



Child and Family Services Reviews

Georgia

Final Report

December 2015

Reissued 2017



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

This page is intentionally blank.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

Final Report: Georgia Child and Family Services Review Report Re-Issued: 2017

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Georgia.¹ 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 Georgia are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), and submitted to the Children's Bureau on March 16, 2015. 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 150 cases (90 foster care, 30 in-home cases, and 30 in-home differential response cases) conducted via a State Conducted Case Review process in all 15 state regions, representing all counties in Georgia, between April 1, 2015, and September 30, 2015
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Attorneys
 - C3 coordinators
 - Child welfare case managers and supervisors from the public and private agencies
 - Child welfare director and deputy directors
 - Child welfare service providers and contractors
 - Child welfare regional directors

¹ The Children's Bureau suspended the use of the state's performance on the national standards for the 7 statewide data indicators in conformity decisions. This re-issued report does not contain changes to the case review and systemic factor functioning results issued in the prior version of the state's Final Report.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Child welfare program managers
- Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Foster and adoptive parents and representatives of the Foster Parent Association
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children staff
- Members of the judiciary
- Representatives from the Court Improvement Project
- Staff responsible for data entry, licensing, and staff recruitment
- Training staff
- Tribal representatives
- 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). As a result, Georgia's Final Report is being reissued (see footnote 1).

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 one 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

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

tables presenting Georgia's overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about Georgia's performance in Round 2.

I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

Georgia 2015 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

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

The following 2 of 7 systemic factors were found to be in substantial conformity:

- Quality Assurance System
- Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Children's Bureau Comments on Georgia Performance

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

Georgia's commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI) was evidenced by the state's functioning Quality Assurance System. Georgia's dedicated team of case reviewers and CQI staff are developing processes to ensure that statewide data and information are collected, analyzed, and used to inform strategic improvements at the regional level and throughout the state. The Children's Bureau believes that the ongoing development and integration of CQI will serve as a solid foundation for improvement in safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes.

Georgia's investment in collaborative relationships with stakeholders is a strength. Georgia is instituting a C3 initiative, which supports the integration of the CFSR, CFSP, and CQI through stakeholder engagement and alignment of key planning and reporting structures. A key pillar of the governor's "Blueprint for Change" strategic plan includes a focus on constituent engagement that further demonstrates the state's commitment to collaborative partnerships. The Children's Bureau believes this work can be leveraged to support improvements in all outcomes, particularly as achievement of permanency and well-being outcomes are affected by the court and other state agency partners overseeing education, health, and mental health services for children and families.

A significant number of cases reviewed involved substance abuse by parents or caregivers. Case review findings highlighted concerns with inadequate assessment and monitoring of risk and safety issues related to substance abuse by parents and caregivers, as well as poor engagement of these families in efforts to obtain comprehensive assessments of needs and ensure adequate service provision. Stakeholders reported concerns with availability and access to substance abuse services. These concerns have cross-cutting implications for all outcomes in both foster care and in-home services cases. The Children's Bureau encourages the state to further assess the state's array of substance abuse treatment services to craft strategies for improvement that are targeted to this specific need as well as to identify strategies to ensure that workers are equipped to adequately assess and engage these families. The Children's Bureau also encourages the agency and court to work together to identify and implement a

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

best practice model for court oversight in cases involving substance abuse that provides positive safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families.

Case review findings indicated a lack of frequent, quality worker visits with children in all in-home cases as compared to foster care cases. In both in-home and foster care cases there was a lack of frequent, quality worker visits with parents. As a result, children were left in homes with unaddressed safety issues due to insufficient assessment and lack of service provision. Inadequate safety planning was another significant issue in many cases, suggesting a need for improved training and supervision to ensure that safety plans are developed and monitored appropriately.

