



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Pennsylvania Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)
Statewide Assessment

Submitted by the Office of Children, Youth and Families
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Section I: General Information

Name of State Agency: PA Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families

CFSR Review Period

CFSR Sample Period: April 1, 2016 – November 15, 2016

Period of AFCARS Data: 2013A-2016A

Period of NCANDS Data: 2013A-2014B

Case Review Period Under Review (PUR): April 1, 2016 – July 21, 2017

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Pennsylvania Approach to Stakeholder Collaboration for the Statewide Assessment

PA Child Welfare Council

Collaboration is a foundational component of PA's child welfare practice that must be modeled at every level and across all partnerships to improve outcomes for children in families. The involvement of key stakeholders in achieving positive outcomes for children, youth and families is critical in a state-supervised, county-administered system like Pennsylvania (PA). In 2015, in assessing the **implementation of recent changes to PA's Child Protective Services Law (CPSL)**, OCYF recognized a need to develop a more streamlined and efficient approach to the engagement of system partners and stakeholders in our planning efforts and began working towards the development of what is currently known as the PA Child Welfare Council.

Significant efforts were made during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016 toward the development of the PA Child Welfare Council. The vision is that this council will serve as the foundational administrative structure that will further support **PA's capacity to implement a CQI framework and process at the broader system level**. The PA Child Welfare Council is intended to serve as a dynamic entity able to provide sustained, shared leadership and guidance to support collaborative **strategic visioning for Pennsylvania's child welfare system**. **Between February and May of 2016**, OCYF met with a group of key system partners to discuss the visioning for the council and to draft a charter to guide the work of the group. OCYF and system partners also reached out to contacts in other county administered, state supervised child welfare systems that have similar structures already in place to gather information about lessons **learned to inform PA's work** in structuring and launching the PA Child Welfare Council. The goals of the PA Child Welfare Council, as identified in the finalized charter, include the following:

- Help build a sustainable structure to support collaborative strategic **visioning for Pennsylvania's child welfare system**;
- Foster a unity of effort to achieve our common shared goals;
- Enhance communication based on shared values of respect and honesty;
- Increase proactive responses to address systemic issues and concerns;
and
- Enhance capacity to use data to drive decision making.

The PA Child Welfare Council, once fully operational, will provide a forum for facilitating streamlined and meaningful engagement of stakeholders in federal planning efforts related to the **development of the goals and objectives of PA's Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), efforts related to the Children's Justice Act (CJA)**, and assessment and analysis of PA performance on CFSR outcomes and systemic factors. The PA Child Welfare Council will be structured to consist of an overarching steering committee whose membership will consist of representation from key child welfare system partners including, but not limited to, the courts, advocates, law enforcement, TA providers, county agencies, youth and parent/caregivers. This steering committee will oversee sub-committees specifically focused around the areas of safety, permanency, well-being, and system resource needs. PA believes the council will promote improved alignment and integration of system priorities with the goals and objectives of the CFSP/APSRs and any program improvement plan that results from federal review processes such as the CFSR or Title IV-E Reviews.

The kick-off meeting for the PA Child Welfare Council was held in November 2016 with over 50 individuals representing various system partners coming together. Subsequent monthly meetings were held in December 2016 and January 2017, with ongoing monthly meetings scheduled as the Council members work to begin prioritization of the work of the Council and development and implementation of the sub-committee structure.

While PA intends to utilize the PA Child Welfare Council as the key body to support ongoing collection and monitoring of data related to CFSR outcomes and systemic factors, OCYF recognized that the Council would likely not be fully functioning to support the engagement of Council members in many aspects of **the PA's CFSR Statewide Assessment prior to the required deadline for submission**. Therefore, PA worked to utilize existing stakeholder groups to support completion of the Statewide Assessment while concurrently developing the PA Child Welfare Council.

Statewide Assessment Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Engagement of stakeholders in collaborating to complete **PA's CFSR Statewide Assessment** included the following activities, which occurred over the course of calendar years 2015 and 2016:

- In 2015, OCYF began work towards the development of the Statewide Assessment. Stakeholders were engaged to conduct an initial data inventory to assess the current data sources available to support the evaluation of PA performance on the CFSR outcomes and systemic factors. **This data inventory formed as the basis for the development of PA's strategic plan to address assessment of the systemic factors which was**

submitted with the 2016 and 2017 Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSR). Of significance, stakeholders highlighted the importance of considering greater use of data collected during annual county children and youth agencies (CCYA) licensing inspections as a way to look at statewide functioning on many safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, as well as systemic factors. As data was collected and integrated in the CFSP and APSR submission, it was shared with key standing stakeholder groups. Stakeholder groups engaged in the data inventory and data review included: TA Collaborative Steering Committee, Sustaining Change Workgroup and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Sponsor Team.

- In May 2016, members of the Sustaining Change Workgroup were engaged in a discussion specifically regarding the functioning of the *Quality Assurance System* systemic factor and additional information to demonstrate statewide functioning. This group was selected to specifically aid in **assessment of this systemic factor as it monitors PA's ongoing CQI** system and process.
- In June 2016, CFSP project managers connected with a representative from the PA Office of Administrative Courts to discuss whether any data was available through the courts **to further enhance PA's assessment of some** permanency outcomes and the *Case Review System* systemic factor.
- In July 2016, data and information related to PA CFSP permanency outcomes and the seven systemic factors were shared with the Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN) Advisory Committee. The data was shared and discussed in preparation for more in-depth conversation scheduled for the November 2016 session.
- In August 2016, focus groups were conducted with older youth attending the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) summer retreat. Youth were specifically asked questions pertaining services to meet their needs to inform the assessment of the systemic factor relating to *Service Array and Resource Development*.
- In September 2016, data on PA performance related to CFSP safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, as well as the seven systemic factors was shared and discussed with the TA Collaborative Steering Committee.
- In October 2016, data on PA performance related to CFSP safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, as well as the seven systemic **factors was shared and discussed with members of PA's Citizen Review Panels (CRPs)** at their statewide all panel meeting. The CRPs have recently

turned their focus to staff recruitment and retention, as well as older youth services.

- In November 2016, the SWAN Advisory Committee was engaged again in a focus group session to further gain more in-depth information about **stakeholder's assessment of PA's performance on key systemic factors** related to permanency and the work of the committee.
- In December 2016, data on CFSR safety outcomes was shared and discussed with the members of the PA Child Welfare Council.
- In January 2017, data on CFSR outcomes related to CFSR permanency and well-being outcomes was shared and discussed with the members of the PA Child Welfare Council.

Statewide Assessment Participants

A listing of the specific stakeholder groups engaged in the Statewide Assessment and the members of each group has been included as Appendix A. It should be noted that the names of youth who participated in the YAB focus group during the YAB retreat are not identified by name as these youths were active recipients of PA child welfare system services at the time the focus group was conducted.

Section II: Safety and Permanency Data

The data profile has been removed in its entirety.

The data profile has been removed in its entirety.

The data profile has been removed in its entirety.

Section III: Assessment of Child and Family Outcomes and Performance on National Standards

Data Sources

- Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) – Data reported covers various time frames, ranging from federal reporting period 2013A through 2016A.
- Annual CCYA Licensing Inspections Summaries – Data covers licensing inspections which occurred in calendar years 2015 and 2016. Further information about the licensing data utilized in this assessment should be reviewed when interpreting results and is provided in Appendix C.
- Child Welfare Information Solution Data – Information covering child abuse and general protectives services reports received in calendar year 2015. Further information about child abuse reporting data is available online in the [PA 2015 Annual Child Protective Services Report](#).
- National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) – Data covering federal reporting periods 2013A through 2014B.
- National Youth and Transition Database (NYTD) – Data covering federal reporting periods 2013A through 2015B.
- Quality Services Review (QSR) Data and Focus Group Findings – Data covering QSRs conducted during calendar years 2011 through 2016 is provided. Focus group findings are from focus groups conducted as part of the QSR in counties participating in a QSR during Round 6. Further information about the QSR information utilized in this assessment should be reviewed when interpreting results and is provided in Appendix D.
- Further description of all data sources utilized in Section III and IV of this assessment is also provided at Attachment E.

Safety Outcomes

CFSR Safety Data Indicators

With regards to performance on the federal data indicators associated with safety, per the CFSR Round 2 data profile provided by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), PA exceeded the national standard for both **“Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence”** and **“Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care”** in 2013 and 2014.

Figure 1. PA CFSR Round 2 Data Profile: Safety Data Indicators

Federal Safety Data Indicators	2013ab	2014ab	National Standard
Absence of Maltreatment Recurrence	98.10%	97.90%	94.6%+
Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care	99.89%	98.88%	99.68%+

Data Source: PA Child and Family Services Review Data Profile, ACF, July, 2015.

As can be seen in the federal CFSR data profile for PA provided in the previous section (Section II) of this assessment, Round 3 CFSR safety indicators for PA using FFY 2015 data are currently unavailable. The new CFSR Data Indicators for Round 3 outlined in the Federal Register on October 10, 2014, have implemented changes in how the indicators for Safety Outcome #1 are now **calculated. As a result of these changes, PA’s performance on this indicator** cannot currently be calculated for CFSR Round 3 due to failure to meet federal data quality assurance checks specifically related to the use of a common child identifier across both NCANDS and AFCARS files. PA is researching this issue and will work with ACF to determine how to best address any barriers that exist in relation to the calculation of these revised federal safety measures.

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

- ❖ ***CFSR Item 1: Were the agency’s responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports initiated and face to face contact with the child(ren), made, within timeframes established by agency policies or state statues?***

PA statute and policy outlines required response times for investigations of both Child Protective Services (CPS) and General Protective Services (GPS) cases. For CPS reports, the county agency is required to begin its investigation within 24 hours of receiving a report of suspected child abuse. Upon beginning its investigation, the county agency must see the child within 24 hours of receipt of the report. The county agency is to begin the investigation immediately upon receipt of a report of suspected child abuse and see the child immediately if one of the following applies:

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Outcome:

[PA CPSL §6368 \(a-b\)](#)
(Investigation of reports)

[55 Pa. Code §3490.232](#)
(Investigation of reports of suspected child abuse)

[OCYF Bulletin 3490-12-01](#)

- (1) Emergency protective custody has been taken or is needed.
- (2) It cannot be determined from the report whether or not emergency protective custody is needed.

