language services, and behavior management. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the findings of the 2009 CPR indicate that the child was referred for assessments for specialized (educational) services in 82 percent of the applicable cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency makes concerted efforts to ensure that children’s educational needs are met. Some of the barriers to meeting educational needs identified by various stakeholders are placement changes that make it difficult for a child to continue in the same school and rules and regulations of the school system that often make it difficult to enroll children who are in foster care in school and ensure that their education-related needs are met.

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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Substantially Achieved	23	14	15	52	85.2
Partially Achieved	5	1	0	6	9.8
Not Achieved	2	0	1	3	4.9
Total Applicable Cases	30	15	16	61	
Not Applicable Cases	1	2	1	4	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Substantially Achieved by Site	77%	93%	94%		

Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Utah is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85.2 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 87 percent of the 39 foster care cases and 82 percent of the 22 applicable in-home services cases. The State 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 review was that while children were being appropriately assessed for physical and mental health needs, services to address the needs identified through the assessments were not consistently provided.

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

- Developed functions in SAFE to allow nursing staff to track the physical and mental health-care services provided to children in foster care and to ensure that identified needs are addressed in a timely manner
- Developed processes to ensure that youth placed in title IV-E funded placements by the Division of Juvenile Justice have access to appropriate mental health services

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

Item 22. Physical health of the child

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 48 (74 percent) of the 65 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were those 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	21	11	12	44	92
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	0	4	8
Total Applicable Cases	24	12	12	48	
Not Applicable Cases	7	5	5	17	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	87.5%	92%	100%		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of the 39 applicable foster care cases and 89 percent of the 9 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 44 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 four cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s physical health needs were not assessed (two cases).
- The child’s dental health needs were not assessed (two cases).
- The child did not receive services to meet health needs (three cases).
- The child did not receive services to meet dental needs (three cases).

Rating Determination

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 92 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children’s physical health needs. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the requirements for health care for foster children in Utah include annual health, dental, and mental health assessments and the completion of any follow-up referrals within a specific time period, generally within 90 days,

depending on the follow-up needed. The Statewide Assessment presents the following 2009 CPR findings relevant to meeting children’s health-care needs:

- An initial or annual comprehensive health assessment was conducted on time in 88 percent of the applicable cases.
- If a need for further evaluation or treatment was indicated in the most current health assessment, that evaluation or treatment was initiated as recommended by the primary care provider in 63 percent of the applicable cases.
- An initial or annual dental assessment was conducted on time in 89 percent of the applicable cases.
- If a need for further dental care treatment was indicated in the most current dental exam, that treatment was initiated as recommended by the primary care provider in 86 percent of applicable cases.

The Statewide Assessment also identifies Utah’s Fostering Healthy Children Program (FHCP) as particularly effective in meeting children’s health-care needs. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, this program is the result of a DCFS contract with the Utah Department of Health (DOH) to provide public health nurses to track each child in foster care and his or her medical and dental health needs. The FHCP nurses usually are located in the DCFS offices and are to be invited to the CFT meetings or to have the opportunity to provide input if they are not able to attend. The nurses follow every aspect of the children’s medical, dental, and mental health and record it in health screens in the SAFE database.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency is meeting children’s medical and dental health needs. Several stakeholders praised the FHCP, indicating that the program ensures that medical and dental needs are assessed and services provided.

Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

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

Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 55 (85 percent) of the 65 cases. 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 whether appropriate 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	Salt Lake	Washington	Weber	Total	Percent
Strength	23	14	13	50	91
Area Needing Improvement	4	0	1	5	9
Total Applicable Cases	27	14	14	55	
Not Applicable Cases	4	3	3	10	
Total Cases	31	17	17	65	
Strength by Site	85%	100%	93%		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 94 percent of the 35 applicable foster care cases and 85 percent of the 20 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 50 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 (three cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed, but services were not provided to address identified needs (two cases).

Rating Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 91 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 greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, within 30 days of removal or court-ordered custody, whichever occurs first, children age 5 years and older will receive a mental health assessment. Children younger than age 5 do not have an initial or annual mental health assessment unless one is recommended by a health-care provider. These children’s developmental levels are assessed using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for both physical and social development. If a child scores below the norm in an area on two consecutive assessments, a referral for early intervention or Head Start services can be made.

The Statewide Assessment provides the following findings of the 2009 CPR relevant to meeting children’s mental health needs.

- An initial or annual mental health assessment was conducted on time in 93 percent of the applicable cases.
- If a need for mental health services was indicated in the most current mental health assessment, those services were initiated within 30 days of receipt of the evaluator’s consultation form in 94 percent of the applicable cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

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

SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

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

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

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

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

I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

Status of Statewide Information System

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

Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Utah's statewide information system can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for every child in foster care. Item 24 also was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, SAFE has been fully operational since September 2001. The Statewide Assessment reports that SAFE can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of children in foster care. The Statewide Assessment also reports that this information is entered accurately and directly into SAFE by caseworkers or their support staff in a timely manner.

With regard to the location of children in foster care, the Statewide Assessment notes that, as of January 2010, agency policy requires entry of placement information within 24 hours of the placement event and, at the time of preparation of the Statewide Assessment, the median time to update placement information was 5 days. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, because payments are connected to placements, the placement information must be accurate for payments to be made. Also, because the information about

placements is reflected in several reports and mailings to providers, inaccurate information about placements can be quickly detected, even for placements that do not receive payments. Additionally, every 2 weeks, caseworkers must verify every placement in the system for all the children on their caseloads.

Stakeholder Interview Information

All stakeholders addressing this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the SAFE system can readily identify the demographic characteristics, legal status, permanency goals, and location of every child in foster care. Stakeholders identified the following features of the system as promoting the accuracy of the information in SAFE at any given time:

- The system has ticklers or pop-up screens with questions that ask caseworkers about the whereabouts of the child or about the child’s demographics and require verification before the caseworkers can move on in the system.
- Case goals must be updated in the system every time the case goes to court, which is usually every 90 days, or there is a notification in SAFE.

Several stakeholders suggested that ensuring accurate and timely placement location information sometimes can be a challenge because of delays in entering this information, but stakeholders expressed the opinion that for most children, placement information is entered in a timely manner, and when there are delays, they generally involve only a few days. However, there were differences in stakeholders’ perceptions of the timeframe required for entering placement change information; some stakeholders said that this information had to be entered within 24 hours of the placement, others said within 48 hours or 3 days, and still others said within 5 days.

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

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

Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- There were inconsistencies in practice with regard to involving parents in the case planning process.
- Case reviews identified a number of children for whom TPR was not sought in accordance with ASFA.

