



Child and Family Services Reviews

North Carolina

Final Report

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

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Final Report: North Carolina 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 North Carolina.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 North Carolina are based on:

- The statewide assessment prepared by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Social Services (DSS), Child Welfare Section, and submitted to the Children's Bureau on March 17, 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 105 cases (59 foster care and 46 in-home cases) conducted via a State Conducted Case Review process at Buncombe, Craven, Cumberland, Durham, Hoke, Jackson, Mecklenburg, Pitt, Scotland, Wake and Wilson counties, North Carolina, between April 1, 2015, and September 30, 2015
- Interviews and focus groups with state stakeholders and partners, which included:
 - Attorneys including representatives from the Attorney General's Office and County Attorneys
 - Child welfare agency directors, senior managers, program managers, and administrators
 - Child welfare agency caseworkers and supervisors
 - Foster and adoptive parents
 - Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) staff
 - Information system staff
 - Licensing staff and representatives
 - Quality Assurance (QA) staff
 - Representatives from the court system including judges, Guardians Ad Litem, and Court Improvement Project (CIP)

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.

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- Representatives from education
- Representatives from other state agencies administering federal programs
- Representatives from university social work programs
- Services providers
- Tribal representatives
- Youth served by the agency

In Round 3, 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. 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 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, North Carolina's Final Report is being reissued (see footnote 1).

Background Information

The Round 3 CF SR 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 CF SR 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 CF SRs is not directly comparable to its performance in the second round. Appendix A provides tables presenting North Carolina's overall performance in Round 3. Appendix B provides information about North Carolina's performance in Round 2.

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I. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

North Carolina 2015 CFSR Assessment of Substantial Conformity for Outcomes and Systemic Factors

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

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

Children's Bureau Comments on North Carolina Performance

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

In preparation for the CFSR, North Carolina dedicated resources to develop and implement a process for case review. The state's efforts resulted in the state's capacity to review its own cases using county and state staff and afforded the state the opportunity to conduct its own case review during the CFSR as well as the potential to measure improvement. The Children's Bureau encourages North Carolina to continue to build and strengthen its case review process and fully integrate it with other components of continuous quality improvement.

Case review results identified concerns in both foster care and in-home cases related to premature case closures when safety concerns were present. Within the in-home sample, some cases were closed before assessing safety or offering services. The case review also revealed that cases were closed without addressing the presenting problem and the reason for agency involvement. The Children's Bureau encourages North Carolina to examine its practices surrounding case closure to improve safety outcomes for children.

Case review findings identified concerns with the cease reunification order and termination of parental rights (TPR) processes within the state. Stakeholders reported that North Carolina does not have a statewide tracking system to monitor the timely filings and scheduling of TPRs. Compelling reasons to support agency recommendations to cease reunification efforts are not consistently documented in case plans or in court orders. A cease reunification order is generally required before the state can proceed with the TPR process and is most commonly made at a permanency planning hearing as part of a sequential process toward achieving permanency. A cease reunification order relieves the state from actively assisting parents with reunification but does not necessarily result in an immediate TPR or achievement of permanency. Additionally, results of case reviews suggest that in some cases where cease reunification orders were made, it was appropriate and beneficial for the child to have a positive relationship and visits with the parent. The Children's Bureau encourages the state to consider how practice could be revised to support healthy relationships for children in care.

Stakeholders noted several concerns regarding children's and parents' access to health services, including those available through Medicaid-managed care organizations (MCO). Stakeholders reported an overall lack of availability of therapists and other service providers who accept Medicaid. They expressed concern that children experienced interruptions in services when they moved across county lines, as those moves often necessitate a change in the MCO. They also reported significant differences in the availability of health-related services provided by MCOs, based on geographic location.

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The lack of a statewide case management information system that allows the state to track child placement episodes across counties affects the state's ability to readily identify the status of children, including re-entry, placement history, and placement goals. The case review revealed several limitations that impede the state from ensuring the data are always current and accurate. Procedures addressing the frequency for updates at the county level and the time required for administrators to enter information into the state's mainframe, combined with the time required to collect and combine updates from all 100 counties in the state, limits North Carolina from producing timely data. At the state level, information may not provide a complete 12-month experience for children in care.