According to data from the PA Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS), in calendar year 2015, PA received a total of 40,590 reports of suspected child abuse, with 4,203 reports substantiated upon completion of investigation. This was a substantial increase in overall reports received compared to years prior, with only 29,273 reports of child abuse received in 2014. This noticeable increase in reports is traced to

changes in PA's CPSL which took effect in 2015 and amended the definition of child abuse in PA, the definition of a perpetrator, and strengthened mandated reporter requirements.

Monitoring of adherence to CPS response time requirements is conducted during annual licensing inspections of county children and youth agencies. During the licensing process, a sample of CPS intake records are reviewed for compliance with CPS response times as outlined in the CPSL. Based on the licensing inspection summaries conducted in 2016, counties were found to be in compliance with CPS response time requirements in approximately 97% of cases reviewed, with only 5 counties found to be in violation of CPS response time policy. It should be noted that one county under regular license was identified as having a systematic citation in this area; however the licensing inspection summary did not specify the total number of cases in violation out of the ten CPS cases reviewed during the inspection. Therefore, the total number of cases cited for fully licensed counties found in Figure 2 may under-represent the total number of cases that were cited during the licensing inspection process.

*Past PA Performance:
Safety Outcome 1*

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was determined to be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

Figure 2. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: CPS Response Times

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties ¹	8 cases (3 counties)	5 cases (2 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties	11 cases (4 counties)	9 cases (3 counties)
Total Cases Cited	19	14
Total CPS Cases Reviewed	675	541
Total Counties Without Citation ²	60	56
Rate of Compliance (%)	97.18	97.41

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

As part of OCYF’s Round 2 CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP), OCYF Bulletin 3490-12-01 “Statewide General Protective Services (GPS) Response Times” was issued in April 2012 to transmit requirements related to a statewide policy establishing response times for reports made to county agencies that are designated as GPS reports. These response times are based on information gathered related to the In-Home Safety Assessment and Management Process and the Risk Assessment Model and include the following:

1. Immediate: The information reported indicates that a Present Danger exists which by definition meets the Safety Threshold. In order to reach the safety threshold, a condition must meet all of the following criteria: have potential to cause serious harm to a child; be specific and observable; be out of control; affect a vulnerable child; and be imminent. Present Danger is defined as an immediate, significant, and clearly observable threat to a child actively occurring in the present.
2. Priority (Within 24 hours): The information reported indicates that an Impending Danger exists which meets the Safety Threshold and/or the information reported indicates that overall Risk Factors rated as high exist

¹ For the purpose of all licensing data referenced in this assessment, a provisionally licensed county is defined as a county who was placed on a provisional license as a result of the licensing inspection or was under a provisional license at the time of the licensing inspection.

² For all 2015 data, annual licensing inspections from all 67 counties are included. For all 2016 data, 6 counties are not included as their licensing inspection summaries were not published at the time of the data pull. Therefore, only 61 counties total are taken into consideration when calculating the number of counties without citation.

which place the child in danger of future harm. An Impending Danger refers to threatening conditions that are not immediately obvious or currently active or occurring now but are out-of-control and likely to cause serious harm to a child in the near future. The information reported does not indicate the existence of Present Danger.

3. Expedited (Within 3-7 calendar days): The information reported indicates that overall Risk Factors rated as moderate exist which place the child in danger of future harm. The information reported does not indicate that Present or Impending Danger exists and does not meet the safety threshold.
4. General/Other (Within 7-10 calendar days): The information reported indicates that overall Risk Factors rated as low exist which may place the child in danger of future harm. The information reported does not indicate that Present or Impending Danger exists and does not meet the safety threshold.

According to data from CWIS, in calendar year 2015, 131,953 reports alleging the need for GPS were received directly at ChildLine (**PA’s Child Abuse Hotline**) or were received initially at the CCYA and transmitted to ChildLine. Of the 131,953 reports, 65,536 were screened out by the county. Of the remaining 66,417 reports assessed statewide, 24,231 (37 percent) were determined valid. Therefore, approximately 35 out of every 1,000 children living in Pennsylvania were reported as subjects of an assessed GPS report in 2015. It should be noted that 2015 marked the first year statewide data could be gathered and analyzed on GPS reporting. Collection of GPS report information became available with the implementation of Phase I of CWIS.

Monitoring of adherence to GPS response time requirements is conducted during annual licensing inspections of county children and youth agencies. During the licensing process, a sample of GPS intake records are reviewed for compliance with GPS response times as outlined in OCYF Bulletin 3490-12-01. Review of licensing inspection violation data provides evidence that counties are adhering to the GPS response timeframes identified within OCYF policy.

Figure 3. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: GPS Response Times

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	7 cases (2 counties)	0 cases (0 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	18 cases (9 counties)	21 cases (10 counties)

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Total Cases Cited	25	21
Total GPS Cases Reviewed	694	616
Total Counties Without Citation	56	51
Rate of Compliance (%)	96.39	96.59

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

PA’s performance on CFSR Safety Outcome #1 can also be assessed by drawing upon findings from the QSRs, which corroborate performance seen in the CFSR national data indicator for absence of child abuse and/or neglect while in foster care. For the purpose of the QSR, the indicator “Safety: Exposure to Threats of Harm” looks over the past 30 days to determine the degree to which the child/youth is free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her place of residence, school, and other daily settings. The substitute home³ is one setting that is specifically rated for all children in foster care during the QSR. Findings from Rounds I-VI of the QSRs show that children are found to be safe within their substitute home in a large majority of the cases reviewed. It should be noted that during Rounds V and VI, all cases where a substitute home was rated for safety were rated as acceptable. More in-depth analysis of the data from the most recent Round (VI), shows that of the 29 cases that qualified to be rated on safety during the QSR for the sub-indicator substitute home, 86.21% of the cases were rated as a “6” on the QSR six-point rating scale, meaning the majority of cases were rated as being optimal in relation to child safety in the substitute home.

Figure 4. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable⁴ on “Safety: Exposure to Threats of Harm” for Sub-Indicator Substitute Home

	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI
Percentage of Cases Rated as Acceptable	98%	99%	98%	97%	100%	100%

Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

³ Substitute home includes foster care homes and congregate care settings.

⁴ For QSR data, an “acceptable” rating is categorized as an indicator or sub-indicator where a rating of a 6, 5 or 4 on the six-point QSR rating scale is given. Indicators or sub-indicators rated as a 3, 2 or 1 are considered to be “unacceptable” and identify a need for improvement by the county.

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

- ❖ *CFSR Item 2: Did the agency make concerted efforts to provide services to the family to **prevent children's entry into foster care or re-entry after reunification?***

PA regulations (55 Pa Code §3130.35) require that county children and youth agencies provide placement prevention and reunification services which include all of the following:

1. Counseling Services
2. Parent Education
3. Homemaker/caretaker services
4. Part day services

The CCYA will work with families where there is risk of abuse to decrease risk factors by providing them with counseling, education and other supportive services. When a need for services exists, cases can be handled in two ways depending upon the risk to the child. Cases where the risk is greater are opened by the CCYA. A family service plan (FSP) is developed that identifies goals, services and the actions to be taken for the family. Cases where the risk of abuse is low may be closed and the family may be referred to services within the community. Most in-home services are provided without regard to cost, although agencies may **charge a fee based on the family's ability to pay.** A family will continue to receive services as long as the agency or the court feels that there is significant risk to the health and safety of the child.

PA has seen a rise in the number of children in out-of-home care. As seen in Figure 5, from 2013 to the first reporting period of 2016, the number of children in care on the last day of the reporting period has increased from 14,139 to 15,999.

*Past PA Performance:
Safety Outcome 2*

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was also determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

*PA Laws, Regulations
and Policies Relevant to
Assessment of CFSR
Outcome:*

[55 PA Code §3130.35
\(Placement prevention and
reunification services\)](#)

OCYF Bulletin 3490-06-01
Safety Assessment and
Planning Process

OCYF Bulletin 3490-97-01
Risk Assessment Policies
and Procedures

Figure 5. Statewide Population Flow, AFCARS Reporting Period 2013B-2016A.

	2013 31-Mar	2013 30-Sep	2014 31-Mar	2014 30-Sep	2015 31-Mar	2015 30-Sep	2016 31-Mar
Admit During Period	5,232	5,809	6,018	6,479	5,976	6,284	5,380
Discharges During Period	5,401	5,690	5,548	6,665	5,294	6,009	5,041
In Care Last Day	14,139	14,240	14,685	14,605	15,302	15,660	15,999
Total Served	18,890	19,269	19,506	20,235	19,968	20,972	20,644
Total Child Population	3,156,857	3,156,857	3,156,857	3,156,857	3,156,857	3,156,857	3,156,857
Admissions per 1,000 Population	1.657	1.840	1.906	2.052	1.893	1.991	1.704
Discharges per 1,000 Population	1.711	1.802	1.757	2.111	1.677	1.903	1.597
In Care per 1,000 Population	4.479	4.511	4.652	4.626	4.847	4.961	5.068
Served per 1,000 Population	5.984	6.104	6.179	6.410	6.325	6.643	6.539

Data Source: Statewide Data Package, HZA, June 2016

OCYF worked with data contractor Hornby Zeller and Associates (HZA) to **conduct further data analysis to identify key drivers impacting PA’s increasing** placement numbers. A review of the data led to identification of counties with trends in placement or populations or challenge areas (re-entry or lengths of stay). The OCYF Regional Office began work with 22 counties (Berks, Dauphin, Erie, Greene, Jefferson, Lawrence, Luzerne, McKean Monroe, Northumberland, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, Tioga, Allegheny, Columbia, Crawford, Washington, York, Cameron, Huntingdon, Montgomery and Susquehanna) with focus on safely reducing children in out of home care. OCYF has worked with each county to formulate a plan to address any barriers and challenges identified by the data review while building upon the strengths that exist within the county the system. The intent was to not have counties develop an additional plan but to better coordinate efforts. Each county approach, plan and focus is county specific with TA partners engaged to support the county specific work.