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

- Developed Practice Guidelines regarding locating and involving fathers in case planning
- Developed supervisory training curriculum to help supervisors assist caseworkers in implementing Practice Model skills
- Established a practice of involving parents in case planning through the use of CFTs
- Included a prompt in SAFE that notifies caseworkers when a child has been in custody for 12 of 22 months
- Provided training to caseworkers on how to request and document exceptions to filing for TPR

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

Key Findings of the 2003 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific 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 information from the stakeholder interviews suggests that the agency uses CFT meetings to involve parents in developing the case plan, information from the Statewide Assessment indicates that parents were involved in creating the current case plan in 81 percent of the cases reviewed in the State’s Quality Assurance (QA) process. In addition, the CFSR case reviews found that mothers were involved in case planning in 73 percent of the applicable cases, and fathers were involved in case planning in 53 percent of the applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah requires that a written case plan, known as the Child and Family Plan, be finalized in SAFE within 45 days of the child entering foster care and that the finalization of the Child and Family Plan requires a CFT meeting. The expectation is that the CFT will include parents, children (when appropriate), and formal and informal support persons, and that the CFT will be used to discuss the strengths of the family as well as the needs that must be addressed in order to ensure children’s safety and permanency. The Statewide Assessment also reports that participation in the development of the case plan by the parents is required and that, although parent participation in a CFT meeting fulfills this requirement, a parent also may participate in case plan development during visits with caseworkers or through correspondence with caseworkers if a parent does not live nearby.

The Statewide Assessment reports the following data for 2009 relevant to case plan development:

- The Child and Family Plan was completed no later than 45 days after the child’s removal from the home in 27 (71 percent) of 38 applicable cases reviewed.
- The natural parents/guardians were involved in creating the current child and family plan in 67 (81 percent) of 83 applicable cases reviewed.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the timeliness of case plan development and the involvement of parents in the case plan development process. All stakeholders noted that case plans are developed in a timely manner and are updated at least once every 6 months and usually more often. Most stakeholders also indicated that parents are engaged in the development of the case plan through the CFT meetings and that this is an agency requirement. They noted that the first CFT meeting is held to develop the case plan and, prior to the first CFT meeting, parents are asked whom they would like to invite to the team meeting. Stakeholders reported that, during the team meeting, parents are asked about the services that they need or that their children need. A few stakeholders, however, suggested that some case plan requirements are set by the court or are otherwise non-negotiable, such as urine screens and assessments for mental health or substance abuse concerns and parenting classes.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as a Strength. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicate that periodic reviews of the status of each child in foster care are held by the court at least every 6 months and usually more frequently, and the reviews address key issues relevant to the case and help move the case forward. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, since the fall of 2008, Utah’s statewide Juvenile Court conducts all periodic reviews on the status of each child in foster care. The Statewide Assessment reports that the majority of Utah’s Juvenile Court judges review cases more frequently than every 6 months.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, all cases that require periodic review hearings shall be scheduled for a court review not less than once every 6 months from the date of disposition. The Statewide Assessment reports that Utah’s Juvenile Court tracks the timeliness of hearings and reports this information to the legislature each year. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, in calendar year 2009, Utah’s Juvenile Court held timely 6-month review hearings in 95 percent of its cases; 97 percent of its cases had a review hearing within an additional 30 days.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the issues of the timeliness of periodic reviews and the usefulness of the reviews in moving a case forward. Almost all stakeholders expressed the opinion that periodic reviews are held at least every 6 months but that it is more common for periodic reviews to be held every 90 days. Most stakeholders indicated that the periodic reviews help to move cases forward. Various stakeholders attributed the usefulness of the periodic review to the following factors:

- Periodic reviews address services for parents and parents' participation in services and motivate parents to meet case plan requirements.
- Periodic reviews often identify obstacles to achieving case plan objectives and ways to overcome those obstacles.
- Periodic reviews assess children's status with regard to their safety and their placement.
- Periodic reviews address permanency issues.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 27 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the first permanency hearing is held within 12 months from the date of the child's removal. In addition, stakeholder interview information suggests that permanency hearings are held at least every 12 months after the initial hearing and that they are useful in moving the child to permanency. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, when reunification services are ordered, a permanency hearing must be held within 12 months of the removal of the child or within 8 months of the removal if the child is 36 months of age or younger at the time of the removal and then at least every 12 months thereafter; Utah code further provides that a permanency hearing must be held within 30 days of the dispositional hearing if reunification services are not ordered at that time.

The Statewide Assessment reports that for calendar year 2009, Utah's Juvenile Court held permanency hearings within 12 months for children older than 36 months of age in 87 percent of its cases; 93 percent of cases had a permanency hearing within an additional 15 days and 94 percent within 13 months of removal. It was clarified during the stakeholder interviews during the onsite CFSR that these data pertain to the first hearing held after removal and not to subsequent hearings. No data were provided in the Statewide Assessment regarding the timeliness of subsequent permanency hearings.

The Statewide Assessment also provides data for calendar year 2009 indicating that for children younger than 36 months of age, permanency hearings were held within 8 months of removal in 77 percent of cases and within 9 months of removal in 91 percent of cases.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this issue during the onsite CFSR addressed the issues of the timeliness of permanency hearings and the usefulness of the hearings in moving children toward permanency. Almost all stakeholders expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are held at least every 12 months if not more often. Many stakeholders noted that the first permanency hearing is held 8 months after removal for children younger than 36 months of age, and at 12 months for older children, and most stakeholders said that permanency hearings continue to be held for children in foster care for long periods of time.

Almost all stakeholders also expressed the opinion that permanency hearings are substantive and useful in moving children toward permanency. They noted that during the hearings, judges address the critical issues relevant to achieving the child’s permanency goal.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the agency is filing for TPR within the required ASFA timeframe or is documenting in the case file a compelling reason for not filing. In addition, CFSR case reviews found that TPR was filed in accordance with ASFA requirements, including documentation of reasons for not filing for TPR, in 84 percent of the applicable cases. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, at the time of the initial permanency hearing (either 8 or 12 months from the date of removal depending on the age of the child), reunification services can no longer be offered unless the parents qualify for one of two possible 90-day extensions of reunification services. If reunification services are ended the permanency goal is changed. If adoption is the new primary permanency goal, TPR procedures must be initiated. If another goal is chosen and TPR is not pursued, reasons for not filing for TPR must be discussed with the court and entered into SAFE.

The Statewide Assessment provides the following State law requirements pertaining to filing for TPR:

- Section 78A-6-314(5) states that “If the final plan for the minor is to proceed toward TPR, the petition for TPR shall be filed, and a pretrial held within 45 calendar days after the permanency hearing.”
- If the petition for TPR is filed prior to the date set for the permanency hearing, the court may consolidate the hearing on the petition to TPR with the permanency hearing (Section 78A-6-314(8)).