Stakeholders confirmed that children who are discharged from foster care in one county and re-enter care in a different county receive a new identification number. While counties are able to conduct a name search in the central registry for maltreatment report information, they are unable to directly access placement history for foster care episodes that occurred in other counties. The challenges with the statewide information system can result in incomplete historical assessment information on individual cases for county staff working with families. The lack of a timely, complete, and accurate data results in an inability to calculate the state's performance on many of the statewide data indicators and compromises the effectiveness of the state's continuous quality improvement efforts.

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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 DSS. 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

North Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 75% of the 51 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 accepted reports, CPS Assessments, are assigned for initiation within 24 hours or 72 hours depending on the nature and severity of the alleged child maltreatment. Response time requires face-to-face contact with the children identified in the report and with at least one caretaker.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 1 because 75% of the 51 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

North Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2.

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The outcome was substantially achieved in 57% of the 105 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 64% of the 59 foster care cases and 48% of the 46 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 2 because 66% of the 62 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 2 was rated as a Strength in 68% of the 22 applicable foster care cases and 65% of the 40 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 3 because 57% of the 105 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 3 was rated as a Strength in 64% of the 59 applicable foster care cases and 48% of the 46 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.

State Outcome Performance

North Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 34% of the 59 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).

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- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 4 because 76% of the 59 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 5 because 64% of the 58 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 6 because 41% of the 59 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

North Carolina is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 71% of the 59 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 7 because 78% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 8 because 59% of the 44 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 72% of the 25 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 64% 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 61% of the 28 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 9 because 73% of the 59 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 10 because 79% of the 56 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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

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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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 11 because 58% of the 40 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- In 66% of the 38 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 59% of the 27 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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 39% of the 105 cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 49% of the 59 foster care cases and 26% of the 46 in-home services 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.

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.

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.

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- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12 because 44% of the 105 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12 was rated as Strength in 51% of the 59 foster care cases and 35% of the 46 in-home services cases.

Item 12 is divided into three sub-items:

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

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12A because 80% of the 105 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12A was rated as a Strength in 88% of the 59 foster care cases and 70% of the 46 in-home services cases.

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

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12B because 40% of the 88 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 12B was rated as a Strength in 43% of the 42 applicable foster care cases and 37% of the 46 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 58% of the 88 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of mothers.
- In 45% of the 73 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts both to assess and address the needs of fathers.

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

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 12C because 87% of the 52 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 13 because 46% of the 98 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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.

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- Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 54% of the 52 applicable foster care cases and 37% of the 46 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 60% of the 67 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve child(ren) in case planning.
- In 67% of the 88 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to involve mothers in case planning.
- In 48% of the 75 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 14 because 61% of the 105 cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 75% of the 59 foster care cases and 43% of the 46 in-home services 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 15 because 34% of the 89 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 15 was rated as a Strength in 37% of the 43 applicable foster care cases and 30% of the 46 applicable in-home services cases.
- In 53% of the 88 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with mothers were sufficient.
- In 32% of the 74 applicable cases, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure that both the frequency and quality of caseworker visitation with fathers were sufficient.

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.

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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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 88% of the 67 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 the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 16 because 88% of the 67 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 96% of the 45 applicable foster care cases and 73% of the 22 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

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

The outcome was substantially achieved in 65% of the 100 applicable cases reviewed.

The outcome was substantially achieved in 68% of the 59 applicable foster care cases and 61% of the applicable 41 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 17 because 76% of the 82 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.

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- Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 78% of the 59 foster care cases and 70% of the 23 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 18 because 67% of the 75 applicable cases were rated as a Strength.
- Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 72% of the 39 applicable foster care cases and 61% of the 36 applicable in-home services cases.

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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

North Carolina 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.

- North Carolina 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 confirmed during stakeholder interviews, showed that North Carolina uses its statewide information systems at the county and state levels to track the status, demographics, goals, and location of children in foster care. However, stakeholders reported that the current information and the immediately preceding 12-month history of children is not readily available because of the guidelines and timelines for data entry across the multiple administrative layers within the state. Stakeholders also reported that county-level users did not have direct access to historical foster care information for children served in other counties. Additionally, the multiple county experiences of children is not always accurate at the state level because the status and placements across counties cannot be identified and linked in the current information system.

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.

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State Systemic Factor Performance

North Carolina 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 20 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and confirmed during stakeholder interviews indicated that the state has no ability to monitor the functioning of this systemic factor item and that families are not consistently engaged in case planning, especially non-custodial parents. Stakeholders expressed concern that parents were not provided timely notification of case planning meetings and that diligent efforts to locate and serve notice of the proceedings to non-custodial parents were not made. Stakeholders indicated that plans are not reflective of the needs of the child and family.

