



# Child and Family Services Reviews

## Florida

## Final Report

## 2016



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

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## Final Report: Florida Child and Family Services Review

### INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the state of Florida Department of Children and Families. The CFSRs enable the Children's Bureau to: (1) ensure conformity with certain federal child welfare requirements; (2) determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services; and (3) assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. Federal law and regulations authorize the Children's Bureau, within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, to administer the review of child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSRs are structured to help states identify strengths and areas needing improvement in their child welfare practices and programs as well as institute systemic changes that will improve child and family outcomes.

The findings for Florida are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Florida Department of Children and Families, and submitted to the Children's Bureau on March 24, 2016. The statewide assessment is the state's analysis of its performance on outcomes, and the functioning of systemic factors in relation to title IV-B and IV-E requirements and the title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan
- The results of case reviews of 80 cases (55 foster care and 25 in-home cases) conducted via a State Conducted Case Review process at 21 lead agency sites in Florida between April 1, 2016, and September 30, 2016
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
  - Attorneys representing the agency
  - Attorneys representing parents
  - Attorneys representing children and youth and Guardians ad Litem
  - Child care facility staff
  - Child welfare agency senior managers and program managers
  - Child welfare caseworkers and supervisors
  - Foster and adoptive licensing staff
  - Foster and adoptive parents and relative caregivers
  - Group care staff
  - Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children staff
  - Information system staff
  - Judges
  - Parents

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- Training staff
- Service providers
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, the Children’s Bureau suspended the use of the state’s performance on national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. For contextual information, Appendix A of this report shows the state’s performance on the 7 data indicators. Moving forward, the Children’s Bureau will refer to the national standards as “national performance.” This national performance represents the performance of the nation on the statewide data indicators for an earlier point in time. For the time periods used to calculate the national performance for each indicator, see 80 Fed. Reg. 27263 (May 13, 2015).

### Background Information

The Round 3 CFSR assesses state performance with regard to substantial conformity with 7 child and family outcomes and 7 systemic factors. Each outcome incorporates 1 or more of the 18 items included in the case review, and each item is rated as a Strength or Area Needing Improvement based on an evaluation of certain child welfare practices and processes in the cases reviewed in the state. With two exceptions, an item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90% or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies to those items. For a state to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95% or more of the cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome.

Eighteen items are considered in assessing the state’s substantial conformity with the 7 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 how well the item-specific requirement is functioning. A determination of the rating is based on information provided by the state to demonstrate the functioning of the systemic factor in the statewide assessment and, as needed, from interviews with stakeholders and partners. For a state to be in substantial conformity with the systemic factors, no more than 1 of the items associated with the systemic factor can be rated as an Area Needing Improvement. For systemic factors that have only 1 item associated with them, that item must be rated as a Strength for a determination of substantial conformity.

The Children’s Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round of reviews and in response to feedback from the child welfare field. As such, a state’s performance in the third round of the CFSRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides tables presenting Florida’s overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about Florida’s performance in Round 2.

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## I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

### Florida 2016 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

None of the 7 outcomes was found to be in substantial conformity.

The following 3 of 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity

- Quality Assurance System
- Staff and Provider Training
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

### Children's Bureau Comments on Florida Performance

The following are the Children's Bureau's observations about cross-cutting issues and Florida's overall performance:

In 2008, the CFSR identified practice issues concerning providing adequate and appropriate services to families to protect children and prevent their removal. Similar practice challenges were identified in the 2016 CFSR. In over half of applicable cases, the agency failed to make concerted efforts to provide services, removed children without providing appropriate services, or did not monitor safety plans and engage the family in needed safety-related services. Case reviews revealed that in most cases in which such issues were rated as an Area Needing Improvement, the safety assessments were inadequate or inaccurate. In nearly half of these cases, there were either no safety plans in place or the safety plans were not adequately monitored.

The case review found that Florida uses a variety of assessment tools to assist in assessing safety, risk, and the well-being needs of children. The use of formal assessment tools such as the Children's Behavioral Health Assessment, Child Strengths and Needs Assessments, and Level of Care Assessment were often found in cases showing good assessment of children's needs and services provided to children. Florida's commitment to the Child Welfare Practice Model, implemented in 2013, contributes to the state's improvement in this area. The model provides a standard practice for engaging caregivers during initial and ongoing assessments.

Although the state was not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1, Children have permanency and stability in their living situations, case review findings did identify some positive work in ensuring stability of children's foster care placements and establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals for children. In over half of the cases reviewed, the target child resided in one placement and most placement settings during the period under review were stable. Court hearings are being held timely in most

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cases. Stakeholders attributed this success to a daily tracking report that identifies scheduling issues and monitors permanency hearing content and quality.