The Statewide Assessment reports that caseworkers are notified through SAFE when a child has been in foster care for 12 of 22 months to allow the caseworker sufficient time to prepare and file the request for TPR. The following data were provided in the Statewide Assessment regarding filing for TPR: On May 1, 2010, DCFS had 845 children in custody who had been in foster care for 15 of the previous 22 months. Of these children, 32 percent had the dates of the TPR documented in their case records and 68 percent had a reason why TPR was not in the children's best interests documented in their case records.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item indicated that the agency files for TPR when a child has been in foster care for 15 out of 22 months and, if the agency does not file, a compelling reason is documented in the case file. Two key stakeholders noted that recently a Utah statute was changed to allow an additional 90-day extension to the filing date in order to give the parents more time to achieve the case plan requirements. This provision means that the child may be in foster care for up to 18 months before the agency files for TPR. Some stakeholders indicated, however, that the reason for each extension, which must be that there is clear evidence that the parent is starting to make good progress to achieve case plan requirements, is documented as a compelling reason. Various stakeholders identified the following additional compelling reasons not to file for TPR:

- The child has a strong bond with the parent.
- The child is age 12 or older and says that he or she does not want to be adopted.
- The child is older or for some other reason may be considered unlikely to be adopted and a TPR would create a legal orphan.

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 the State does not have a formal or consistent process in place to notify caregivers about hearings and reviews or to ensure that caregivers have the opportunity to be heard in those hearings or reviews. As a result, both timely notification and opportunity to be heard are inconsistent. This item was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the DCFS caseworker is responsible for providing notice to caregivers (i.e., foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers) about all reviews and hearings involving the children in their care. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that notification often happens during the CFT meetings or the regular monthly visits to the foster home. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, there is no formal or consistent notification process in place and there is a need for a more systematic process. In recognition of this need, the Statewide Assessment reports that, based on information from the foster parents

association, the agency is working on a process through which the SAFE database system will generate hearing notices via email to foster parents.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the following questions: (1) Do caregivers routinely receive notice of the dates for hearings and reviews involving the children in their care? Do caregivers have the opportunity to provide information or have other types of input into those hearings or reviews? With regard to notification, most stakeholders reported that there is no formal system in place in the State for notifying foster parents regarding the dates of hearings or reviews. In addition, although many stakeholders indicated that notification was the responsibility of the caseworkers, several other stakeholders said that they did not know who was responsible for notification.

Stakeholders held different opinions regarding whether foster parents were routinely notified of hearings and reviews, with some stakeholders saying that notification was occurring on a routine basis and others suggesting that notification is sporadic and dependent on the caseworker. Data from a foster parent association survey discussed during a stakeholder interview (and supported by submission of a written report) indicate that 37.7 percent of foster parents said that they were notified more than 76 percent of the time, and 28.8 percent said that they were notified less than 25 percent of the time.

Stakeholders also held different opinions about the opportunity for foster parents to have input into the proceedings of the hearing or review. Stakeholders in Salt Lake County and Washington County expressed the opinion that caregivers have the opportunity to speak in court or to have their opinions and information presented to the court by caseworkers or guardians *ad litem*. State-level stakeholders and Weber County stakeholders reported that the opportunity to have input into the proceedings of the hearing or review varies depending on the judge. In addition, data from the foster parent survey discussed during a stakeholder interview indicate the following:

- Only 10.7 percent of foster parents said that they had been asked to comment in court more than 75 percent of the time, while 70.2 percent said that they had been asked to comment less than 25 percent of the time.
- Only 12.5 percent of the foster parents said that they had been asked for feedback for the court report over 75 percent of the time, while 64.3 percent said that they had been asked for feedback for the court report less than 25 percent of the time.

III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

Status of Quality Assurance System

Utah is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of QA System. The State 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 specific items assessed under QA System are presented and discussed below.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has in place a variety of standards to ensure that there are quality services to protect children's safety and health. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, standards to protect children's health and safety were established as a result of the David C. lawsuit, are part of the agency's practice guidelines, and are reviewed in the QCR and CPR. The Statewide Assessment also reports that practice guidelines are updated on a quarterly basis and that the CPR, which reviews compliance with practice guidelines, also is updated to reflect any changes in practice guidelines.

The Statewide Assessment notes that the agency's practice guidelines require annual health, mental health, and dental examinations for all children in foster care, and follow-up care be completed within specific timeframes depending on the health provider's recommendations. The Statewide Assessment also notes that the FHCP ensures that each child in foster care is assigned a nurse from DOH who is responsible for tracking his or her health-care issues to verify that assessments and services are being provided.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, practice guidelines also address safety issues for children in foster care through the requirement that caseworkers must make monthly visits to children in foster care and must speak with the child and inquire about the child's safety outside of the presence of the caregiver.

Stakeholder Interview Information

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has developed and implemented effective standards to address the health- and safety-related needs of children in foster care. With regard to health, stakeholders noted

that standards are in place to ensure that children receive regular health screens, physical exams, and dental examinations. Several stakeholders mentioned the FHCP as particularly effective in ensuring that children in foster care receive quality services to meet their health-related needs.

Various stakeholders indicated that safety is addressed through the following standards and procedures:

- State standards that require caseworkers to visit children in their out-of-home placements at least monthly and to have private conversations with the children
- Licensing standards and background checks regarding the safety of the caregiver home or facility, including prior histories of abuse and neglect of all members of the caregiver’s family
- Procedures for investigation if a child in foster care is injured in the foster home
- Ongoing reviews of the data regarding the timeliness of investigations of abuse and neglect reports
- Ongoing reviews of service contracts to ensure that State and Federal guidelines are being met

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 31 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State’s QA system is comprehensive; implemented statewide on an ongoing basis; and designed to evaluate the quality of services, identify system strengths and areas needing improvement, and evaluate program improvement efforts. In addition, the State’s QA system is data-based and generates reports that are disseminated to and useful for all levels of agency staff as well as external stakeholders. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah has been conducting statewide QA reviews of its child welfare practices since 1995 and, since 2000, the reviews have included both an annual CPR, which uses a statistically representative sample of cases in all DCFS program areas to assess compliance with policy, and an annual QCR, which is designed to assess achievement of outcomes. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the reviews are conducted by the Office of Services Review, which is an office within Utah’s DHS but separate from DCFS.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the QCR is similar to the Federal CFSR and includes both case file reviews and interviews with key people associated with the case, including the child, parents, and service providers. The QCR is conducted in each of Utah’s five regions during the year and includes a total of approximately 168 cases statewide. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following QCR procedures and activities:

- After each case has been scored, caseworkers receive immediate feedback and recommendations, and a debriefing is held for reviewers to share their findings and discuss the case with other reviewers, supervisors, and region administration.
- The lead reviewer for the case writes a case story explaining the scoring of the case and providing case-specific recommendations. The case story is sent to the region administration and to the caseworker and his/her supervisor and is sometimes used in trainings as a case example.
- After the Onsite Review, the Office of Services Review prepares a written report with overall findings including the analysis of case scores, information from the case stories, and information from interviews with local stakeholders.
- The overall findings are presented to the region administration with attention to both the strengths and the areas for improvement found in the region. Ideas are solicited on improvements that can be made and also barriers within the system that need to be addressed by administration.
- Each regional report, as well as a statewide annual report, are made available to the public and can be viewed on an agency website.