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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 21 based on information from the stakeholder interviews.
- Stakeholders concurred that periodic reviews occur no less frequently than once every 6 months, that most hearings occur every 3 months, and sometimes more frequently. Stakeholders reported that even when there are continuances, periodic reviews still occur within the federally-required timelines.

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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 22 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, North Carolina provided data that demonstrated that initial permanency hearings were routinely occurring timely. Information received during stakeholder interviews confirmed this. Stakeholders reported that subsequent permanency hearings occurred timely as well.

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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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 23 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information provided in the statewide assessment and collected through stakeholder interviews could not confirm that TPR proceedings were occurring in accordance with required provisions. Stakeholders reported that compelling reasons for not filing TPR in accordance with federal requirements were inconsistent across 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.

- North Carolina 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, North Carolina reported that there is not a statewide uniform system for tracking or for providing notice to foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care, and therefore the functioning of this systemic factor item is unknown. During interviews, stakeholders reported that the process of providing notification and the right to be heard varies across the state.

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

North Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance System. The one item in this systemic factor was rated as an Area Needing Improvement.

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.

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- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 25 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and obtained during interviews with stakeholders confirmed that although recent improvements have been made, North Carolina does not have a uniform Quality Assurance (QA) system functioning statewide or consistent statewide standards for evaluating the quality of services across the state. Stakeholders indicated that the state's existing QA system does not identify the strengths and needs of the service delivery system and does not have a standard format in place to evaluate implemented program improvement measures statewide.

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

North Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Staff and Provider Training. One of the items in this systemic factor was 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.

- North Carolina 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, North Carolina provided information on staff initial training requirements. In interviews, stakeholders confirmed the initial training requirements and said that demand for and locations of the trainings created barriers to attendance resulting in delayed start dates for some new employees. Some stakeholders indicated that the initial training does not fully prepare staff because it does not provide them with the basic skills necessary to do their work. Stakeholders also reported that the state does not have a good system for tracking staff participation in online training.

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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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 27 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and supported through stakeholder interviews indicated that North Carolina has a system in place for ongoing training. However, the state was not able to demonstrate the effectiveness of ongoing trainings or identify additional staff training needs. According to stakeholders interviewed, ongoing trainings were not always reflective of the current training needs of the staff in each county. Stakeholders also reported long waiting lists for trainings, the need for more ongoing training for supervisors, and the need for in-depth trainings on mental health and substance abuse. Training provided through the county is not tracked on a statewide basis.

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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 28 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- Information in the statewide assessment and collected during interviews with stakeholders confirmed that Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP) training is provided across the state and is required for foster and adoptive parents. Private agencies provide trainings to their foster parents and ensure that they meet the ongoing training requirements. The majority of stakeholders interviewed reported that the state provides foster and adoptive parents quality initial training and provides foster parents quality ongoing training.

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.

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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

North Carolina 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.

- North Carolina 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, North Carolina did not provide data to assess accessibility of services statewide. Information received from stakeholders indicated concerns with the adequacy of services for mental health, substance abuse, Medicaid, transportation, housing, domestic violence, and services for Hispanic populations. Stakeholders identified that the funding mechanism for services creates accessibility barriers and delays the timeliness of services as some clients are not eligible for Medicaid, and there is lack of providers willing to accept Medicaid. Stakeholders also reported that services can be interrupted when the family or child moves across county lines resulting in a change in the Managed Care Organization (MCO). Stakeholders also raised concerns about the quality of available services and limited services in the rural areas of the state.

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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 30 based on information from the stakeholder interviews.
- North Carolina did not provide data or information in the statewide assessment to evaluate the functioning of this systemic item. During interviews, stakeholders expressed concerns with the state's ability to individualize services to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency. Stakeholders identified challenges in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities and special needs as well as individualizing services for families experiencing domestic violence, parents and children impacted by trauma, and Hispanic and Latino families because of language barriers. Stakeholders reported that counties have limited funds available to individualize services.

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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

North Carolina is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. None of the items 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 31 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, North Carolina provided insufficient information to fully assess the functioning of this systemic factor item. Information collected through stakeholder interviews indicated that several stakeholders were not routinely involved in the development of the CFSP/APSR and some stakeholders had no involvement. Internal stakeholders reported that they were not familiar with the goals and objectives of the CFSP and APSR.