Despite establishing timely and appropriate permanency goals, case review results found that agencies and courts struggle to make concerted efforts to achieve identified permanency goals in a timely manner. Delays in achieving reunification and guardianship goals are affected by case plans not being updated timely to reflect the current needs of the family, delays in referral for services, and failure to engage parents. The agency and court do not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of adoption timely in nearly half of applicable cases. Barriers affecting timely adoptions include the lack of concurrent planning when a parent's compliance level is minimal, and providing parents additional time to work on case plan goals.

The CFSR identified significant practice challenges with engaging parents, particularly fathers. In over half of the cases reviewed, both the frequency and quality of casework visitation with mothers was sufficient. However, the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers was insufficient in more than half of the cases. The lack of father engagement affects many areas of casework practice, including the relationship of the child in care with parents, assessing needs and providing services to parents, involving parents in case planning, and achieving reunification. In these cases, casework with fathers was rated significantly lower than the work with mothers across these items, although in-home services cases generally were rated higher than foster care cases.

The CFSR found that the state was not in substantial conformity with meeting the educational, physical health, and mental/behavioral health needs of children being served. Case reviews found that in nearly all applicable cases, the agency accurately assesses the children's educational, physical health, dental, and mental/behavioral needs. However, once assessments are completed, there are challenges in providing appropriate services to meet the identified needs of the children.

The state's challenges with the service array systemic factor affect the state's ability to meet safety and well-being needs.. There are concerns with gaps in key services, long waiting lists, insurance barriers, and an inability to tailor services to meet the cultural needs of the diverse population. Substance abuse and domestic violence are the main reasons for the agency's involvement in many cases. The review found that substance abuse, in particular, contributes to various safety concerns for children. Stakeholders noted that there are major gaps in services to address both substance abuse and domestic violence in the non-metro areas of the state. Results of case reviews and information from stakeholders found that the lack of services and quality service provision negatively affects state performance.

Florida has made significant gains in its Quality Assurance (QA) System. The agency has a fully functioning case review system in place that identifies standards, has written QA guidelines, and provides training for all QA staff. We encourage the state to continue its agency-wide CQI processes that build capacity to conduct case reviews on a continuous basis. We also encourage the use of the item report function in the Online Monitoring System to provide an ongoing training process.

## II. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO OUTCOMES

For each outcome, we provide performance summaries from the case review findings. The CFSR relies upon a case review of an approved sample of foster care cases and in-home services cases. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care and in-home services cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to Florida Department of Children and Families. The state is encouraged to conduct additional item-specific analysis of the case review findings to better understand areas of practice that are associated with positive outcomes and those that need improvement.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Item 1.

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Florida is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 91% of the 47 applicable cases reviewed.

#### ***Safety Outcome 1 Item Performance***

##### **Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated, and face-to-face contact with the child(ren) made, within the time frames established by agency policies or state statutes.

State policy requires that the response time for a CPS investigation be based upon an assessment of present or impending danger. Reports assigned for Immediate Response require the investigator to attempt to make the initial face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim as soon as possible but no later than 4 hours. A report assigned for 24-Hour Response requires the investigator to attempt to make initial face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim no later than 24 hours.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 91% of the 47 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the safety statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Safety Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 2 and 3.

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Florida is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 70% of the 80 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 75% of the 55 foster care cases and 60% of the 25 in-home services cases.

#### ***Safety Outcome 2 Item Performance***

##### **Item 2. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-Entry Into Foster Care**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 76% of the 34 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 83% of the 23 applicable foster care cases and 64% of the 11 applicable in-home services cases.

##### **Item 3. Risk and Safety Assessment and Management**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 71% of the 80 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 76% of the 55 applicable foster care cases and 60% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 4, 5, and 6.



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### State Outcome Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 49% of the 55 applicable cases reviewed.

### *Permanency Outcome 1 Item Performance*

#### Item 4. Stability of Foster Care Placement

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goal(s).

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 82% of the 55 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

#### Item 5. Permanency Goal for Child

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 75% of the 55 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

#### Item 6. Achieving Reunification, Guardianship, Adoption, or Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 67% of the 55 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

For performance on the permanency statewide data indicators, see Appendix A.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Permanency Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Items 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

### State Outcome Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 69% of the 55 applicable cases reviewed.

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### *Permanency Outcome 2 Item Performance*

#### **Item 7. Placement With Siblings**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 85% of the 41 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

#### **Item 8. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father,<sup>1</sup> and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 69% of the 45 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 74% of the 19 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation with a sibling(s) in foster care who is/was in a different placement setting was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 85% of the 39 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her mother was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.
- In 71% of the 17 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of visitation between the child in foster care and his or her father was sufficient to maintain and promote the continuity of the relationship.

#### **Item 9. Preserving Connections**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, and friends.

<sup>1</sup> For Item 8, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification. The persons identified in these roles for the purposes of the review may include individuals who do not meet the legal definitions or conventional meanings of a mother and father.