A number of cases in the in-home sample involved children who were placed with relatives as a “safety resource.” These children are not in foster care, and although these placements are intended to be short-term according to state policy, some children were left in these out-of-home situations for extended periods. Since these are in-home cases, permanency outcomes were not applicable in the case review; however, the Children’s Bureau noted that there was not a clear understanding of whether and how such children would return to their homes or achieve another form of legal permanency in their living situations. There were also concerns about the level of support and monitoring provided to the relatives in these cases. As some of these cases involved court oversight, the Children’s Bureau encourages the agency and court to review this practice and clarify each entity’s expectations, responsibilities, and procedures for ensuring appropriate decisions about safety, permanency, and well-being for the children in these cases.

With regard to foster care cases, review results identified several concerns that affect permanency outcomes. Case review findings and stakeholder interviews noted a lack of adequate support to foster parents, including delays in processing payments; inconsistent notification of, and right to be heard in, hearings; and lack of service provision. Stakeholder interviews also revealed concerns with the adequacy of foster parent training to equip foster parents in handling the needs of the children placed in their care. Case reviews and stakeholder interviews raised concerns about a lack of available foster homes, resulting in children being placed in hotels or offices in some cases. Focused attention on the recruitment of foster homes is a critical need for Georgia. Despite evidence that court reviews and permanency hearings are being held frequently, case reviews noted concerns with ensuring appropriate permanency goals for children and delays in achieving timely permanency. Neither the agency nor the court has a system for tracking termination of parental rights proceedings or the use of compelling reasons, and case review findings noted filing delays in half of the applicable cases. In addition, although concurrent plans were noted in some cases, they were not implemented effectively in most cases and as a result did not serve to improve timely achievement of permanency.

A concern within well-being outcomes was inadequate oversight of prescription medication for children in foster care. In many cases state policy regarding oversight was not followed. Stakeholders also noted concerns with a lack of adequate mental health services for children. Focused attention is required to ensure that the mental health needs of children are being adequately assessed, addressed, and monitored in both in-home and foster care cases.

Stakeholder interviews and case review findings highlighted significant workforce concerns, including inadequate training of staff and high turnover. In cases reviewed, multiple caseworkers resulted in delayed service provision and disjointed case planning. The case review results also suggest that improved collaboration between the public child welfare agency and private agency partners could

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

ensure that families have coordinated services and case planning, an accurate and thorough assessment of their needs completed in the Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment, and more frequent support and monitoring. The Children's Bureau encourages the state to revisit the roles and responsibilities of private and public agency workers to ensure improved coordination of services, which may help to strengthen the supports available to families.

The Children's Bureau recognizes Georgia's commitment to a collaborative and transparent review, which was evident throughout the CFSR process. The state engaged in a rigorous assessment process during which the state was keenly engaged in seeking out strengths in its system and practices, as well as identifying areas that need further attention. We believe this willingness to look closely at the state's system and then share those findings with partners is a significant strength that will form a firm foundation for program improvement to come.

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. Georgia provides an alternative/differential response to, in addition to a traditional investigation of, incoming reports of child maltreatment or children in need of services. Where relevant, we provide performance summaries that are differentiated between foster care, in-home, and in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

This report provides an overview. Results have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Details on each case rating are available to DFCS. 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

Georgia is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 66% of the 88 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

State policy provides two response times for accepted reports. Reports may be assigned for an immediate response—within 24 hours—or for response within 5 working days. The time frame for face-to-face contact is 24 hours or 5 days, respectively, per state policy. Using the guidance provided in the Onsite Review Instrument and Instructions, the first attempt to contact the family was used to define “initiation” because Georgia does not define “initiation” in state policy.

Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 66% of the 88 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

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

Georgia is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 43% of the 150 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 53% of the 90 foster care cases, 20% of the 30 in-home services cases, and 37% of the 30 in-home services alternative/differential response 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 59% of the 46 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 77% of the 31 applicable foster care cases, 18% of the 11 applicable in-home services cases, and 25% of the 4 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 43% of the 150 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 53% of the 90 applicable foster care cases, 20% of the 30 applicable in-home services cases, and 37% of the 30 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response 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.

State Outcome Performance

Georgia is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 14% of the 90 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).

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 68% of the 90 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 42% of the 86 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 27% of the 90 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

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

Georgia is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 32% of the 90 applicable cases reviewed.