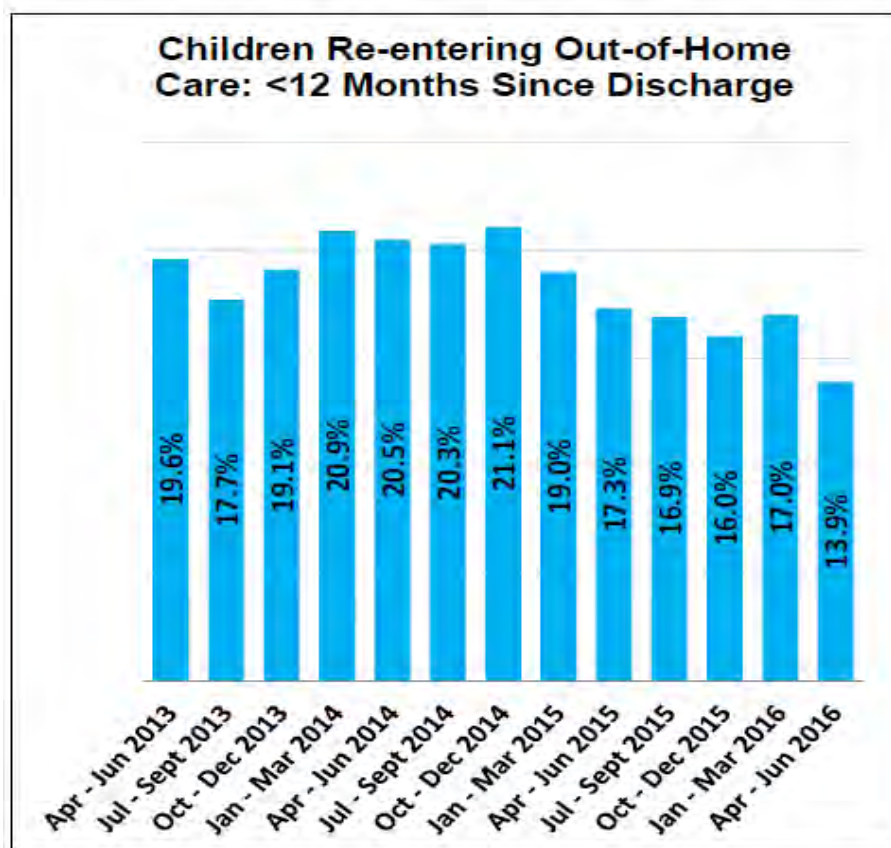
The key to successful reunification for children in out-of-home care and prevention of re-entries is aggressive and meaningful planning and service delivery. **In order to ensure that a child’s return home is successful, PA endorses beginning** reunification planning the day the child enters placement and continue until the child is safely maintained with their parent. It is necessary to plan and coordinate service interventions that are based on the strengths and needs of children, youth and families that address safety, permanency and wellbeing. Most of these services are part of on-going casework services and concurrent planning efforts.

There are five core areas surrounding the planning and services for successful reunifications that must be addressed:

- Placement Decision Making;
- Family Engagement;
- Meaningful Visitation;
- Resource Family/Parent Collaboration; and
- Post Reunification Services Delivery.

In FFY 2015, PA AFCARS data indicates the statewide re-entry rate continues to remain well above the national standard of 8.3 percent.

Figure 6. PA Re-Entries April 2013 – June 2016



Data Source: AFCARS, DHS Monthly Management Report, December 2016.

PA continues to put forth concerted efforts to reduce the number of re-entries and has made this a targeted objective in the 2015-2019 CFSP. In the Needs Based Plan and Budget (NBPB) instructions for state fiscal year 2017-2018, counties who fell below the national re-entry rate were required to provide detailed information about their re-entries and a plan for how their county will plan to work to safely reduce the re-entry of children into care.

- ❖ *CFSR Item 3: Did the agency make 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?*

Safety is the primary and essential factor that informs and guides all decisions made from intake through case closure. The focus is on identifying safety factors, present and/or impending danger, protective capacities and interventions with caregivers to supplement protective capacities. PA has worked on implementation of a standardized Safety Assessment and Management Process (SAMP) for in-home cases. For the purposes of the in-home SAMP, the focus is on identifying safety threats, present and/or impending danger, protective capacities, and working with caregivers to supplement protective capacities through safety intervention. The process leads to making informed decisions about safety planning and implementation of safety actions that will control identified threats.

Ongoing monitoring of the use of the SAMP tool occurs during annual licensure of county children and youth agencies. Safety Assessments are reviewed for CPS intake, GPS intake, in-home and placement cases that are included in the licensing sample. It should be noted that in the majority of cases reviewed, multiple assessments and executed safety plans would have occurred more than once. During the licensing review, OCYF Regional Office staff not only assess whether the Safety Assessments are completed timely and in the case file, but also review to determine other factors such as, whether justification is provided for **every child safety threat, each caregiver’s protective capacities are assessed if** safety threat(s) are present, the safety actions are clear and the safety actions are immediately able to alleviate/control the threat.

Figure 7. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Safety Assessment and Management Process (SAMP)

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	75 cases (3 counties)	30 cases (4 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	79 cases (20 counties)	79 cases (20 counties)
Total Cases Cited (Duplicated Count) ⁵	154	109
Total Counties without Citation	44	37

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

⁵ In some instances, the same case may have been cited multiple times depending on the existence of different violations in relation to the SAMP process.

Further analysis of licensing data from the 2016 inspections indicates that the majority of citations were issued in relation to assessments not being completed within required timeframes or missing signatures on the safety assessment. In one provisionally licensed county, 13 cases were cited related to ongoing issues surrounding implementation of the safety assessment and management process. Nineteen cases (approximately 17%) were cited for failure to ensure safety of all the children in the home as not all children were assessed as required. It should be noted that four cases (less than 1%) were related to complete lack of a safety plan being developed in relation to identified safety threats or incorrect assessment of safety during the 2016 licensing inspections.

The CCYA also conducts a risk assessment to determine if the child is at future risk of maltreatment. Risk is assessed at intervals throughout the life of the case which include:

- 30-calendar days before and after the child is returned to the family home unless one of the following applies:
 - The risk to the child remains low or no risk.
 - **The child's return home was not anticipated by the CCYA.**
 - A risk assessment for these cases shall be completed within two **weeks of the child's return to the home.**
- At other times during the life of the case including, every six months at the FSP review.
- **When circumstances change within the child's environment regardless of the required time frame.**

The CCYA is required to conduct a risk assessment as often as necessary to **assure the child's safety. The CCYA also assesses the safety and risk of the child when the circumstances change within the child's environment at times other than required under this section.**

Ongoing monitoring of the risk assessment process occurs during annual licensure of county children and youth agencies. Figure 8 reflects findings from annual CCYA licensures which occurred during calendar years 2015 and 2016 with regards to agency compliance with risk assessment requirements.

Figure 8. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Risk Assessment

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	32 cases (3 counties)	17 cases (3 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	86 cases (19 counties)	81 cases (23 counties)
Total Cases Cited (Duplicated Count) ⁶	118	98
Total Counties without Citation	45	35

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

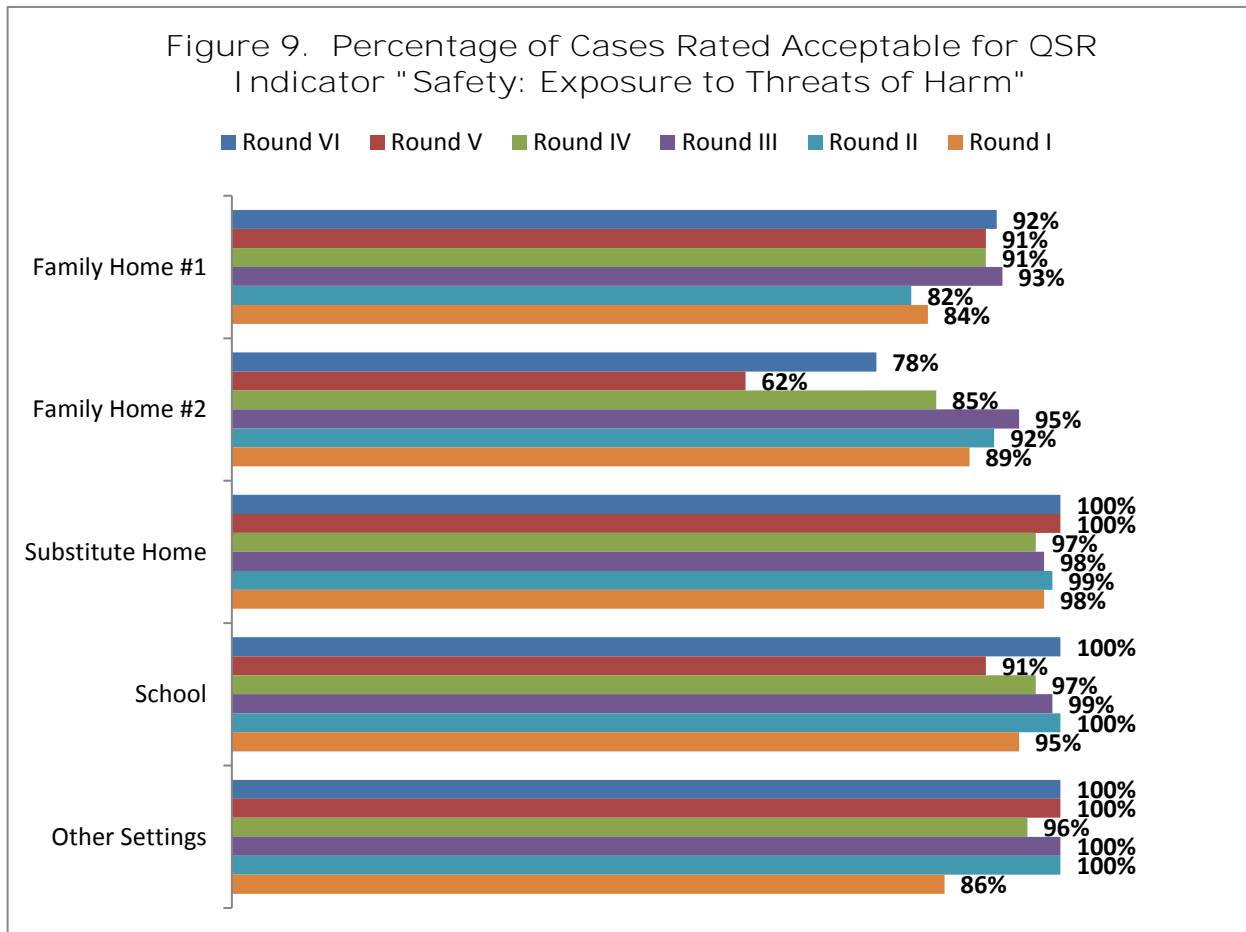
For licensing inspections which occurred in 2016, in 80 percent of the cases cited related to risk assessment (n=78), risk assessments were not completed at the required intervals or within the required timeframes. The remaining citations related to risk assessment tended to relate to insufficient information to support the level of risk determined or information missing or incomplete on the assessments.