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- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 82% of the 55 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 10. Relative Placement

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 72% of the 54 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 11. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father<sup>2</sup> or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 60% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 72% of the 39 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her mother.
- In 29% of the 17 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to promote, support, and otherwise maintain a positive and nurturing relationship between the child in foster care and his or her father.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 1 using the state's performance on Items 12, 13, 14, and 15.

### State Outcome Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 40% of the 80 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 38% of the 55 foster care cases and 44% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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<sup>2</sup> For Item 11, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification.

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### *Well-Being Outcome 1 Item Performance*

#### **Item 12. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency (1) made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents<sup>3</sup> (both initially, if the child entered foster care or the case was opened during the period under review, and on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and (2) provided the appropriate services.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 51% of the 80 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 49% of the 55 foster care cases and 56% of the 25 in-home services cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

#### **Sub-Item 12A. Needs Assessment and Services to Children**

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 88% of the 80 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 91% of the 55 foster care cases and 80% of the 25 in-home services cases.

#### **Sub-Item 12B. Needs Assessment and Services to Parents**

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 55% of the 69 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 52% of the 44 applicable foster care cases and 60% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 67% of the 67 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 56% of the 45 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

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<sup>3</sup> For Sub-Item 12B, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable "mothers" and "fathers" for the period under review in the case.

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### Sub-Item 12C. Needs Assessment and Services to Foster Parents

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 80% of the 51 applicable foster care cases were rated as a Strength.

### Item 13. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents<sup>4</sup> and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 64% of the 77 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 58% of the 52 applicable foster care cases and 76% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 65% of the 43 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 79% of the 67 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 67% of the 42 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

### Item 14. Caseworker Visits With Child

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 73% of the 80 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 75% of the 55 foster care cases and 68% of the 25 in-home services cases.

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<sup>4</sup> For Item 13, in the in-home cases, “Mother” and “Father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, “mother” and “father” are typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency’s work with multiple applicable “mothers” and “fathers” for the period under review in the case.

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### Item 15. Caseworker Visits With Parents

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers<sup>5</sup> of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 43% of the 69 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 41% of the 44 applicable foster care cases and 48% of the 25 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 58% of the 67 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 48% of the 44 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 2 using the state's performance on Item 16.

#### State Outcome Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 92% of the 53 applicable cases reviewed.

#### Well-Being Outcome 2 Item Performance

### Item 16. Educational Needs of the Child

**Purpose of Assessment:** To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if

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<sup>5</sup> For Item 15, in the in-home cases, "Mother" and "Father" are typically defined as the parents/caregivers with whom the children were living when the agency became involved with the family and with whom the children will remain (for example, biological parents, relatives, guardians, adoptive parents). In the foster care cases, "Mother" and "Father" is typically defined as the parents/caregivers from whom the child was removed and with whom the agency is working toward reunification; however, biological parents who were not the parents from whom the child was removed may also be included, as may adoptive parents if the adoption was finalized during the period under review. A rating could consider the agency's work with multiple applicable mother and fathers for the period under review in the case.

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the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 92% of the 53 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 93% of the 46 applicable foster care cases and 86% of the 7 applicable in-home services cases.

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

The Children's Bureau calculates the state's performance on Well-Being Outcome 3 using the state's performance on Items 17 and 18.

#### **State Outcome Performance**

Florida is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 75% of the 67 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 76% of the 55 applicable foster care cases and 67% of the applicable 12 in-home services cases.

#### ***Well-Being Outcome 3 Item Performance***

##### **Item 17. Physical Health of the Child**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the children, including dental health needs.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 85% of the 60 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 87% of the 55 foster care cases and 60% of the 5 applicable in-home services cases.

##### **Item 18. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child**

**Purpose of Assessment:** To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the children.

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- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 72% of the 39 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 72% of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 71% of the 7 applicable in-home services cases.

### III. KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO SYSTEMIC FACTORS

For each systemic factor below, we provide performance summaries and a determination of whether the state is in substantial conformity with that systemic factor. In addition, we provide ratings for each item and a description of how the rating was determined. The CFSR relies upon a review of information contained in the statewide assessment to assess each item. If an item rating cannot be determined from the information contained in the statewide assessment, the Children's Bureau conducts stakeholder interviews and considers information gathered through the interviews in determining ratings for each item.

#### Statewide Information System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 19.

##### State Systemic Factor Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Statewide Information System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

##### *Statewide Information System Item Performance*

#### Item 19. Statewide Information System

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The statewide information system is functioning statewide to ensure that, at a minimum, the state 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.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that although Florida has an information system that supports the collection of required information, the state did not demonstrate that the system is functioning to ensure that the goals, status, placements, and demographic characteristics of every child are entered accurately and in a timely manner. Additionally, practices for data collection were determined to vary across the community-based care agencies.