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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 32 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, North Carolina did not provide information that addressed how services under the CFSP were coordinated with services or benefits of other federal programs serving the same population. During interviews, stakeholders were not able to clearly articulate how services were being coordinated across programs, and there were no available data that indicated that CFSP services were coordinated with other federal programs statewide.

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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

North Carolina 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 were 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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Strength for Item 33 based on information from the stakeholder interviews.
- During interviews, stakeholders generally agreed that foster and adoptive parent standards were in place and applied consistently statewide.

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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 34 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- North Carolina did not provide data in the statewide assessment to demonstrate the functioning of this item, specifically at the county level. The counties' access to criminal background check information and how information was communicated to the counties was unclear. The state does not have a standard process in place to ensure counties are consistently addressing negative criminal background findings according to policy. Stakeholders also reported during interviews that there is sometimes a delay receiving background check results.

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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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 35 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- North Carolina did not provide data in the statewide assessment to demonstrate the statewide routine diligent recruitment of foster and adoptive homes for children with special needs or for families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of the children in the state's custody. The state does not have a uniform system in place across the state that monitors or provides consistent standards for diligent recruitment. Stakeholders reported that recruitment efforts vary by county and are not coordinated at the state level.

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.

- North Carolina received an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement for Item 36 based on information from the statewide assessment and stakeholder interviews.
- In the statewide assessment, North Carolina provided information on the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) unit that is responsible for out-of-state placements; however, it did not provide sufficient information on the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources. North Carolina estimated that more than half of home studies are completed within 60 days. During interviews, stakeholders expressed concerns with the timeliness of the state's ICPC process and inconsistencies in staff resources across the state available to manage ICPC cases.

Appendix A: North Carolina 2015 CFSR Final Report Summary

Summary of North Carolina 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	75% Substantially Achieved
Item 1 Timeliness of investigations	Area Needing Improvement	75% 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 when possible and appropriate	Not in Substantial Conformity	57% Substantially Achieved
Item 2 Services to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	Area Needing Improvement	66% Strength
Item 3 Risk and safety assessment and management	Area Needing Improvement	57% Strength

Appendix A: North Carolina 2015 CFSR Final Report Summary

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	34% Substantially Achieved
Item 4 Stability of foster care placement	Area Needing Improvement	76% Strength
Item 5 Permanency goal for child	Area Needing Improvement	64% Strength
Item 6 Achieving reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other planned permanent living arrangement	Area Needing Improvement	41% 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	71% Substantially Achieved
Item 7 Placement with siblings	Area Needing Improvement	78% Strength
Item 8 Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	Area Needing Improvement	59% Strength
Item 9 Preserving connections	Area Needing Improvement	73% Strength
Item 10 Relative placement	Area Needing Improvement	79% Strength
Item 11 Relationship of child in care with parents	Area Needing Improvement	58% Strength

Appendix A: North Carolina 2015 CFSR Final Report Summary

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 children's needs	Not in Substantial Conformity	39% Substantially Achieved
Item 12 Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	44% Strength
Sub-Item 12A Needs assessment and services to children	Area Needing Improvement	80% Strength
Sub-Item 12B Needs assessment and services to parents	Area Needing Improvement	40% Strength
Sub-Item 12C Needs assessment and services to foster parents	Area Needing Improvement	87% Strength
Item 13 Child and family involvement in case planning	Area Needing Improvement	46% Strength
Item 14 Caseworker visits with child	Area Needing Improvement	61% Strength
Item 15 Caseworker visits with parents	Area Needing Improvement	34% Strength

Appendix A: North Carolina 2015 CFSR Final Report Summary

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	88% Substantially Achieved
Item 16 Educational needs of the child	Area Needing Improvement	88% Strength

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	65% Substantially Achieved
Item 17 Physical health of the child	Area Needing Improvement	76% Strength
Item 18 Mental/behavioral health of child	Area Needing Improvement	67% Strength

II. Ratings for Systemic Factors

The Children's Bureau determines whether a state is in substantial conformity with federal requirements for the seven 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.