The Statewide Assessment reports that results of both the QCRs and CPRs have been used to target training needs and policy and practice revisions. Each region has one or more Practice Improvement Coordinators whose job it is to improve practice performance to the level needed to insure quality outcomes for the children and families served by the child welfare system. These coordinators work with region administration, frontline caseworkers, and supervisors to address areas needing improvement through training, mentoring, or by other means to improve practice. The regional Practice Improvement Coordinators all meet together on a quarterly basis with the State Program and Practice Improvement Team, an internal DCFS system, to discuss issues around CPR, QCR, and the CFSR. Innovative ways of fostering practice improvements are shared among the participants of these quarterly meetings.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, another part of the State's QA system is the Trends Analysis Committee, which meets on a quarterly basis and is composed of State and regional administrators who work together reviewing and interpreting data. The Trends Analysis Committee issues recommendations for improving practice to the appropriate program administrators. Then the Committee reviews data collected after practice changes have been implemented to assess the effectiveness of the practice changes.

Additional components of the State's QA system mentioned in the Statewide Assessment include the State and Regional Quality Improvement (QI) Committees and the multiple reports that can be generated from SAFE that focus on both process and outcome information. The QI Committees exist at both State and regional levels and are comprised of key community stakeholders. The Committees request and review data from SAFE and offer recommendations to DCFS on a number of issues. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, there is a data unit within the SAFE team that responds to requests for reports or information from State administration, regional administration, community partners, and State government, as well as the QI Committees and other relevant groups.

Stakeholder Interview Information

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has a comprehensive QA system in place that evaluates case practice, compliance with agency requirements, and child outcomes and identifies the strengths and areas needing improvement. Stakeholders also noted that feedback from the various QA processes is provided to all levels of the child welfare agency and includes both immediate oral feedback to caseworkers on specific cases as well as written reports to regional and State administrators. Several stakeholders indicated that regions exhibiting marked declines in performance must develop a corrective action plan and that the QA system then evaluates the effectiveness of the program improvements implemented.

Stakeholders identified the following additional components of the QA system:

- The Program and Practice Improvement Team, which works with the regions and the Office of Services Review to help develop and monitor corrective action plans, as well as other program improvement-related activities
- An external network of QI Committees in each region and at the State level that identify areas of concern, review data, and make recommendations to regional and State administrators
- The Finishing Touches Review, a set of tools and data reports that supervisors can use to review individual cases (supervisors are required to review one case per caseworker per month)
- Multiple data reports generated through SAFE that provide all levels of DCFS staff with information on various aspects of case practice and child outcomes

A few stakeholders expressed concern that the current QA process can be somewhat burdensome and needs to be streamlined. These stakeholders noted, however, that no changes are permitted to the QA system under the terms of the David C. settlement agreement and that the State is considering streamlining the QA process once the agency is released from the terms of the settlement.

A few stakeholders also expressed concern that although the CPR QA review incorporates a review of the CPS process from the perspective of compliance with agency requirements regarding the investigative process, the QCR does not include the initial investigative CPS process in its case reviews. A key State-level stakeholder indicated that this is an area that they have been trying to address.

IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

Status of Staff and Provider Training

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

Key Findings of the 2003 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 and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State operates a staff development and training program for all new caseworkers and that the training is effective in helping caseworkers perform their job functions. In addition, new caseworkers must complete the training before carrying a full caseload. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, initial training for new hires involves a 9-week program that combines classroom and on-the-job training. On-the-job training takes place in the agency office, performed by supervisors and mentors, and/or by the new hires shadowing experienced caseworkers. The Statewide Assessment also notes that State law requires DCFS to provide a mentoring experience for all new employees.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, new employees hired to provide casework services complete the following:

- DHS New Employee training
- 120 hours of Practice Model Training
- SAFE training
- Level A - DHS and DCFS processes
- Level B - practice and documentation
- CORE 100 - laws and legal processes
- CORE 103 - the effects of abuse and neglect on child development
- CORE 104 - the issues of separation and loss

The Statewide Assessment reports that each region has a training team that delivers the training for the new hires in that region, develops trainings requested by administrators and supervisors to meet needs in the region, and works with the Professional Development Team at the State office on curriculum development. The Statewide Assessment also reports that participation in training is recorded and tracked in the SAFE database system and provides data indicating that in 2009, practice model training was provided to 100 percent of newly hired caseworkers.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has in place a comprehensive training program for new staff that focuses on preparing them for their job responsibilities and generally takes about 5–9 weeks to complete. Several stakeholders indicated that the training is a mixture of classroom training that focuses on practice model training, SAFE training, and on-the-job training. Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the on-the-job training component was particularly effective in preparing caseworkers for their job responsibilities.

Some stakeholders also noted that the trainers track participation in training and, although there is no training post-test, the trainers work with supervisors and regional directors to continually monitor the performance of new caseworkers. Several stakeholders reported that new caseworkers cannot carry a caseload as a primary caseworker without first completing the practice model training and 3 months of employment while being mentored by supervisors or other caseworkers, as well as shadowing more experienced caseworkers. However, a key State-level stakeholder indicated that because of staff shortages in some of the more rural offices, it may be necessary for a new caseworker to carry one or two cases as a primary caseworker while participating in training.

A few stakeholders expressed concern that trainees do not know the type of unit to which they will be assigned until after completing training. They suggested that the “shadowing” component of the training might be more effective if trainees were shadowing someone from a unit where they would be working.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State provides ongoing training for staff that is intended to enhance their skills and knowledge base and improve their job performance. The Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews also indicate that the agency uses SAFE to track participation in ongoing training. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, although there has been some confusion in the past regarding the authorization for the requirement of annual ongoing training hours, at the time of the preparation of the Statewide Assessment, DCFS policy required

frontline caseworkers, supervisors, and other administrators to complete 40 hours of ongoing training each year. The Statewide Assessment also notes, however, that budget cuts have made it difficult to offer training through an annual Child Welfare Institute or other type of conference venue. Consequently, to provide an opportunity for all employees to complete the required ongoing training each year without incurring personal cost, DCFS decided to offer online training, web-based training produced by the Professional Development Team, and classroom training. The Statewide Assessment also notes that DCFS is planning to offer as much training as possible via the web so that employees can access it at times convenient to them.