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### Case Review System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Case Review System. Two of the 5 items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

#### Case Review System Item Performance

##### Item 20. Written Case Plan

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan that is developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment. Florida agreed with this rating and felt that additional information collected during stakeholder interviews would not affect the rating.
- Information in the statewide assessment does not show that the case review system ensures that each child has a written case plan developed jointly with the child's parent(s). In the statewide assessment, Florida described the substantial changes made to the state's case planning process through the institution of a practice model that promotes family engagement in case planning. The state provided recent case review results that showed the need for increased parental involvement in case plan development. Florida also shared stakeholder information that confirms limited engagement of parents and the often generic nature of case plans.

##### Item 21. Periodic Reviews

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that a periodic review for each child occurs no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

- Florida received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Florida provided recent point-in-time data demonstrating that almost all children and youth had a periodic review within the last 6 months. Stakeholder interviews affirmed that both initial and periodic reviews are occurring and are timely.

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### Item 22. Permanency Hearings

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body that occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

- Florida received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that almost all children entering and remaining in care have timely initial and subsequent permanency hearings. Stakeholder information revealed that initial and subsequent permanency hearings are scheduled 1 or 2 months ahead of the 12th month, and that hearings are timely. The state has developed and implemented a daily tracking report to identify scheduling issues, and has instituted a review process to monitor permanency hearing content and quality.

### Item 23. Termination of Parental Rights

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning statewide to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Florida provided data showing that in those cases where a petition to terminate parental rights (TPR) is filed, it is filed timely. However, the state was not able to provide sufficient information to show whether TPR requirements are met or exceptions are documented in all applicable cases. Stakeholders said that because of DCFS staff and attorney turnover, hearings are not as effective as they could be. Stakeholders identified several barriers that result in TPRs not occurring timely, including appeals by parents; judges' belief that families should be preserved despite the facts of the case; and cases being opened too long before petitions are filed. Stakeholders did not provide sufficient information to demonstrate that TPR requirements are being met consistently throughout the state.

### Item 24. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The case review system is functioning to ensure that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care are notified of, and have a right to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed in interviews with stakeholder showed that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and caregivers are not regularly notified of hearings. In the statewide assessment, Florida provided survey data showing that a large percentage of caregivers do not receive notices of hearings or know they can share their views with

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the court. Stakeholders interviewed explained that notices of hearings can be delivered in various ways and that the caregivers' right to be heard depends on the judge.

### Quality Assurance System

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Item 25.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Florida is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### Quality Assurance System Item Performance

##### Item 25. Quality Assurance System

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The quality assurance system is functioning statewide to ensure that it (1) operating in the jurisdictions where the services included in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services (including standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their health and safety), (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures.

- Florida received an overall rating of Strength for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- Information in the statewide assessment demonstrated that the quality assurance system is functioning statewide. The state's quality assurance system adheres to standards and written guidelines, identifies strengths and areas needing improvement, and makes data available for the state's public website. The state has a process in place to develop quality improvement plans and includes a training component for all QA staff. Florida's State Conducted Case Review process showed one aspect of the QA system functioning effectively.

### Staff and Provider Training

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 26, 27, and 28.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Florida is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. Two of the items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

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### *Staff and Provider Training Item Performance*

#### **Item 26. Initial Staff Training**

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that initial training is provided to all staff who deliver services pursuant to the CFSP that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

- Florida received an overall rating of Strength for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- Information in the statewide assessment showed that initial training is provided to all staff that provide services pursuant to the CFSP. Staff certification to work in the field requires completion of a pre-service exam following pre-service training, and completion of 1,040 hours of on-the-job experience and 46 hours of direct supervision. The statewide assessment included survey information from staff stating that they believe initial training provides them with the skills and knowledge needed to do their jobs.

#### **Item 27. Ongoing Staff Training**

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff<sup>6</sup> that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Florida received an overall rating of Strength for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and obtained from stakeholders during interviews showed that ongoing staff training provides staff with the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties. All staff and supervisors must complete 40 hours of ongoing training every 2 years. Training is coordinated statewide and provided at the Community Based Care (CBC) level. Ongoing training is incentivized and completion is tied to recertification for staff and performance evaluation for supervisors. The statewide assessment included survey information that suggests most staff believe the training addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties.

#### **Item 28. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training**

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The staff and provider training system is functioning statewide to ensure that training is occurring statewide for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of state licensed or approved facilities (that

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<sup>6</sup> "Staff," for purposes of assessing this item, includes all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP. "Staff" also includes direct supervisors of all contracted and non-contracted staff who have case management responsibilities in the areas of child protection services, family preservation and support services, foster care services, adoption services, and independent living services pursuant to the state's CFSP.