During focus groups conducted with caseworkers as part of the Quality Service Review (QSR) process, safety and risk assessments were an issue that surfaced related to feedback about areas for improvement during a focus group conducted in one Western region county. Caseworkers participating in the focus group noted that they felt there was a lack of consistency among supervisors related to safety assessment guidance, with supervisors differing in what they would consider a safety threat. The caseworkers noted that additional training that takes real world scenarios and ties them to safety, as well as risk, could be one way to help caseworkers improve their skills in understanding the safety and risk assessment continuum.

PA also monitors performance related to the safety of children/youth in their own homes or in foster care through the QSR process through assessment of agency performance related to **QSR indicator "Safety: Exposure from Threats of Harm."** This indicator assesses the degree to which the target child/youth is free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her place of residence, **school, and other daily settings; it also addresses whether the child/youth's** parents and/or caregivers provide the attention, actions, and supports and possess the skills and knowledge necessary to protect the child/youth from

⁶ In some instances, the same case may have been cited multiple times depending on the existence of different violations in relation to the risk assessment process.

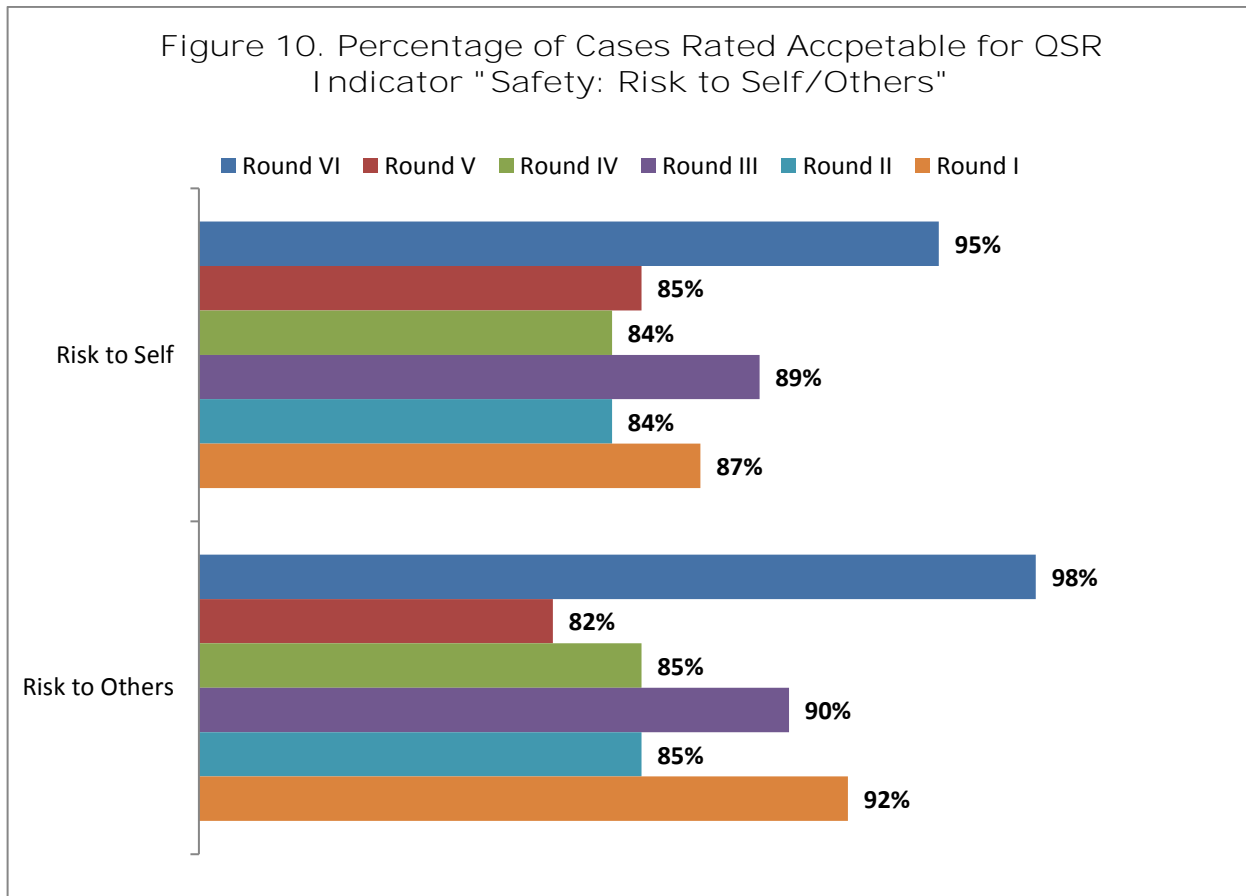
known and potential threats of harm in the home, school, and other daily settings. In rating this indicator, reviewers consider the effectiveness of any safety interventions (i.e. no-contact orders, safety plans, and after-school child/youth supervision plans) put into place to protect the child/youth. Reviewers also consider what informal supports and resources being used to keep the child/youth safe, what protective capacities have been in place that helps the family to better recognize risks of harm and to protect the child in the home and other daily settings from those threats and the reliability of these protective strategies if any are in place.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

Another safety dimension captured through the QSR looks at a **child/youth's safety in terms of their risk to self and others.** Throughout development, a child/youth learns to follow rules, values, norms, and laws established in the home, school, and community, while learning to avoid behaviors and actions that can put themselves or others at risk of harm. This safety indicator assesses the degree to which the child/youth avoids self-endangerment and if the child/youth refrains from using behaviors that may put others at risk of harm. This indicator applies only to children/youth ages three or

older. In assessing this indicator, reviewers may consider if the child has current or a past pattern of self-endangering behaviors or acting as a danger to others and how these behaviors are being managed; if the youth is placed in congregate care or a detention setting, has restraint been used in the past 90 days to prevent harm to self and others; if the child has made suicidal gestures, threatened suicide or had a suicide attempt is a self-harm safety plan in place; and if the youth is involved with the juvenile justice system, is he/she actively participating with the court’s plans and avoiding reoffending.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

Safety Analysis:

With regards to CFSR outcomes related to safety, information obtained through annual CCYA licensing suggests that counties adhere to required CPS and GPS response times in a high percentage of the cases reviews (90 percent and greater). Since January 2015, PA has seen a significant increase in the number of child abuse reports being received by the counties and ChildLine due largely to the changes to the CPSL, many of which took effect December 31, 2014. PA will

continue to monitor GPS and CPS response times to ensure that these are being maintained.

As previously discussed, PA does not have Round 3 performance available on the CFSR safety data indicators related to maltreatment in foster care and repeat maltreatment and therefore cannot provide additional analysis or feedback on these measures. It should be noted that QSR findings provide information that would suggest children are largely being kept safe both in their family homes and foster homes, as well as other settings. PA also tracks and reports annually statistics on reabuse. While these reabuse statistics are not calculated using the same syntax as the federal safety data indicator for repeat maltreatment, they do allow PA to monitor the prevalence of prior abuse of a child or prior history of abuse inflicted by a perpetrator. In 2015 there were 1,865 reports investigated where the victim had been listed in other reports. Of those reports of suspected reabuse, 272 were substantiated. In 2015, substantiated reports of reabuse accounted for seven percent of all substantiated reports of abuse.

Over half of all counties were found to have issues pertaining to risk and safety assessment during annual CCYA licensing inspections conducted in 2016. While for counties on provisional licenses these issues were often identified to be systemic issues, violations found in other counties often tended to be isolated to specific cases. In sharing the safety data with stakeholders, it was noted by county administrators and staff, as well as TA providers that work with the area of safety and risk assessment are struggles for many counties. Stakeholders tended to note that high staff turnover has led to an influx of new caseworkers who must learn to correctly implement the safety and risk assessment processes. **Looking at PA's current risk and** safety assessment process has been identified as a priority for the safety sub-committee which will be convened under the PA Child Welfare Council.

Permanency Outcomes

❖ *CFSR Permanency Data Indicators*

Review of the new CFSR federal permanency indicators shows PA is currently meeting or exceeding two out of the five indicators.

Federal Permanency Indicator #1 (Permanency within 12 months) is defined as follows: *Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, what percent are discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care?* As seen in Figure 11, the proportion of children discharging to permanency within 12 months does not meet the national standard. Currently, this performance would require PA to complete a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in this area for the CFSR.