The Statewide Assessment reports that DCFS has been able to record ongoing training for employees in SAFE and uses SAFE to notify employees when they need more training hours. Employees can enter trainings that are not part of the agency trainings into SAFE. For example, if an employee attends a seminar on a topic related to child welfare, he or she can enter that activity as ongoing training in SAFE. The employee's supervisor then decides if the training is applicable and whether credit should be given for the training.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR confirmed information in the Statewide Assessment that all caseworkers and supervisors are required to complete 40 hours of in-service training annually. The general consensus among stakeholders is that the majority of caseworkers and supervisors are meeting this requirement and that there is no difficulty accessing trainings to meet the time requirement. Stakeholders in all three sites also reported that participation in at least 40 hours of in-service training is part of the performance evaluation process and that not completing the training is seen as ~~not~~ an option.”

Many stakeholders also suggested that training is helpful to caseworkers and supervisors in performing their jobs. However, several stakeholders expressed the opinion that the mandatory trainings required by the State agency were not helpful because they were not sufficiently individualized to address staff needs. In contrast, several stakeholders identified the formal trainings from community partners and the informal trainings through a “~~in~~ch and learn” process as helpful to caseworkers in performing their jobs. Some of the trainings identified by stakeholders as particularly useful were the ICWA training, cultural sensitivity training, and domestic violence training. Some stakeholders noted that decisions about training topics are made based on staff requests, the findings of the CPRs and QCRs, and Federal and State requirements.

All stakeholders in the three sites included in the onsite CFSR said that participation in training is tracked through SAFE. It was noted that participation in mandatory training was entered by the administration, while caseworkers and supervisors entered their participation in other types of training directly into the system. However, a key State-level stakeholder noted that this process is not always consistent and has not been formalized. Stakeholders also noted that for licensed social workers, participation in training was tracked to maintain their licensure, although not all caseworkers and supervisors in DCFS are licensed social workers.

Several stakeholders indicated that although a comprehensive training curriculum for new supervisors is in the process of development, at the time of the onsite CFSR, training for new supervisors was limited to administrative tasks, some mentoring, and one-on-one training in how to use data reports, which is provided by the Program and Practice Improvement Team. However,

stakeholders confirmed information in the Statewide Assessment that all supervisors, as well as all caseworkers, are required to participate in 40 hours of in-service training annually.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that DCFS provides initial and ongoing training to DCFS’s current or prospective foster parents through the Utah Foster Care Foundation (UFCF), a nonprofit organization, and requires the private child-placing agencies to provide equivalent initial and ongoing training to their foster parents. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, prospective foster parents are required to attend 32 hours of training prior to licensure and 12 hours of in-service training annually to remain licensed. The Statewide Assessment reports that DCFS contracts with UFCF to provide both pre-service training for resource families and in-service training to retain licensure.

The Statewide Assessment reports that UFCF offers training that is designed to provide insights into the process of becoming a foster/adoptive family, information about the situations these families encounter, solutions to typical problems, the emotional aspects of being a foster/adoptive family, and many other topics important for those preparing to foster. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, after the resource family is licensed, the UFCF trainer continues in a supportive role providing in-service training through clusters, which are groups of foster parents who meet on a regular basis across the State. The Statewide Assessment notes that in-service training classes are developed, implemented, and designed to help families enhance their skills and knowledge.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item primarily addressed the initial and ongoing training provided by UFCF to DCFS foster parents under contract with the State. All stakeholders expressed the opinion that the initial, 32-hour UFCF training program is effective in preparing foster parents to assume their roles and, except for relative caregivers, must be completed prior to having a child placed in their homes. A few stakeholders noted that for relative/kinship caregivers, training may be completed after a child is placed in the home following a home study and background checks, and it must be completed for the relative to be fully licensed.

Most stakeholders also praised the availability and content of ongoing training provided by UFCF, and they noted that foster parents do not have difficulty meeting the requirements of 12 hours of ongoing training annually for the primary foster parent or 4 hours annually for the secondary foster parent. Many stakeholders indicated that ongoing training occurs primarily in the cluster groups. A few stakeholders also noted that a UFCF newsletter informs foster parents about available training through UFCF and other resources.

Many stakeholders reported that participation in both pre-placement and ongoing training is tracked through SAFE and is a condition of relicensure. However, several stakeholders also noted that there can be barriers to foster parents attending ongoing training, such as lack of transportation and child care, and that online trainings are available.

Several stakeholders indicated that training for foster parents who are part of the private provider network (referred to by stakeholders as proctor foster parents and proctor agencies) has the same hourly requirements, but that each agency is responsible for the implementation and content of the training. A key State-level stakeholder noted that the Office of Licensing (OL) conducts an annual review of a sample of foster parents licensed by the private child-placing agencies to ensure that State requirements are met. A few stakeholders indicated, however, that there was little information about both the initial and ongoing training provided to the proctor foster parents.

V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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

Status of Service Array and Resource Development

Utah is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The State 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 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 State 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, as discussed under item 36. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah provides an array of services across the State with local communities having various resources available to assist families in meeting basic needs (food banks, housing assistance, homeless shelters, after-school programs, free clinics, etc.), as well as services to improve functioning (parenting classes, education supports, employment assistance, vocational rehabilitation, mental health services, crisis nurseries, youth services, etc.). The Statewide Assessment notes that the more rural parts of the State, which might be viewed as lacking a large array of services for families, often have informal supports in place to ensure that families and children receive the services they need.

The State’s continuum of services includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Family Support Centers contract with DCFS to provide parenting classes and crisis respite nurseries for children age 0 to 11 years. Each Family Support Center offers further services that meet the needs of the particular community in which they are located. Additional services may include other services such as therapeutic treatment, counseling for children and adults, emergency food and housing services, and referral services.
- Home Visiting programs have been implemented as an intervention with high-risk, first-time parents to reduce the potential of abuse and neglect. The DOH received grant funds to build an infrastructure for Home Visiting and evaluation.
- Thirteen community mental health centers provide mental health treatment to children and families.
- Substance abuse treatment is provided at local county levels with funding from State and Federal governments.
- Domestic violence services include both direct and indirect services, and both DCFS and local community coalitions coordinate domestic violence programs.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the service array is adequate to meet the needs of children and families served by the child welfare system, but that there are concerns with regard to the accessibility of services due to various factors such as transportation, insufficient services in rural areas, and budget cuts that have resulted in a decrease in the quantity of key services available. These concerns are discussed further under item 36.