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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.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment showed that preservice training and a variety of ongoing training is available for foster and adoptive parents and that there are requirements for training. However, neither the statewide assessment nor stakeholder interviews sufficiently demonstrated that the training available to foster parents and group home staff equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to care for children. Stakeholders said more training is needed to prepare foster parents for fostering teens and that foster parents needed to have a better understanding of the reunification process.

### Service Array and Resource Development

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 29 and 30.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### *Service Array and Resource Development Item Performance*

##### Item 29. Array of Services

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The service array and resource development system is functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP: (1) services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, (2) services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, (3) services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and (4) services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected from stakeholder interviews indicated the state faces challenges in its array of services. Although the statewide assessment provided information that services are available across the state, there are statewide challenges and barriers in safety management services, and gaps in services in non-metro areas. In particular, stakeholders identified service gaps or wait lists for substance abuse treatment, mental health services, domestic violence services, anger management, and transportation services.

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### Item 30. Individualizing Services

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The service array and resource development system is functioning statewide to ensure that the services in Item 29 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that Florida has had some success in individualizing services, but there are challenges in offering bilingual services to meet language needs. Gaps in services and wait lists for some services result in limitations in individualizing services to meet unique family needs.

### Agency Responsiveness to the Community

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 31 and 32.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Florida is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. One item in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### *Agency Responsiveness to the Community Item Performance*

### Item 31. State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related APSRs, 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, objectives, and annual updates of the CFSP.

- Florida received an overall rating of Strength for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed a high level of collaboration and consultation with stakeholders in developing the CFSP. Florida has a statewide committee and other regular workgroups and summits with tribes and multiple internal and external partners to accomplish the goal of reviewing and assessing information on performance, policy, systems, and services for both the CFSR and the CFSP.

### Item 32. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The agency responsiveness to the community system is functioning statewide to ensure that the state's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

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- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information from the statewide assessment and interviews with stakeholders showed that although Florida has coalitions with some federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population, there is no evidence of coordination of CFSP services with key public agencies such as TANF, Child Care, Department of Labor, and HUD. Stakeholders expressed concerns with navigating through the Medicaid process and with a recent change to Florida Medicaid that has resulted in limited access to primary care physicians.

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

The Children's Bureau assesses the state's performance on this systemic factor using the state's performance on Items 33, 34, 35, and 36.

#### State Systemic Factor Performance

Florida is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. One of the four items in this systemic factor was rated as a Strength.

#### *Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Item Performance*

##### Item 33. Standards Applied Equally

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that state standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-B or IV-E funds.

- Florida received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and from stakeholder interviews indicated that Florida's foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system standards are applied equally across the state. The statewide assessment indicated that Florida uses a Unified Home Study for purposes of approving and licensing caregiver homes. The CBCs and child placing agencies complete the training and home studies in their areas, and state licensing specialists monitor the licensing process quarterly. Stakeholders confirmed consistent compliance with the licensing standard across the state.

##### Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning statewide to ensure that 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.

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- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that completion of initial criminal background checks is a fundamental aspect of placement and licensing decisions for relative and non-relative caregivers and child care institutions. Florida also conducts additional checks on an ongoing basis as well as abuse-and-neglect record checks and scans of local law enforcement information. However, neither the statewide assessment nor stakeholders addressed processes for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children already in care when a safety concern is identified during a new background check. Due to the lack of this information, this item is rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

### Item 35. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the 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 is occurring statewide.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during stakeholder interviews showed that each of the CBC agencies develops individualized plans aimed at recruiting foster families who reflect the ethnic and cultural needs of foster children in their local system of care. These recruitment plans become part of regional and statewide plans that are intended to fulfill specific foster and adoptive home goals using prior year data. However, the effectiveness of this approach to recruitment could not be demonstrated. Despite these efforts, stakeholders noted significant home shortages and retention challenges.

### Item 36. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements

**Description of Systemic Factor Item:** The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is occurring statewide.

- Florida received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information provided in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders showed that the state's use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children is not occurring effectively statewide. The state has border agreements with Georgia, and is working on additional state-to-state agreements. The state is an active participant in the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), with one of the highest number of requests for placement across state lines in the country. Florida provided information showing that a substantial number of incoming home study requests are not completed timely.



**Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance**

**Appendix A  
Summary of Florida 2016 Child and Family Services Review Performance**

**I. Ratings for Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Outcomes and Items**

**Outcome Achievement:** Outcomes may be rated as in substantial conformity or not in substantial conformity. 95% 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.

**Item Achievement:** Items may be rated as a Strength or as an Area Needing Improvement. For an overall rating of Strength, 90% of the cases reviewed for the item (with the exception of Item 1 and Item 16) must be rated as a Strength. Because Item 1 is the only item for Safety Outcome 1 and Item 16 is the only item for Well-Being Outcome 2, the requirement of a 95% Strength rating applies.

**SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT.**

| <b>Data Element</b>   | <b>Overall Determination</b>  | <b>State Performance</b>   |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Safety Outcome 1</b><br>Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect | Not in Substantial Conformity | 91% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 1</b><br>Timeliness of investigations   | Area Needing Improvement      | 91% Strength               |

**SAFETY OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE.**

| <b>Data Element</b>  | <b>Overall Determination</b>  | <b>State Performance</b>   |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Safety Outcome 2</b><br>Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate | Not in Substantial Conformity | 70% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 2</b><br>Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care   | Area Needing Improvement      | 76% Strength               |
| <b>Item 3</b><br>Risk and safety assessment and management   | Area Needing Improvement      | 71% Strength               |

## Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance

### PERMANENCY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS.

| Data Element  | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Permanency Outcome 1</b><br>Children have permanency and stability in their living situations                | Not in Substantial Conformity | 49% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 4</b><br>Stability of foster care placement   | Area Needing Improvement      | 82% Strength               |
| <b>Item 5</b><br>Permanency goal for child  | Area Needing Improvement      | 75% Strength               |
| <b>Item 6</b><br>Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement | Area Needing Improvement      | 67% Strength               |

### PERMANENCY OUTCOME 2: THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN.

| Data Element  | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Permanency Outcome 2</b><br>The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children | Not in Substantial Conformity | 69% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 7</b><br>Placement with siblings  | Area Needing Improvement      | 85% Strength               |
| <b>Item 8</b><br>Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care  | Area Needing Improvement      | 69% Strength               |
| <b>Item 9</b><br>Preserving connections   | Area Needing Improvement      | 82% Strength               |
| <b>Item 10</b><br>Relative placement  | Area Needing Improvement      | 72% Strength               |
| <b>Item 11</b><br>Relationship of child in care with parents  | Area Needing Improvement      | 60% Strength               |

## Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance

### WELL-BEING OUTCOME 1: FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

| Data Element   | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Well-Being Outcome 1</b><br>Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs | Not in Substantial Conformity | 40% Substantially achieved |
| <b>Item 12</b><br>Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents                           | Area Needing Improvement      | 51% Strength               |
| <b>Sub-Item 12A</b><br>Needs assessment and services to children                                     | Area Needing Improvement      | 88% Strength               |
| <b>Sub-Item 12B</b><br>Needs assessment and services to parents                                      | Area Needing Improvement      | 55% Strength               |
| <b>Sub-Item 12C</b><br>Needs assessment and services to foster parents                               | Area Needing Improvement      | 80% Strength               |
| <b>Item 13</b><br>Child and family involvement in case planning                                      | Area Needing Improvement      | 64% Strength               |
| <b>Item 14</b><br>Caseworker visits with child   | Area Needing Improvement      | 73% Strength               |
| <b>Item 15</b><br>Caseworker visits with parents   | Area Needing Improvement      | 43% Strength               |

### WELL-BEING OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.

| Data Element   | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Well-Being Outcome 2</b><br>Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs | Not in Substantial Conformity | 92% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 16</b><br>Educational needs of the child   | Area Needing Improvement      | 92% Strength               |

## Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance

### WELL-BEING OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS.

| Data Element   | Overall Determination         | State Performance          |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Well-Being Outcome 3</b><br>Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs | Not in Substantial Conformity | 75% Substantially Achieved |
| <b>Item 17</b><br>Physical health of the child   | Area Needing Improvement      | 85% Strength               |
| <b>Item 18</b><br>Mental/behavioral health of the child  | Area Needing Improvement      | 72% Strength               |

## II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children’s Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the 7 systemic factors based on the level of functioning of each systemic factor across the state. The Children’s Bureau determines substantial conformity with the systemic factors based on ratings for the item or items within each factor. Performance on 5 of the 7 systemic factors is determined on the basis of ratings for multiple items or plan requirements. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with these systemic factors, the Children’s Bureau must find that no more than 1 of the required items for that systemic factor fails to function as required. For a state to be found in substantial conformity with the 2 systemic factors that are determined based on the rating of a single item, the Children’s Bureau must find that the item is functioning as required.

### STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

| Data Element                                   | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance             |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Statewide Information System</b>            | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 19</b><br>Statewide Information System | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |

## Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance

### CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

| Data Element   | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance             |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Case Review System</b>                                      | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 20</b><br>Written Case Plan                            | Statewide Assessment                            | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 21</b><br>Periodic Reviews                             | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                      |
| <b>Item 22</b><br>Permanency Hearings                          | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                      |
| <b>Item 23</b><br>Termination of Parental Rights               | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 24</b><br>Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |

### QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

| Data Element                               | Source of Data and Information | State Performance         |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Quality Assurance System</b>            | Statewide Assessment           | In Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 25</b><br>Quality Assurance System | Statewide Assessment           | Strength                  |

### STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

| Data Element                                    | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance         |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Staff and Provider Training</b>              | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | In Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 26</b><br>Initial Staff Training        | Statewide Assessment                            | Strength                  |
| <b>Item 27</b><br><b>Ongoing Staff Training</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                  |

## Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance

| Data Element  | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance        |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Item 28</b><br>Foster and Adoptive Parent Training | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement |

### SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

| Data Element                                  | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance             |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Service Array and Resource Development</b> | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 29</b><br>Array of Services           | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 30</b><br>Individualizing Services    | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |

### AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

| Data Element  | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance         |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| <b>Agency Responsiveness to the Community</b>   | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | In Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 31</b><br>State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                  |
| <b>Item 32</b><br>Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs                     | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement  |

## Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance

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

| Data Element   | Source of Data and Information                  | State Performance             |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention</b>                | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Not in Substantial Conformity |
| <b>Item 33</b><br>Standards Applied Equally  | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Strength                      |
| <b>Item 34</b><br>Requirements for Criminal Background Checks                          | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 35</b><br>Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes                    | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |
| <b>Item 36</b><br>State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements | Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews | Area Needing Improvement      |

### III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators<sup>7</sup>

The state's performance is considered against the national performance for each statewide data indicator and provides contextual information for considering the findings. This information is not used in conformity decisions. State performance may be statistically above, below, or no different than the national performance. If a state did not provide the required data or did not meet the applicable item data quality limits, the Children's Bureau did not calculate the state's performance for the statewide data indicator.

| Statewide Data Indicator  | National Performance | Direction of Desired Performance | RSP*  | 95% Confidence Interval** | Data Period(s) Used for State Performance*** |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|--|
| Recurrence of maltreatment  | 9.1                  | Lower                            | 8.8%  | 8.5%–9.1%                 | FY13–14                                      |
| Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care) | 8.5                  | Lower                            | 12.89 | 11.92–13.94               | 14A–14B, FY14                                |

<sup>7</sup> In October 2016, the Children's Bureau issued Technical Bulletin #9 (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cfsr-technical-bulletin-9>), which alerted states to the fact that there were technical errors in the syntax used to calculate the national and state performance for the statewide data indicators. The syntax revision is still underway, so performance shown in this table is based on the 2015 Federal Register syntax.

## Appendix A: Summary of Florida 2016 CFSR Performance

| Statewide Data Indicator  | National Performance | Direction of Desired Performance | RSP*  | 95% Confidence Interval** | Data Period(s) Used for State Performance*** |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|--|
| Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care             | 40.5%                | Higher                           | 49.7% | 48.9%–50.5%               | 12B–15A                                      |
| Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months      | 43.6%                | Higher                           | 50.5% | 49.1%–51.9%               | 14B–15A                                      |
| Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more | 30.3%                | Higher                           | 36.1% | 34.7%–37.4%               | 14B–15A                                      |
| Re-entry to foster care in 12 months                                  | 8.3%                 | Lower                            | 9.9%  | 9.1%–10.7%                | 12B–15A                                      |
| Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)                    | 4.12                 | Lower                            | 5.18  | 5.09–5.27                 | 14B–15A                                      |

\* **Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP)** is derived from a multi-level statistical model and reflects the state's performance relative to states with similar children and takes into account the number of children the state served, the age distribution of these children, and, for some indicators, the state's entry rate. It uses risk-adjustment to minimize differences in outcomes due to factors over which the state has little control and provides a more fair comparison of state performance against the national performance.

\*\* **95% Confidence Interval** is the 95% confidence interval estimate for the state's RSP. The values shown are the lower RSP and upper RSP of the interval estimate. The interval accounts for the amount of uncertainty associated with the RSP. For example, the CB is 95% confident that the true value of the RSP is between the lower and upper limit of the interval.

\*\*\* **Data Period(s) Used for State Performance:** Refers to the initial 12-month period and the period(s) of data needed to follow the children to observe their outcomes. The FY or federal fiscal year refers to NCANDS data, which spans the 12-month period October 1 – September 30. All other periods refer to AFCARS data. "A" refers to the 6-month period October 1 – March 31. "B" refers to the 6-month period April 1 – September 30. The 2-digit year refers to the calendar year in which the period ends.



## Appendix B: Florida 2008 CFSR Key Findings

### Appendix B Summary of CFSR Round 2 Florida 2008 Key Findings

The Children's Bureau conducted a CFSR in Florida in 2008. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children's Bureau made several changes to the CFSR process and items and indicators relevant for performance based on lessons learned during the second round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a state's performance in the third round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round.