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 77% of the 56 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,² and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 45% of the 69 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 46% of the 26 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 51% of the 57 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.

² 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- In 50% of the 42 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 39% of the 87 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 46% of the 85 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 father³ or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 34% of the 62 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 39% of the 57 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 40% of the 40 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.

³ 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

State Outcome Performance

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 26% of the 150 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 27% of the 90 foster care cases, 17% of the 30 in-home services cases, and 33% of the 30 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

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,⁴ and foster parents (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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 25% of the 142 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 28% of the 90 foster care cases, 20% of the 30 in-home services cases, and 18% of the 22 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

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

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 51% of the 142 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 57% of the 90 foster care cases, 40% of the 30 in-home services cases, and 41% of the 22 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

⁴ 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

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

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 25% of the 123 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 30% of the 71 applicable foster care cases, 20% of the 30 applicable in-home services cases, and 18% of the 22 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 29% of the 118 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to both assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 27% of the 106 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to both assess and address the needs of fathers.

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

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 56% of the 80 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 parents⁵ and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 42% of the 137 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 48% of the 87 applicable foster care cases, 30% of the 30 applicable in-home services cases, and 30% of the 20 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 58% of the 97 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 46% of the 116 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 39% of the 90 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve fathers in case planning.

⁵ 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 59% of the 150 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 74% of the 90 foster care cases, 37% of the 30 in-home services cases, and 37% of the 30 in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

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 fathers⁶ of the child(ren) are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren) and promote achievement of case goals.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 31% of the 132 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 33% of the 72 applicable foster care cases, 20% of the 30 applicable in-home services cases, and 37% of the 30 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.
- In 35% of the 127 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 31% of the 100 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

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

⁶ 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 54% of the 104 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 54% of the 104 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 58% of the 79 applicable foster care cases, 39% of the 18 applicable in-home services cases, and 43% of the 7 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response 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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 25% of the 135 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 24% of the 90 applicable foster care cases, 18% of the applicable 28 in-home services cases, and 41% of the applicable 17 in-home services alternative/differential response 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 49% of the 119 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 53% of the 90 foster care cases, 25% of the 20 applicable in-home services cases, and 56% of the 9 in-home services alternative/differential response 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 29% of the 101 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 32% of the 69 applicable foster care cases, 20% of the 20 applicable in-home services cases, and 25% of the 12 applicable in-home services alternative/differential response cases.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

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

Georgia 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

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 19 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided data that indicated concern with the timely entry and accuracy of the key required data elements, especially for timely entry of information on children's legal status and placement. Information received from stakeholders during stakeholder interviews confirmed these concerns.

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

Georgia 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided data showing that parents are not routinely engaged in case planning for children in foster care and that parental involvement in case planning has been decreasing over the last several years. The majority of stakeholders interviewed indicated that family team meetings, a key mechanism used to engage parents in case planning, are not routinely happening statewide.

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided data showing that children's cases are reviewed periodically by a court no less frequently than every 6 months. In interviews, stakeholders confirmed that periodic reviews were routinely occurring statewide within the required time frames.

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided some data on the number of children receiving timely permanency hearings. Additional data and information obtained during stakeholder interviews showed that initial and subsequent permanency hearings were occurring in the first year and subsequently every 12 months thereafter, and more frequently in most instances.

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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and obtained during interviews with stakeholders described barriers to the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings in accordance with required provisions that included high turnover of workers, lack of training, courts allowing additional time for parents to demonstrate progress, and delays in the process. According to stakeholders, neither the courts nor the agency has a reliable process in place to monitor and track TPR proceedings or the use of compelling reasons.

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 24 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided information describing some of the methods used to notify caregivers of hearings and reviews. In interviews, stakeholders confirmed the use of the various methods but indicated that notification and right to be heard are inconsistent statewide.