Figure 11. Federal Permanency Indicator #1

Permanency in 12 Months			
Cohort: Children entering care in a 12-month period			
12-month period: 2013B and 2014A			
National Standard	40.5%	PA Risk Adjusted Performance	36.2%

Data Source: AFCARS, Workbook on State Performance Provided by ACF September 2016

Federal Permanency Indicator #2 (Permanency in 12-23 months) is defined as follows: *Of all children in foster care on the first day of a 12-month period who had been in foster care (in that episode) between 12 and 23 months, what percent discharged from foster care to permanency within 12 months of the first day of the period?* Currently, this performance would require PA to complete a PIP in this area for the CFSR.

Figure 12. Federal Permanency Indicator #2

Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12-13 Months			
Cohort: Children in care 12-23 months as of the 1 st day of a 12 month period			
12-month period: 2015B and 2016A			
National Standard	43.6%	PA Risk Adjusted Performance	38.5%

Data Source: AFCARS, Workbook on State Performance Provided by ACF September 2016

Federal Permanency Indicator #3 (Permanency in 24+ months) is defined as follows: *Of all children in foster care on the first day of a 12-month period who had been in foster care (in that episode) for 24 months or more, what percent discharged to permanency within 12 months of the first day?* **While PA's current performance does not meet the national standard, the risk adjusted performance is considered to be not significantly different from the national standard.** Therefore, current PA performance would not require a PIP in this area for the CFSR.

Figure 13. Federal Permanency Indicator #3

Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 24 Months or More			
Cohort: Children in care 24 months as of the 1 st day of a 12 month period			
12-month period: 2015B and 2016A			
National Standard	30.3%	PA Risk Adjusted Performance	30.8%

Data Source: AFCARS, Workbook on State Performance Provided by ACF September 2016

Federal Permanency Indicator #4 (Re-Entry) is defined as follows: *Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period who were discharged within 12 months to reunification, living with a relative, or guardianship, what percent re-enter foster care within 12 months of their discharge?* As seen in Figure 14, the proportion of children re-entering care does not meet the national standard. Based upon this performance in this area, PA would be required to do a PIP in this area for the CFSR. PA made reduction of re-entries into care within 12 months an area of improvement to work on as part of the 2015-2019 CFSP.

Figure 14. Federal Permanency Indicator #4

Re-entry to foster care in 12 months			
Cohort: Children entering care in a 12-month period and exiting within 12 months			
12-month period: 2013B and 2014A			
National Standard	8.3%	PA Observed Performance	16.3%

Data Source: AFCARS, Workbook on State Performance Provided by ACF September 2016.

The final Federal Permanency Indicator, Placement Stability, is defined as follows: *Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, what is the rate of placement moves per day of foster care?* As seen in Figure 15, PA currently meets the national standard for this measure. It is important to note this measure only counts placement moves, the initial removal placement is not counted. If a child entered care and remained in the same placement, that child would have zero placement moves.

Figure 15. Federal Permanency Indicator #5

Placement Stability			
Cohort: Children entering foster care in a 12-month period			
12-month period: 2015B and 2016A			
National Standard	4.12 placement moves per day	PA Risk Adjusted Performance	3.66 placement moves per day

Data Source: AFCARS, Workbook on State Performance Provided by ACF September 2016.

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

- ❖ *CFSR Item 4: Is the child in foster care in a stable placement and were any changes in the **child’s placement in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s)**?*

Data analysis suggests that PA has made noticeable improvement in the area of placement stability. Review of data packages provided to counties for their NBPB preparation shows that from 2010-2014, PA saw a 20% increase in the proportion of children found to have placement stability (defined as having two or fewer placement settings over the entire removal episode). Data collected during the QSRs also provides an opportunity to evaluate performance around stability of placement and ensuring changes in **the child’s placement are in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s)**. QSR indicator “Stability” allows reviewers to rate the degree to which the child/youth’s daily living and learning arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions.

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Outcome:

[OCYF Bulletin 3130-12-03 \(Concurrent Planning\)](#)

[OCYF Bulletin 3130-10-02 \(PLC\)](#)

[55 Pa Code §3130.67 \(Placement planning\)](#)

[55 Pa Code §3130.71 \(Placement reviews\)](#)

[The Juvenile Act § 6351\(f\)\(1-8\)](#)

In evaluating performance on the “Stability” indicator, QSR reviewers may consider not only how many placement settings the child has had in the past 12 months, but whether these changes were planned and if they were made to unite the child/youth with siblings or relatives, move to a less restrictive level of care, or make progress towards a planned permanency outcome. This permanency indicator has two sub-indicators: **one looks at stability within the child’s living arrangement** while the other looks at **stability within the child’s school** setting. As seen in Figure 16, the proportion of cases in which stability of living arrangement has been acceptable has remained fairly steady, averaging at around 61 percent over the course of the past six rounds of QSRs.

Past PA Performance on Permanency Outcome #1

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was also determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

Figure 16. Stability: Sub-Indicator Living Arrangement

	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI
Percentage of Cases Rated as Acceptable	60%	54%	69%	59%	58%	67%

Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

- ❖ *CFSR Item 5: Did the agency establish appropriate permanency goals for the child in a timely manner?*

In establishing permanency goal plans, county agencies follow the hierarchy of preferred goals as specified in §6351(f) (1) of the Juvenile Act. **At each permanency hearing, the court must determine the permanency goal “best suited to the safety, protection and physical, mental and moral welfare of the child”.** PA’s Juvenile Act, in complying with the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) identifies the hierarchy of permanency goals for children and youth in the custody of a county agency as return to parent, adoption, permanent legal custodianship, permanent placement with a fit and willing relative or another planned living arrangement intended to be permanent.

An information source available that aids in understanding performance around establishing permanency goals in a timely manner comes from data collected through the form CY-890, which is completed for all children eligible for SWAN services. During the first quarter of 2016 (reporting period January 1 –

March 31) data from the CY-890s showed a total of 2,625 children were registered as having a goal of adoption, which is the next preferable permanency goal to pursue once return to parent has been ruled out. The length of time to the establishment of the goal of adoption broken down by race/ethnicity is found in Figure 17 below. The data shows that a little under a quarter (22 percent) of the children with a goal of adoption had established this goal in less than six months and nearly half (49 percent) within a year.

Figure 17. Length of Time to Primary Goal of Adoption

Length of Time from Goal to Termination	Black/ African American	White	Multi- Racial	Other	Hispanic	Total
Under 6 months	186	343	50	8	103	587
6 months to 1 year	295	352	46	11	81	704
1 year to 18 months	192	224	35	4	47	455
18 months to 2 years	95	140	30	2	41	267
2 years to 3 years	33	41	8	4	10	86
3 years to 4 years	84	87	20	14	29	205
4 years to 5 years	36	42	7	0	9	85
Over 5 years	90	108	20	18	20	236

Data Source: CY-890, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries/FDR, April 2016

- ❖ *CFSR Item 6: Did the agency make concerted efforts to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption or other planned permanent living arrangement for the child?*

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) requires that county children and youth agencies make reasonable efforts to finalize permanency plans as soon as a child enters substitute care, and that they be diligent in identifying a permanent family for the child. To that end, concurrent planning is acknowledged in ASFA as a best practice for achieving permanency and stability for a child. Concurrent planning is required in PA for all dependent children in out-of-home placement. Effective July 1, 2015 all children entering foster care with a goal of reunification were required to have a concurrent plan for permanency established within 90 days of their placement. Effective January 1, 2016 all children who were already in out-of-home care were required to have a

concurrent plan for permanency, regardless of their court-ordered permanency goal. Data collected during the QSRs shows that over the past six rounds, the percentage of children with no concurrent goal established decreased from a high of 47% during Round I to a low of 3% during Round VI. The table below also shows that QSR participating counties assigned a primary permanency goal and followed appropriate goal hierarchy for out-of-home cases, with the substantial number of cases has a permanency goal for returning home, followed by adoption.

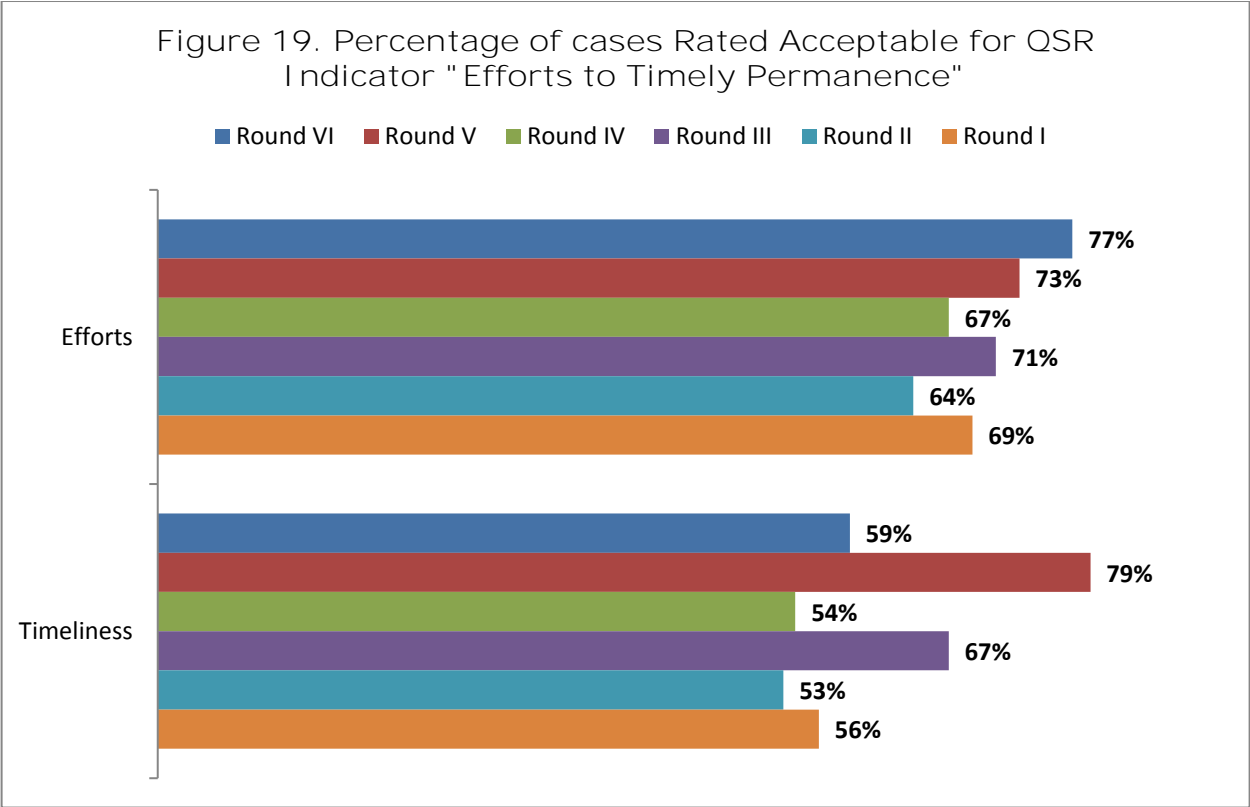
Figure 18. Primary and Concurrent Permanency Goals, QSR Rounds I -VI