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

 Strength X Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the Statewide Assessment reports that there are no concerns with regard to accessing services, information from stakeholder interviews indicates that there are several accessibility concerns such as the absence of services in some rural areas, the lack of sufficient transportation services, the waiting lists for key services in both rural and urban areas, and the fact that parents who do not have Medicaid often cannot afford to access the services required in the case plan. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the problems noted in Utah's first CFSR with regard to the accessibility of services in all areas of the State have been addressed and no accessibility concerns were identified in the Statewide Assessment as existing at the time of preparation of the Statewide Assessment. The Statewide Assessment provides a number of examples of the improvements in service array in the three DCFS regions that include the more rural parts of Utah, including but not limited to mental health services, domestic violence services, substance abuse treatment services, parenting training, and transportation services.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item expressed concern about the accessibility of services, and many noted that accessibility may become even more of a concern in the future because the Federal Government is requiring the State to revise its Medicaid eligibility criteria. Various stakeholders identified the following concerns pertaining to accessibility:

- There is a large array of services in the urban areas and along the Wasatch Front (an urban area in the north-central part of the State), but very limited services in the rural areas. Families in rural areas often must travel long distances to receive services, and agencies often must place children who come from rural areas in foster care placements that are some distance from their homes in order to be able to meet their service needs.
- Even in urban areas, the availability of services has been decreased due to budget cuts, resulting in children and parents being placed on waiting lists for services. Some stakeholders identified the loss of community services for children and adults with disabilities and noted that some of these children are entering foster care in order to receive those lost services.
- Parents who are not eligible for Medicaid often have limited accessibility to services because they cannot afford them. When a child is removed from a home, the parent loses Medicaid eligibility, and while the agency will pay for evaluations and assessments, the parents must pay for services. If a child is in the home, the family must be eligible for Medicaid in order for either the parent or the child to receive Medicaid funding for services.
- There are concerns about the quality of services in both the rural and urban areas because of budget cuts and reductions in staff in many service delivery areas.

Stakeholders identified a number of services that were lacking in rural communities or that were insufficient in urban communities. These included, but are not limited to, the following key services:

- Respite care for parents and foster parents
- Peer Parenting programs
- Dental services, including orthodontics

- Mental health services, including child psychiatrists, for children with high-level service needs
- Services for victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse
- Inpatient substance abuse treatment programs
- Intensive in-home services
- Prevention services
- Affordable housing
- Domestic violence shelter beds
- Community-based services for high risk youth
- Spanish-speaking services and interpreters
- Foster homes, particularly for adolescents

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 in the Statewide Assessment indicates that caseworkers are encouraged to develop “creative interventions” to assist children and families, and culturally relevant services are available for families. However, information from the stakeholder interviews indicates that it is difficult to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families because the services often are not accessible, particularly Spanish-speaking services. This item was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Practice Model requires that caseworkers must work with the child and family to individualize interventions that meet specific family needs and that one module in the Practice Model training focuses on how to find and access resources outside of DCFS and how to develop creative interventions to assist the child and family. The Statewide Assessment also notes that agencies that provide services through a contract with DCFS are expected to participate in CFT meetings and to individualize their services according to the needs of the family members.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed a range of opinions regarding the effectiveness of the State in individualizing services to meet the unique needs of children and families. One concern expressed by several stakeholders was that although case plans usually are individualized to meet child and family needs, often the lack of accessible resources will result in services provision not being individualized. A few stakeholders, however, suggested that services often are not individualized because although the resources exist, many caseworkers do not have sufficient information about what resources are available to meet unique needs.

Several stakeholders also expressed the opinion that there is a lack of Spanish-speaking service providers in almost all service areas to ensure that the needs of Hispanic children and parents can be adequately addressed. Culturally sensitive services to meet the needs of various immigrant and refugee populations also were noted to be lacking, as well as interpreters in the various languages represented by these populations.

Despite these concerns, several stakeholders noted that there are culturally appropriate services provided to Native American families in many areas of the State and cited the Indian Walk-In Center in Salt Lake City as particularly effective in ensuring that Native American children and families are able to receive culturally appropriate services. Several stakeholders also reported that the agency often uses services provided by the Tribes for Native American children and families to ensure that services are culturally responsive. However, some stakeholders also reported that a barrier to meeting the individual needs of Native American children is the lack of Native American foster homes and the lack of sufficient cultural education of non-Native American families caring for Native American children.

A few Washington County stakeholders noted that flexible funds are available to meet the needs of children and families that are not covered under the DCFS service array. However, they also noted that these funds are limited and were recently reduced due to budget cuts.

A key stakeholder noted that DHS now has a website devoted to cultural diversity issues and to identifying culturally appropriate resources.

VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Utah is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State was in substantial conformity with this 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, in developing the goals and objectives of the agency, DCFS engages in informal and formal consultation with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders and incorporates their input into the CFSP. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, there are multiple avenues for stakeholders to provide consultation to DHS and DCFS regarding the agency’s goals and objectives. Various partners, including representatives from the Tribes, were involved in one or more of three joint planning meetings in developing the most recent 5-year plan. DCFS and DHS staff and representatives from the Children’s Bureau and Administration on Children, Youth and Families Regional Office in Denver also were in attendance. The Statewide Assessment notes that the first meeting focused on the implementation of the Safety Model and development of systems to support caseworkers’ use of the Safety Model. The second meeting focused on developing new, or enhancing existing, in-home services to help maintain at-risk children in their homes. At the third meeting, participants developed new service delivery goals for State’s transitional living program.

In addition, as indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the regional and State QI Committees provide an independent review of agency performance in each region as well as at the State level. It was noted in the Statewide Assessment that QI Committees can request data reports from SAFE on any area of concern and can use that data to assess DCFS performance, identify trends and challenges, and provide input that enables DCFS to improve the quality of its programs and services. The Statewide Assessment reports that QI Committees communicate their findings to DCFS administrators and produce a quarterly summary that includes a description of data reviewed, public relation activities conducted by the committee, special studies conducted, CPS and domestic violence-related concerns, and recommendations to be passed to the State QI Committee and/or DCFS administration.

The Statewide Assessment identifies the following additional venues as opportunities for the agency to gather input from a variety of stakeholders:

- The DCFS director and program administrator for implementation of ICWA participate with the DHS Indian Issues forum, which is a quarterly meeting in which the Native American Indian Tribes join with DHS leaders to work on policy issues related to human services.
- The DCFS ICWA program administrator meets quarterly with the various Utah Tribe leaders to address issues such as Practice Guidelines relating to requirements for the timely assessment of a child’s Indian heritage.

- Youth in State custody who are enrolled in TAL services delivered through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program coordinate many of the activities in which youth in custody are involved.
- The Child Abuse and Neglect Council, established by statute in the late 1980s, advises DCFS on matters related to the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
- The Child Abuse Prevention Advisory Council works closely with the prevention program administrator in DCFS who oversees prevention funding and makes recommendations to the agency for use of funds.
- DCFS hosts a semi-monthly Partners' Meeting during which State program administrators meet with agency partners to plan for and coordinate various agency policies and practices.
- The Initiative on Utah Children in Foster Care (IOU) committee, which is composed of leaders in the public and private sectors, addresses issues identified in a Pew Commission Report with recommendations for practices and policies. DCFS provides support to various IOU subcommittees, including a subcommittee addressing community support needed by kin caregivers, a subcommittee addressing educational issues regarding children in foster care, and a subcommittee addressing issues relating to youth in foster care transitioning to adult living.
- Various stakeholders at the local and State levels participate in the annual QCRs and CPRs and provide information regarding the quality of services provided by DCFS.