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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

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 Review	Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 22 Permanency Hearing	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

Appendix A: North Carolina 2015 CFSR Final Report Summary

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not In Substantial Conformity
Item 25 Quality Assurance System	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

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
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	Strength

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	Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix A: Summary of North Carolina 2015 CFSR Performance

AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Data Element	Source of Data and Information	State Performance
Agency Responsiveness to the Community	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Not In Substantial Conformity
Item 31 State Engagement and Consultation With Stakeholders Pursuant to CFSP and APSR	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
Item 32 Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement

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	Stakeholder Interviews	Strength
Item 34 Requirements for Criminal Background Checks	Statewide Assessment and Stakeholder Interviews	Area Needing Improvement
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

Appendix A: Summary of North Carolina 2015 CFSSR Performance

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	6.2%	5.7%-6.8%	FY12-13
Maltreatment in foster care (victimizations per 100,000 days in care)	8.50	Lower	Excluded due to Data Quality****	Excluded due to Data Quality	13A-13B, FY13
Permanency in 12 months for children entering foster care	40.5%	Higher	Excluded due to Data Quality	Excluded due to Data Quality	11B-14A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 12-23 months	43.6%	Higher	Excluded due to Data Quality	Excluded due to Data Quality	13B-14A
Permanency in 12 months for children in foster care 24 months or more	30.3%	Higher	Excluded due to Data Quality	Excluded due to Data Quality	13B-14A

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 North Carolina 2015 CFSSR Performance

Statewide Data Indicator	National Performance	Direction of Desired Performance	RSP*	95% Confidence Interval**	Data Period(s) Used for State Performance***
Re-entry to foster care in 12 months	8.3%	Lower	Excluded due to Data Quality	Excluded due to Data Quality	11B–14A
Placement stability (moves per 1,000 days in care)	4.12	Lower	Excluded due to Data Quality	Excluded due to Data Quality	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.

**** **Excluded due to Data Quality:** Identifies when performance was not calculated due to the state failing one or more data quality checks for this indicator.

Appendix B: North Carolina 2007 CF SR Key Findings

Appendix B Summary of CF SR Round 2 North Carolina 2007 Key Findings

The Children's Bureau conducted a CF SR in North Carolina in 2007. Key findings from that review are presented below. Because the Children's Bureau made several changes to the CF SR 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 CF SR 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: March 26–30, 2007
Period Under Review: October 1, 2005, through March 26, 2007
Date Courtesy Copy of Final Report Issued: June 27, 2007
Date Program Improvement Plan Due: September 27, 2007
Date Program Improvement Plan Approved: April 1, 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 one of the seven outcomes.
C. The State achieved substantial conformity for five of the seven systemic factors.

Appendix B: North Carolina 2007 CF SR 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	92.1	Does Not Meet Standard
Absence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (data indicator)	99.68 or higher	99.01	Does Not Meet Standard
Timeliness and permanency of reunifications (Permanency Composite 1)	122.6 or higher	139.4	Meets Standard
Timeliness of adoptions (Permanency Composite 2)	106.4 or higher	123.3	Meets Standard
Permanency for children and youth in foster care for long periods of time (Permanency Composite 3)	121.7 or higher	117.1	Does Not Meet Standard
Placement stability (Permanency Composite 4)	101.5 or higher	52.4	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
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

Appendix B: North Carolina 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Outcome	Achieved or Did Not Achieve Substantial Conformity
Child and Family Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	Achieved 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	Achieved Substantial Conformity

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	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

Appendix B: North Carolina 2007 CFSR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
Item 4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	Area Needing Improvement
Item 5. Foster Care Re-entries	Area Needing Improvement
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	Strength
Item 11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	Strength
Item 12. Placement With Siblings	Strength
Item 13. Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	Area Needing Improvement
Item 14. Preserving Connections	Strength
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	Strength
Item 22. Physical Health of the Child	Strength
Item 23. Mental/Behavioral Health of the Child	Area Needing Improvement

Appendix B: North Carolina 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	Strength
Item 27. Permanency Hearings	Strength
Item 28. Termination of Parental Rights	Area Needing Improvement
Item 29. Notice of Hearings and Reviews to Caregivers	Strength
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
Item 37. Individualizing Services	Strength
Item 38. Engagement in Consultation With Stakeholders	Strength
Item 39. Agency Annual Reports Pursuant to CFSP	Strength
Item 40. Coordination of CFSP Services With Other Federal Programs	Strength
Item 41. Standards for Foster Homes and Institutions	Strength

Appendix B: North Carolina 2007 CF SR Key Findings

Item	Strength or Area Needing Improvement
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	Strength