Primary Permanency Goal	Round One #	Round One %	Round Two #	Round Two %	Round Three #	Round Three %	Round Four #	Round Four %	Round Five #	Round Five %	Round Six #	Round Six %
Remain in the home	38	38%	65	42%	82	57%	103	57%	37	60%	42	59%
Return home	37	37%	49	32%	32	22%	42	23%	18	29%	19	27%
Adoption	5	5%	8	5%	13	9%	19	10%	5	8%	6	8%
Permanent legal custodian/Subsidized legal custodian	5	5%	7	5%	1	1%	9	5%	0	0%	1	1%
Placement with fit and willing relative	0	0%	5	3%	1	1%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Other planned placement intended to be permanent/APPLA	12	12%	21	14%	12	8%	6	3%	1	2%	3	4%
No primary goal established	2	2%	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%	0	0%	0	0%

Concurrent Permanency Goal	Round One #	Round One %	Round Two #	Round Two %	Round Three #	Round Three %	Round Four #	Round Four %	Round Five #	Round Five %	Round Six #	Round Six %
Return home	1	2%	2	2%	3	5%	3	4%	1	4%	0	0%
Adoption	15	25%	24	27%	28	43%	29	38%	9	36%	24	34%
Permanent legal custodian/Subsidized legal custodian	3	5%	5	6%	6	9%	12	16%	4	16%	1	1%
Placement with fit and willing relative	7	12%	14	16%	12	18%	15	19%	3	12%	10	14%
Other planned placement intended to be permanent/APPLA	5	8%	10	11%	5	8%	6	8%	3	12%	1	1%
Out-of-Home Cases with no concurrent goal established	28	47%	35	39%	11	17%	12	16%	5	20%	1	3%

Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

In looking at the efforts of the agency to achieve permanency for children, the QSR provides a source of data to evaluate performance through the indicator **"Efforts to Timely Permanence."** This indicator rates **"efforts"** for both in-home and out-of-home cases, but rates **"timeliness"** for out-of-home cases only. This indicator looks at the degree to which current efforts by system agents for achieving safe case closure (consistent with the long-term view) show a pattern of diligence and urgency necessary for timely attainment of permanency with sustained adequate functioning of the child/youth and family following cessation of protective supervision. In rating this indicator, reviewers are asked to consider the primary and concurrent goals for the child and whether they will achieve a forever family; the frequency with which attention and action are being directed towards providing timely and adequate services for meeting safe case closure requirements; were those with legal rights to the child/youth identified, were permanent placement resources identified and were comprehensive assessments done; and if appropriate in the case, what is the prognosis for successful reunification and what progress is being made on the concurrent plan.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

As seen in Figure 19 above, the percentage of cases rated as acceptable on the efforts sub-indicator has trended towards improvement over the past six rounds of QSRs, ranging from a low of 64% in Round II to a high of 77% in

Round VI. The timeliness sub-indicator for out-of-home cases has ranged from a low of 53% in Round II to a high of 79% in Round V.

Permanency was also a topic that was noted during QSR focus groups with caseworkers in three western region counties. It was noted in one focus group that caseworkers felt the agency and the courts have a better understanding and focus on permanency than in the past. In two counties, caseworkers focused discussion related to concurrent planning. Caseworkers in one focus group discussed how concurrent planning from the first placement has helped to shorten the time for some children in placement and that foster parents are being trained and supported to understand permanency much more. In terms of concurrent planning, caseworkers discussed some benefits they have seen related to increased use of family finding, diligent searches and Family Group Decision Making conferences in moving children towards permanency. Caseworkers also referenced full disclosure and being upfront with families from the start can help better lay the groundwork for moving children towards permanency. Caseworkers also discussed the role of the court in the process and how court continuances can sometimes be frustrating in working to achieve permanency for children. The Dependency Bench Book, developed by the Administrative Office of Children in the Courts (AOPC), was identified by caseworkers in one focus group as a critical resource that helps better educate the courts on working towards permanency.

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

- ❖ *CFSR Item 7: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings?*

OCYF Bulletin 3130-12-01 outlines provisions set forth in Act 115 of 2010 requiring that reasonable efforts be made to place siblings together or, if not possible, to facilitate ongoing contacts between siblings, unless contraindicated for safety or well-being reasons. OCYF policy also requires counties maintain in the case record written rationale for not placing siblings

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Outcome:

[42 Pa C.S. Chapter 63 §6351\(b.1\)](#)

[OCYF Bulletin 3130-12-01](#)

Past PA Performance on Permanency Outcome #2

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was also determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

together. Compliance with OCYF regulations regarding placement with siblings in foster care is monitored during the annual licensing reviews. Additionally, during court reviews, the permanency review order identifies if the agency made concerted efforts to ensure siblings in foster care are placed together unless separation is necessary. During annual licensing inspection summaries conducted during calendar year 2015 and 2016, there were no placement records cited with regards to compliance with sibling placement requirements.

Data collected during the QSR process via the QSR Roll-Up Sheet does identify, for out-of-home cases reviewed, how many of the target child/youth's siblings are in out of home care and how many siblings in out-of-home care are residing in the same out-of-home placement as the child/youth. As seen in Figure 20, when an out-of-home focus child also had at least one sibling also in care, at least one of the siblings was placed in the same setting for at least half of all cases reviewed during each round of the QSR.

Figure 20. Placement with Siblings for Children in Out-of-Home Care

	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI
Cases with Siblings In Care	42	48	35	47	29	18
Cases with Siblings Placed Together	37	37	20	31	15	12
% Siblings Placed Together	88.10	77.08	57.14	65.96	51.72	66.67

Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

- ❖ *CFSR Item 8: Did the agency make concerted efforts to ensure visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father and siblings was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members?*

OCYF regulations set requirements for visits between children in foster care with fathers, mothers, and siblings. OCYF Bulletin 3130-12-01 outlines provisions set forth in Act 115 of 2010 that require sibling visitation to occur no less frequently than twice a month as a minimum standard. OCYF regulations at 55 PA Code §3130.68 outline requirements that the county agency shall provide the opportunity for visits between the child and parents as frequently as possible, but no less frequently than once every two weeks unless certain exception criteria outlined in statute apply. Compliance with visitation regulations is monitored through review of placement records during annual CCYA licensing inspection. Per Figure 21 below, the lack of citations noted in relation to these

provisions indicates counties are successfully meeting these visitation requirements. Of the cases cited below during 2016 licensing inspections, the majority of the citations were issued in relation to failure to provide documentation or timely notice to parents about the visitation schedule. In only one case was a county cited for not providing the child with an opportunity to visit with the parent or to have other contact.

Figure 21. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Parent and Sibling Visitation

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	7 cases (3 counties)	2 cases (1 county)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	3 cases (3 counties)	3 cases (3 counties)
Total Cases Cited	10	5
Total Placement Cases Reviewed	503	425
Total Counties Without Citation	61	56
Rate of Compliance (%)	98.01	98.82

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

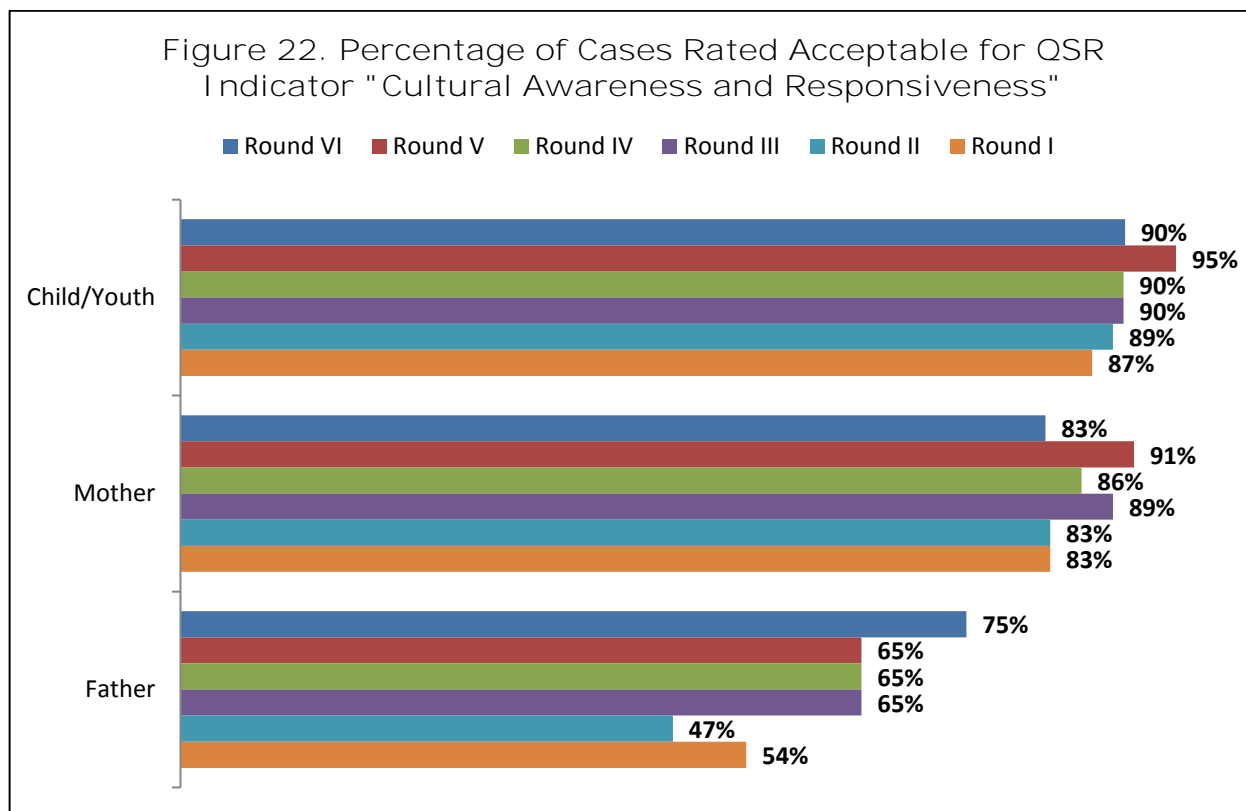
- ❖ *CFSR Item 9: Did the agency make concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school and friends?*