Stakeholder Interview Information

All stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State consults with a wide variety of stakeholders regarding child welfare agency plans, policies, and overall operations. Stakeholders noted that input is solicited through the joint planning meetings that the State convenes in the process of preparing the CFSP as well as other venues. Several stakeholders said that joint planning meetings include stakeholders from partner agencies, courts, Native American Tribes, community partners, and service providers.

Several stakeholders also noted that input is provided to DCFS through the State and regional QI Committees. Stakeholders indicated that membership on the QI Committee includes, but is not limited to, community partners, courts, foster parents, agency clients (e.g., biological parents, guardians), and legal representatives. A few stakeholders reported that there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the QI Committees and DCFS stipulating that when a QI Committee makes a recommendation, DCFS must provide a written response within 30 days detailing how it will address the recommendation.

Several stakeholders also indicated that stakeholders can provide input informally and on an ongoing basis and that State agency administration is open to all suggestions and recommendations. A key State-level stakeholder noted that information and recommendations from stakeholders, particularly from the QI Committees and the Joint Planning Commission, are included in the 5-year CFSP but that stakeholders are not always directly informed about how their recommendations are used in the report.

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 suggests that DCFS develops the Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSR) in consultation with a variety of stakeholders. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS’s Federal Revenue Team is responsible for completing the APSR. The APSR was described in the Statewide Assessment as the major tool used to summarize existing agency goals and objectives; to communicate activities necessary to achieve those goals and objectives; and to identify needed changes to Practice Guidelines, Administrative Rules, or State statutes.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in 2008 the APSR was disseminated to QI Committees for review and comment; in 2009 the 2004-2009 CFSP 5-year plan was disseminated to QI Committees and their comments were incorporated into that report. The Statewide Assessment also reports that DCFS convenes an annual stakeholders meeting in preparation for submission of the APSR, during which time areas of focus are defined and stakeholders and agency representatives review progress and assess areas for improvement.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item provided the same information with regard to input into the APSR as they did regarding input into the CFSP. Again, it was noted that DCFS develops the APSR in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

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 DCFS coordinates its services and benefits with those of other Federal or Federally-assisted programs. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, DCFS coordinates services with a number of Federal or Federally-assisted programs. The Statewide Assessment identifies the following service coordination efforts:

- In each area of the State, DCFS is represented on local interagency councils, which include representatives from agencies providing services to similar populations in the areas of health, mental health, substance abuse treatment, education, juvenile justice, and probation.
- A full-time eligibility caseworker position exists in each region of the State, enabling a small group of staff to develop expertise in eligibility determination for both Medicaid and title IV-E. This joint determination process enables the child welfare agency to ensure that Federal benefits are accessed for foster and adoptive children.
- For children who enter foster care without Medicaid coverage, DCFS, in conjunction with the DOH, has a process that allows for immediate access to health-care services prior to a Medicaid eligibility determination being made. Under this process, an eligibility caseworker completes a form, files it with the DOH, and provides a copy to the caseworker and foster care provider, who forwards it to the health-care provider when services are provided. Health-care providers then bill the DOH for services, payments are made, and, when Medicaid eligibility is determined, costs are recouped.
- DCFS partners with the DOH, Division of Health Care Financing, to ensure that the mental health needs of foster and adoptive children are met. A process of “Medicaid Enhancement” carves out all children in foster care from the State’s Medicaid capitated mental health program, which enables DCFS to contract with a wider range of mental health-care professionals and offer a broader range of services covered by Medicaid that address the unique mental health needs of children in foster care. In addition, an agreement was established to enable children with adoption assistance to be “carved-out” of the capitated mental health system at the request of an adoptive parent to give the child access to the same mental health providers that were available while the child was in foster care.
- DCFS maintains a title IV-E Memorandum of Agreement with the Division of Juvenile Justice Services for the provision of foster care maintenance payment services for eligible children. Both divisions have liaisons for title IV-E to ensure that clear communication between agencies takes place.
- The Department of Workforce Services manages the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) through an interagency contract with DCFS. ETV funds are allocated to youth through an application and screening process, and vouchers are issued in compliance with ETV program requirements. Individual Education Assessment and Individual Education Plans, coordinated by the Department of Workforce Services, are produced for each eligible applicant.
- DCFS has an agreement with the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) relating to children who will age out of DCFS’s custody but still require and qualify for DSPD services. The agreement outlines the process that caseworkers and their clients use to assure continued support through DSPD after the children are no longer in DCFS custody. DSPD also coordinates services for eligible children with disabilities while they are placed in foster care and coordinates services for eligible adopted children with disabilities.
- DCFS coordinates with the Court Improvement Program to improve timeframes to permanency and improve the overall court process for children and families involved with child welfare.

- In an effort to ensure that children are meeting developmental milestones, a Memorandum of Understanding between DCFS and DOH was implemented to allow DOH to provide initial assessments to children younger than 3 years of age and in DCFS custody.
- DOH provides every DCFS office with an FHCP nurse to monitor the health, dental, and mental health needs of children in foster care.
- Through the Medicaid State Plan, DOH also assists in the coordination of foster care Medicaid, coordinates Medicaid adoption assistance, facilitates Medicaid mental health and rehabilitation services exempt from the Public Mental Health Plan, and provides Medicaid coverage for youth after they age out of foster care.
- DCFS coordinates with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to provide treatment and counseling to children and youth in foster care and to their families.
- The State of Utah Office of Education coordinates special education services for children with special needs and helps school districts, administrators, and teachers provide culturally sensitive services to children who have been adopted.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that DCFS works closely with other agencies, particularly other agencies within Utah’s DHS, to coordinate services with other Federal or Federally-assisted programs. Stakeholders identified the following coordination efforts as particularly effective:

- The FHCP
- The collaboration between DCFS and the Division of Juvenile Justice Services to coordinate assessment and treatment services to address the needs of dually adjudicated children
- The collaboration between DCFS and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program to ensure that foster parents are aware that children in foster care are eligible for WIC services
- The “high-level staffing group” within DHS in which division administrators look at cases involving children served by multiple systems to attempt to break down silos between divisions so that the child is viewed as a DHS child rather than belonging to any particular division
- The collaboration between DCFS and Domestic Violence programs that involves both cross-training of staff and coordination of services to children and families

Several stakeholders noted that DCFS collaborates with the Tribes to promote coordination of services to Tribal children in foster care, although some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the agency’s collaboration with the Tribes could be strengthened.