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

Georgia 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 is (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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Strength for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment.
- Information in the statewide assessment indicated that the quality assurance (QA) and continuous quality improvement (CQI) systems were operating throughout the state. The QA system has standards in place to evaluate the quality of services

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

provided to children and families. Safety standards related to licensing and approving private foster and adoptive homes are evaluated annually. The QA and CQI systems identify strengths and needs of the service delivery system and provide relevant reports to support program improvement efforts.

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

Georgia is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. None of the items in this systemic factor were rated as a Strength.

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 26 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided data showing that a large percentage of public agency case managers did not complete initial training timely. Stakeholders confirmed this information during interviews. Stakeholders also expressed concern that the initial training was not adequate to prepare public agency case managers for their jobs. Stakeholders provided data that showed private agency staff also did not complete training timely.

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 staff⁷ that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

⁷ "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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Data in the statewide assessment indicated that many private agency staff completed annual ongoing training timely. However, the statewide assessment noted that there was no method for tracking the completion of ongoing training requirements for public agency staff. In interviews, stakeholders expressed concerns regarding staff's ability to access ongoing training and unclear expectations for ongoing training requirements for public agency staff. Data and information collected during stakeholder interviews identified concerns with the adequacy and effectiveness of ongoing worker and supervisory training. Stakeholders stated that supervisors are often trained on the job.

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 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed through stakeholder interviews indicated that both public and private agency foster and adoptive parents complete required pre-service and ongoing training and that there are methods to monitor and track this. Stakeholders confirmed that the completion of the required training for Child Care Institution staff is also tracked and monitored. However, information in the statewide assessment and obtained through stakeholder interviews identified concerns with the effectiveness of the training to adequately prepare foster and adoptive parents to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children in their homes, particularly as they encounter children with complex needs.

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

Georgia is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. None of the items in this systemic factor were 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.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 29 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided information indicating a need for basic services (food, shelter, clothing, income), service support (transportation, child care, education), and mental/emotional/behavioral health services, especially substance abuse services. During interviews, stakeholders confirmed gaps in services across the state, including in supervised visitation, post-permanency services, psychological evaluations, sexual trauma services, services for Latino families (long waitlists), specialized services for special needs children, Autism services, and LGBTQ services. Stakeholders also expressed concerns about long waiting lists and the quality of some of the services.

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information provided in the statewide assessment and confirmed during interviews with stakeholders described significant concerns about the inability to individualize services based on the quality of Comprehensive Child and Family Assessments that inform service needs, insurance issues with Ameri-Group, lack of translation services, the inability to tailor services to meet the cultural needs of the diverse population, and the inconsistent engagement of community providers across the state.

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

Georgia is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. Both items in this systemic factor were 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Strength for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders described how they have been engaged in the development of state plans. The state's integration of CFSP, CQI, and CFSR through the C3 process and its Blueprint for Change provides for ongoing and consistent engagement across the state and ensures that the major concerns of required stakeholders and community input and feedback on needs are included in the goals, objectives, and annual updates of 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Strength for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during stakeholder interviews showed how the CFSP is coordinated with services or benefits of other federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population, such as Head Start, Department of Housing and Urban Development programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, education, behavioral health, and child support.

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

Georgia 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 33 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided data showing that child placement agency homes and private child care institutions are monitored to ensure compliance with standards. However, the state lacks a consistent, comprehensive approach to monitoring standards in DFCS-licensed homes. Data from a recent quality assurance review of DFCS public homes showed that the majority of the homes did not meet some of the standards. During interviews, stakeholders noted that

Georgia 2015 CFSR Final Report

some counties do not have dedicated Resource Development Workers and that may affect how standards are being monitored.

Item 34. Requirements for Criminal Background Checks

Description of Systemic Factor Item: The foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system is functioning state wide 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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Strength for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, Georgia provided data showing that criminal history background checks are conducted routinely statewide. Stakeholders confirmed in interviews that policy is in place to support a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of children in foster care and adoptive placements.

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.

- Georgia 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 confirmed through stakeholder interviews, showed that Georgia does not have a comprehensive statewide diligent recruitment and retention plan. Stakeholders reported that some recruitment activities were occurring within regions and that demographic data were used to inform these efforts, but this was not occurring in a consistent and organized manner throughout the state.