When placement of a child becomes necessary for the child’s safety and well-being, county children and youth agencies are expected to choose placement locations that are as proximal to a child’s family, school, and community as possible, as long as doing so is not contrary to the child’s best interests. If not possible, the agency must document in the child’s case record why such a placement was not pursued, and how the chosen placement best serves the child.

Another measure from the QSR that helps evaluate PA performance related to Permanency Outcome #2 comes from the indicator **“Cultural Awareness and Responsiveness.”** This indicator evaluates the degree to which any significant cultural issues, family beliefs and customs of the child/youth and family have been identified and addressed in practice and that the natural, cultural or community supports appropriate for the child/youth and family are being provided. In rating this indicator, reviewers consider whether service providers respect family beliefs and customs, whether the team has adequate knowledge of cultural issues relevant to service delivery for the child/youth and family and

whether any cultural differences are impeding working relationships with this child/youth and family.

As seen in Figure 22 below, the cultural awareness and responsiveness to both children and mothers have been consistently acceptable from round to round, and there has even been slight improvement over time from Round I to Round VI. While improvement has been made in relation to cultural awareness and responsiveness of fathers, this group is also consistently less likely to be rated within the acceptable range compared to the other, child/youth and mother.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

- ❖ *CFSR Item 10: Did the agency make concerted efforts to place the child with relatives when appropriate?*

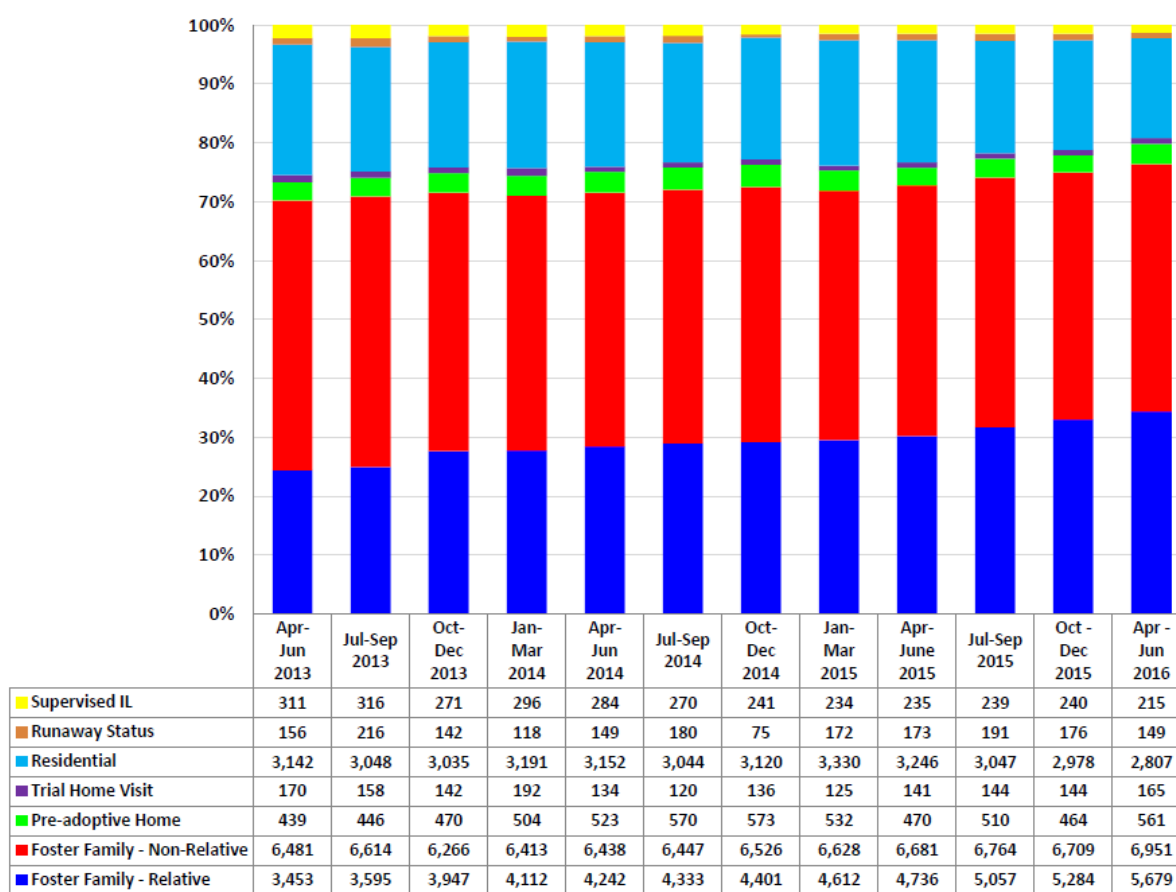
Ensuring the preservation of family relationships is critical to helping children achieve and maintain permanency. **PA's Juvenile Act allows for children** to be placed with any individual, including any relative, who after study, is found to be qualified to receive the child. Formal kinship care exists when the CCYA has legal custody of the child and out-of-home placement is made with a kinship caregiver who is an approved foster parent by a licensed foster family care agency. Informal kinship care exists when an arrangement is made by the

parents for placement of their child with a kinship caregiver. Formal kinship caregivers must be offered and are eligible to receive foster care maintenance payments if they meet certain requirements. DHS fully supports the use of kinship care, as it is designed to promote the following objectives:

- **Preserving family connections through placement with “fit and willing”** relatives and other individuals with whom the parents or the child have an existing relationship who are providing care for the child who cannot remain with his/her parents.
- Assuring that kinship caregivers are able to make informed decisions regarding their commitment to the child by providing them with information about community services, public benefits, concurrent planning and the foster parent approval process.
- Supporting formal kinship caregivers with placement services, resource **parent orientation and training that recognizes the caregiver’s knowledge of** the child and family situation, the ability to receive foster care maintenance payments and in cases where they provide permanency to a child through adoption or permanent legal custodianship (PLC), the ability to receive adoption assistance or have the PLC subsidized if eligibility criteria are met.
- Providing post-permanency services to formal kinship caregivers as a unit of service through the SWAN prime contract.

Review of placement setting data for PA children in out of home care shows that the percentage of children placed in foster care with relatives has increased over the period April 2013-June 2016, with 34.4% of all children in out of home care placed with relatives during the most recent quarter data available, April 2016-June 2016.

Figure 23. Placement Settings for Children in Out of Home Care



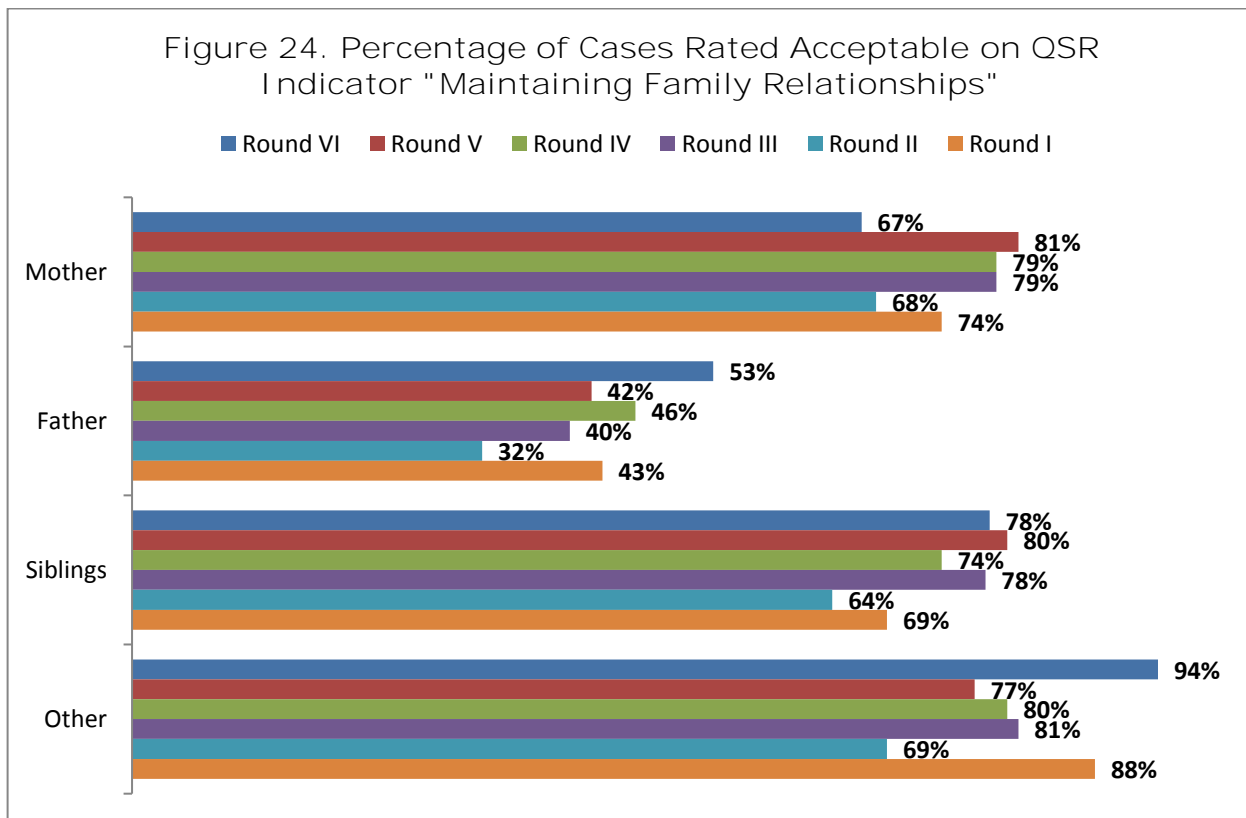
Data Source: AFCARS, DHS Monthly Management Report, December 2016