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

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

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

Utah is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State 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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has established standards for foster family homes and congregate care facilities. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah’s 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State of Utah has established standards for foster family homes, adoptive homes, and child care institutions. The OL, an office separate from DCFS, was created within DHS to ensure proper regulation of these standards.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the standards required for licensure of foster homes and institutions are defined in Utah law and also in Administrative Rule. A license is valid for 12 months from the day it is issued. The foster parent or institution may apply for a licensing renewal. Major requirements for licensure of a foster family home include a Resource Family Evaluation (home study), which includes a health and safety check of the home; verification of income; medical clearances for providers; three letters of reference; verification of training required by DCFS; criminal background checks; and child abuse and neglect clearances.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, standards for foster family homes, adoptive homes, and child care institutions are reviewed every 5 years, and any changes, additions, or deletions of standards are submitted to the Legislative Rules Committee and published for public comment and response. Complaints of any violation of licensing standards received from the community or from individuals being served in programs are investigated by OL and by DCFS if they involve any allegation of abuse or neglect of a child. When necessary, the office may sanction a licensee. The Statewide Assessment reports that this procedure allows for due process and the opportunity for the programs or individuals to plead their cases before an Administrative Law judge.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has adequate licensing standards in place for foster family homes and congregate care facilities and that the standards address the safety and health of children in foster care. Stakeholders noted that standards apply to the square footage of a home, the sturdiness of the beds, the storage of firearms and medications, the availability of storage, the income of the family, and criminal records and CPS background checks. Stakeholders reported that the OL does not permit waivers but that variances are permitted under certain conditions that allow a temporary license to be issued until the family can meet the standard. A key stakeholder reported that variances cannot extend beyond 12 months but can be renewed.

Stakeholders noted that for DCFS foster homes, OL conducts licensing of foster parents and congregate care facilities, conducts the home study and the background checks, and makes the final determination regarding licensure. OL also renews licenses every year, and the renewal involves another home study and safety inspection. A few stakeholders reported that for DCFS kinship foster homes, the home study is conducted by DCFS, background checks are completed, and the home receives a provisional license by OL prior to the kinship parent's completion of training. Kinship parents are then given 5 months from the time of placement of the child to complete training, at which point they become fully licensed through OL.

Several stakeholders expressed concern that strict adherence to some of the standards pertaining to square footage and the sturdiness of beds often prevents licensure of relative homes and Native American homes. These stakeholders suggested, in particular, that the standards are not culturally relevant for Native American homes and, although efforts have been made to recruit Native American homes, it is difficult to get them licensed. Stakeholders in Washington County, however, noted that the Paiute Tribe has been able to recruit enough Native American homes to meet the placement needs of the children in foster care from that Tribe.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that licensing standards are applied equally to all homes and congregate care facilities. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, standards are applied equally to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the process and requirements for licensing foster and adoptive homes are the same for both relative and non-relative care providers.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that standards are applied equally to all licensed foster family homes and congregate care facilities receiving title IV-E or IV- funds. Stakeholders noted that kinship foster homes may receive a provisional license at the time of the child's placement, but that they will not receive title IV-E board payments until they complete training and are fully licensed.

Two key stakeholders also reported that while OL licenses private child placement agencies, the individual foster homes (called proctor homes) in each agency are licensed by the private child placement agency and not by OL, although OL monitors the private agencies to ensure that they are adhering to the State standards. A key stakeholder reported that about 25 percent of the private agency proctor homes are sampled and reviewed annually to ensure consistency.

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 the State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, OL conducts criminal background screenings for DCFS. Criminal background checks are required in both State statute and licensing Administrative Rules for employees of child-placing agencies and all foster and adoptive families. The Statewide Assessment reports that nearly 80 percent of all approved background screening applications are completed within 2 weeks of submission.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the background screening includes a check of the State's child abuse database; incidents of severe physical abuse, severe neglect, and sexual abuse disqualify individuals for licensure or employment. Statute requires a national Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint background check for an individual who has not lived in the State consistently for the past 5 consecutive years as well as a check of the Utah criminal history. Background checks are done bi-annually for all employees

and foster parents. These checks also are required for all parents adopting through private agencies or attorneys. The Statewide Assessment reports that background checks must be completed prior to placing the child in the home with a Preliminary Placement.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that OL is thorough in conducting criminal background clearances before licensing foster parents. Stakeholders also noted that OL conducts background checks on the staff of congregate care institutions.

A key stakeholder reported that fingerprinting is done at each licensure and that foster parents are expected to notify OL if any charges have been filed after the license is issued. A key stakeholder also noted that a nationwide or FBI background clearance is not done unless the foster family has lived outside of Utah. Some stakeholders indicated that the background check process goes relatively quickly.

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

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State engages in the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in foster care. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, over the past 7 years, UFCF, operating under a contract with DCFS, has conducted three intensive recruitment efforts for foster parents. The first was an effort to recruit Native American homes, the second was to recruit Latino/Hispanic homes, and the third and most recent is an effort to recruit homes for adolescents.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in an effort to increase the number of Latino/Hispanic foster/adoptive families, UFCF placed newspaper ads and billboards along the Wasatch Front, along with paid radio ads. These ran in conjunction with media stories in newspapers and on TV and radio and culminated in a Spanish-language, pre-service training. In the first half of FY 2010 there were 30 pre-service trainings held, including one series in Spanish. There were 36 Latino/Hispanic families who graduated from pre-service training in the first half of FY 2010.

No data are provided in the Statewide Assessment regarding the current percentage of children in foster care representing various ethnicities and/or races and the current percentage of foster and adoptive families representing those ethnicities and/or races.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Several stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that in the past few years, UFCF has targeted its foster parent recruitment efforts to Native American, Hispanic, and African American communities to increase the number of foster parents from those communities. However, most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review also expressed the opinion that there continues to be a need for more Native American and Hispanic foster homes, as well as homes to meet the needs of the growing refugee populations in Salt Lake City. A few stakeholders noted that UFCF works with regional directors and uses data from a particular region to assess the needs for that region and then uses billboards, posters, and community events to target their recruitment efforts. Some stakeholders reported that there has been an increase in Hispanic foster homes, but that Native American foster homes were still needed. A few stakeholders also reported that Native American families often will express an interest in becoming licensed, but their homes do not meet the square footage or other required physical standards.

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 stakeholder interviews indicates that the State uses cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate adoptive placements for waiting children. This item also was rated as a Strength in Utah's 2003 CFSR.

Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, Utah has Practice Guidelines and a State law that incorporate the protocol for the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC). The Statewide Assessment also notes that Utah has an ICPC administrator at the State level who tracks all ICPC cases.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, Practice Guidelines require that if a child's permanency goal is adoption and the child is not already in an adoptive home, DCFS must make intensive efforts to place the child with an adoptive family. If the child is being placed out of State, an ICPC agreement between the two States must be in place. If an adoptive family is not found within 30 days of the child's permanency goal changing to adoption, DCFS must contact the Adoption Exchange and/or a licensed child-placing agency to help recruit an appropriate adoptive family for the child regardless of location.

Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State does use cross-jurisdictional resources to find adoptive or other permanent placements for children. Some stakeholders reported that Utah children are listed on the Adoption Exchange and AdoptUsKids and that the State has an ICPC coordinator to facilitate placements in other States.