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.

- Georgia received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Data provided in the statewide assessment showed that Georgia generally completes home study requests from other states within the 60-day time frame. However, information in the statewide assessment and clarified during stakeholder interviews indicated that Georgia does not have clear requirements and procedures for actively seeking placements for waiting children in cross-jurisdictional resources and is not proactive in seeking out these types of placement resources. In interviews, stakeholders reported a lack of follow-through with inquiries and problems with data collection.

Appendix A: Summary of Georgia 2015 CFSR Performance

Appendix A

Summary of Georgia 2015 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.

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 1 Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect	Not in Substantial Conformity	66% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	66% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Safety Outcome 2 Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	43% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	43% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Georgia 2015 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 1 Children have permanency and stability in their living situations	Not in Substantial Conformity	14% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	68% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	42% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	27% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Permanency Outcome 2 The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children	Not in Substantial Conformity	32% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	77% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	45% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	39% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	46% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	34% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Georgia 2015 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 1 Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	26% Substantially achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	25% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	51% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	25% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	56% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	42% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	31% Strength

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 2 Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	Not In Substantial Conformity	54% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	54% Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Georgia 2015 CFSR Performance

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

Data Element	Overall Determination	State Performance
Well-Being Outcome 3 Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	25% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	49% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	29% 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
Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not In Substantial Conformity
Item 19 Statewide Information System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of Georgia 2015 CFSR Performance

CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Case Review System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 20 Written Case Plan	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 21 Periodic Reviews	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 22 Permanency Hearings	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 23 Termination of Parental Rights	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 24 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
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment	In Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment	Strength

STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Staff and Provider Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 26 Initial Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of Georgia 2015 CFSR Performance

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Item 27 Ongoing Staff Training	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 28 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
Service Array and Resource Development	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not in Substantial Conformity
Item 29 Array of Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 30 Individualizing Services	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	In Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Strength

Appendix A: Summary of Georgia 2015 CFSR Performance

FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

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

III. Performance on Statewide Data Indicators⁸

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	8.0%	7.6%–8.5%	FY12–13
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	8.09	6.94–9.43	13A–13B, FY13

⁸ 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 Georgia 2015 CFSSR 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	47.0%	45.7%–48.3%	11B–14A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	43.6%	Higher	44.3%	42.3%–46.3%	13B–14A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	31.4%	29.5%–33.4%	13B–14A
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	7.5%	6.4%–8.8%	11B–14A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	5.84	5.67–6	13B–14A

* **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 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: Georgia 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Summary of CFSR Round 2 Georgia 2007 Key Findings

The Children's Bureau conducted a CFSR in Georgia in 2007. 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

General Information
Children's Bureau Region: 4
Date of Onsite Review: May 14–18, 2007
Period Under Review: April 1, 2006, through May 14, 2007
Date Final Report Issued: September 25, 2007
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: December 25, 2007
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: August 31, 2008

Highlights of Findings

Performance Measurements
A. The State met the national standards for two of the six standards.
B. The State achieved substantial conformity for none of the seven outcomes.
C. The State achieved substantial conformity for four of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: Georgia 2007 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	93.0	Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.19	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	129.0	Meets Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	93.2	Does Not Meet Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	118.6	Does Not Meet Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	107.4	Meets 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: Georgia 2007 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	Achieved 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	Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity

Appendix B: Georgia 2007 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	Area Needing Improvement
Item 2. Repeat Maltreatment	Strength
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

Appendix B: Georgia 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
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
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

Appendix B: Georgia 2007 CFSR Key Findings

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	Area Needing Improvement
Item 27. Permanency Hearings	Area Needing Improvement
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	Strength
Item 33. Ongoing Staff Training	Strength
Item 34. Foster and Adoptive Parent Training	Strength
Item 35. Array of Services	Area Needing Improvement
Item 36. Service Accessibility	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: Georgia 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or 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	Area Needing Improvement
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	Area Needing Improvement
Item 45. State Use of Cross-Jurisdictional Resources for Permanent Placements	Area Needing Improvement