#### Identifying Information and Review Dates

|   |
|---|
| <b>General Information</b>  |
| <b>Children's Bureau Region:</b> 4                                    |
| <b>Date of Onsite Review:</b> January 7–11, 2008                      |
| <b>Period Under Review:</b> October 1, 2006, through January 11, 2008 |
| <b>Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued:</b> October 17, 2008    |
| <b>Date Program Improvement Plan Due:</b> January 17, 2009            |
| <b>Date Program Improvement Plan Approved:</b> July 1, 2009           |

#### Highlights of Findings

|   |
|---|
| <b>Performance Measurements</b>   |
| A. The State met the national standards for <b>two</b> of the <b>six</b> standards.                 |
| B. The State achieved substantial conformity with <b>none</b> of the <b>seven</b> outcomes.         |
| C. The State achieved substantial conformity with <b>four</b> of the <b>seven</b> systemic factors. |

## Appendix B: Florida 2008 CFSR Key Findings

### State's Conformance With the National Standards

| Data Indicator or Composite  | National Standard | State's Score | Meets or Does Not Meet Standard |
|--|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Absence of maltreatment recurrence (data indicator)  | 94.6 or higher    | 89.7          | Does Not Meet Standard          |
| Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)                              | 99.68 or higher   | 99.43         | Does Not Meet Standard          |
| Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)                               | 122.6 or higher   | 111.7         | Does Not Meet Standard          |
| Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)   | 106.4 or higher   | 124.2         | Meets Standard                  |
| Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3) | 121.7 or higher   | 125.7         | Meets Standard                  |
| Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)   | 101.5 or higher   | 88.1          | Does Not Meet Standard          |

### State's Conformance With the Outcomes

| Outcome  | Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity |
|--|--|
| Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.              | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate. | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.           | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |

## Appendix B: Florida 2008 CFSR Key Findings

| Outcome   | Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity |
|---|--|
| Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.                   | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.             | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.             | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |

### State's Conformance With the Systemic Factors

| Systemic Factor  | Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity |
|--|--|
| Statewide Information System                                     | Achieved Substantial Conformity                    |
| Case Review System   | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Quality Assurance System   | Achieved Substantial Conformity                    |
| Staff and Provider Training                                      | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Service Array and Resource Development                           | Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity             |
| Agency Responsiveness to the Community                           | Achieved Substantial Conformity                    |
| Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention | Achieved Substantial Conformity                    |

## Appendix B: Florida 2008 CFSR Key Findings

### Key Findings by Item

#### Outcomes

| Item  | Strength or Area Needing Improvement |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Item 1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment                              | Strength                             |
| Item 2. Repeat Maltreatment   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 3. Services to Family to Protect Child(ren) in the Home and Prevent Removal or Re-entry Into Foster Care | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 5. Foster Care Re-entries  | Strength                             |
| Item 6. Stability of Foster Care Placement  | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 7. Permanency Goal for Child   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives                                    | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 9. Adoption  | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement   | Strength                             |
| Item 12. Placement With Siblings  | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care  | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 14. Preserving Connections   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 15. Relative Placement   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 16. Relationship of Child in Care With Parents   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 17. Needs and Services of Child, Parents, and Foster Parents   | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning  | Area Needing Improvement             |

## Appendix B: Florida 2008 CFSR Key Findings

| Item   | Strength or Area Needing Improvement |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Item 19. Caseworker Visits With Child          | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 20. Caseworker Visits With Parents        | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 21. Educational Needs of the Child        | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 22. Physical Health of the Child          | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child | Area Needing Improvement             |

### Systemic Factors

| Item  | Strength or Area Needing Improvement |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Item 24. Statewide Information System                 | Strength                             |
| Item 25. Written Case Plan                            | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 26. Periodic Reviews                             | Strength                             |
| Item 27. Permanency Hearings                          | Strength                             |
| Item 28. Termination of Parental Rights               | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 30. Standards Ensuring Quality Services          | Strength                             |
| Item 31. Quality Assurance System                     | Strength                             |
| Item 32. Initial Staff Training                       | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 33. Ongoing Staff Training                       | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training          | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 35. Array of Services                            | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 36. Service Accessibility                        | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 37. Individualizing Services                     | Area Needing Improvement             |
| Item 38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders | Strength                             |
| Item 39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP       | Strength                             |

## Appendix B: Florida 2008 CFSR Key Findings

| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Strength or Area Needing Improvement</b> |
|---|---|
| Item 40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs            | Strength                                    |
| Item 41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions                          | Strength                                    |
| Item 42. Standards Applied Equally  | Strength                                    |
| Item 43. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks                          | Strength                                    |
| Item 44. Diligent Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Homes                    | Strength                                    |
| Item 45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements | Strength                                    |