- ❖ *CFSR Item 11: Did the agency make concerted efforts to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregivers from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation?*

The QSR provides a measure of agency practice with regards to the quality of relationships between the child/youth and his/her family members and other important people in the child/youth’s life through the indicator “Maintaining Family Relationships.” This indicator is measured unless the child/youth is residing with the family member or parental rights have been terminated, or whereabouts are unknown and there is documentation of the agency’s concerted efforts to locate them. This indicator specifically looks at the degree to which interventions are building and maintaining positive interactions and providing emotional support between the child/youth and his/her parents, siblings and

other important people⁷ in the child/youth’s life, when the child/youth and family members are temporarily living away from one another. In rating this indicator, reviewers may consider if family visits and appropriate interactions are occurring and if so, how frequently are they occurring and whether conducive to “quality time” in relationship building; what supports are being provided to parents, resource parents and case planners to facilitate and assist in visits, and if there is an effort to integrate the parents into the child/youth’s life (i.e. doctor’s appointments, teacher conferences at school, sporting events, etc.).

Figure 24 below gives the proportion of applicable cases rated acceptable under the “Maintaining Family Relationships” indicator. It is important to note that fathers are consistently rated lower in this indicator compared to all other relationship types.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

Permanency Summary:

Review of PA performance on the federal permanency data indicators shows that achieving permanency for children who have been in care 24 months

⁷Other important people may include a stepparent, domestic partner, grandparent or other extended family member involved in the family’s life.

or more and placement stability are areas of strength for PA related to permanency. With full implementation of concurrent planning taking effect in 2016, available QSR data shows that counties have shifted towards this practice with a noticeable decline in the number of QSR cases reviewed that are without a concurrent goal. QSR data also provides evidence to suggest that counties who participated in the QSR were generally successful in their efforts to preserve **children's connections to their mother's, siblings and other primary caregiver.** QSR data also suggests **that counties have an awareness of children's** connections to their neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school and friends and attempt to support these connections in a culturally competent manner. AFCARS data also shows that PA has been increasing the percentage of children in out of home care who are placed with a relative caretaker.

Re-entries continue to serve as one of the federal permanency outcomes for which PA performance does not meet national standards. To this end, strategies to address re-**entries remain an important piece of PA's plan for** improvement outlined in the 2015-2019 CFSP. Achievement of permanency within 12 months and 12 to 23 months are two data indicators where PA falls short of the national performance standard. Both re-entries and exits to permanency are areas that OCYF has examined through data analysis and continues to monitor as part of the work with counties safely reducing placements. Another key area that warrants further attention in relation to permanency outcomes that is noted in the QSR data is related to fathers. **In particular, QSR data suggests that children's connections with their fathers are** not being maintained in a high percentage of cases reviewed as part of the QSR. Counties participating in the QSRs continue to identify this as a priority area of improvement and a number of QSR counties have included improving father engagement within their county improvement plans.

Feedback from stakeholders, including counties and TA providers, related to permanency noted that the increase in CPS and GPS reports seen as a result of changes to the CPSL, as well as high caseworker turnover, has an impact on the ability of county agencies to effectively work towards achievement of permanency, with agencies having to shift more resources towards safety and CPS/GPS investigations. Stakeholders identified that the array of services available through the Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN), broad use of family engagement strategies, such as Family Group Decisions Making (FGDM) and use of Permanency Roundtables have been helpful in counties working to achieve permanency outcomes.

Well-Being Outcomes

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

- ❖ *CFSR Item 12: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess the needs of and provide services to children, parents, and foster parents and to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family?*

In order to aid families in developing **capacity to provide for their children's needs**, CCYAs must ensure that the needs of families are properly assessed and identified early in the case planning process and regularly thereafter to track progress. The QSR measures agency practice in **assessment and understanding of the family's needs through the indicator labeled "Assessment and Understanding."** This indicator identifies the degree to which the team has gathered and shared essential information so that members have a **shared, big picture understanding of the child/youth's and family's strengths and needs** based on their underlying issues, safety threats/factors, risk factors, protective capacities, culture, hopes and dreams. This indicator also attempts to measure if the team has developed an understanding of what things must change in order for the child/youth and family to live safely together, achieve timely **permanence and improve the child/family's well-being and functioning.** In rating this indicator, reviewers consider what information, observations, formal assessments or evaluation have been obtained to further understand the child/youth and family and how well the team analyzed the assessments and draw their conclusions.

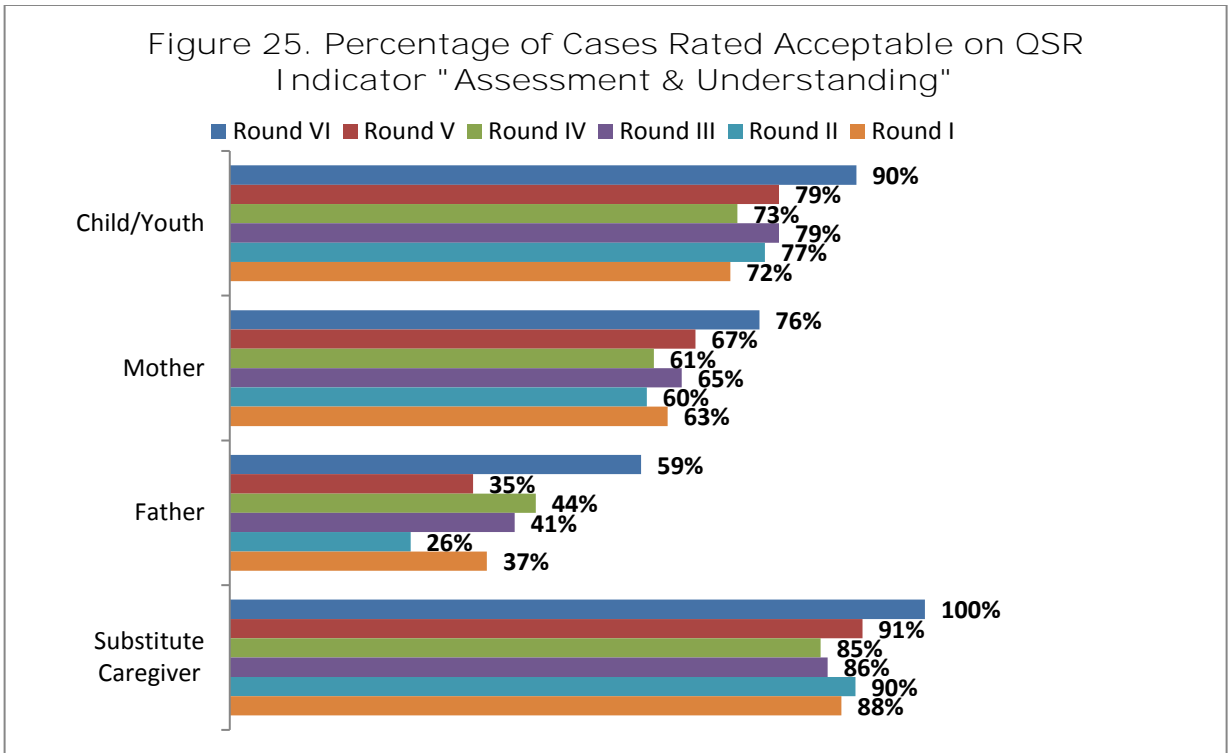
As shown in Figure 25 below, over the course of six **rounds of QSRs**, the indicator **"Assessment and Understanding"** has been rated acceptable in a large percentage of cases reviewed for sub-indicators child/youth and substitute caregiver. Similar to other practice performance indicators, fathers are rated acceptable in a much smaller percentage of cases.

Past PA Performance on Well-Being Outcome #1
PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was also determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Outcome:

OCYF Bulletin 3490-08-05

55 Pa Code §3490.61
(Supervisory review and child contacts)



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

In addition to examining the degree to which families are assessed and their needs understood, the QSR also looks at the adequacy of service provision to the child/youth and family. The QSR sub-indicator **"Intervention Adequacy"** looks at the degree to which planned interventions, services and supports being provided have sufficient power and beneficial effect to meet near-term needs and achieve the conditions necessary for safe case closure. In rating a case on this indicator, reviewers consider whether the level of intensity, duration, coordination and continuity commensurate with what is required to meet the near-term needs and conditions for safe case closure. Reviewers also consider whether the planned interventions, services, and supports mitigate active safety threats; achieve timely permanency; enhance protective capacities and reduce risk. As seen in the table below, intervention adequacy appears to be an area that has consistently been a strength across all six rounds of the QSRs.

Figure 26. Intervention Adequacy Sub-Indicator

	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI
Percentage of Cases Rated as Acceptable	70%	76%	83%	77%	81%	80%

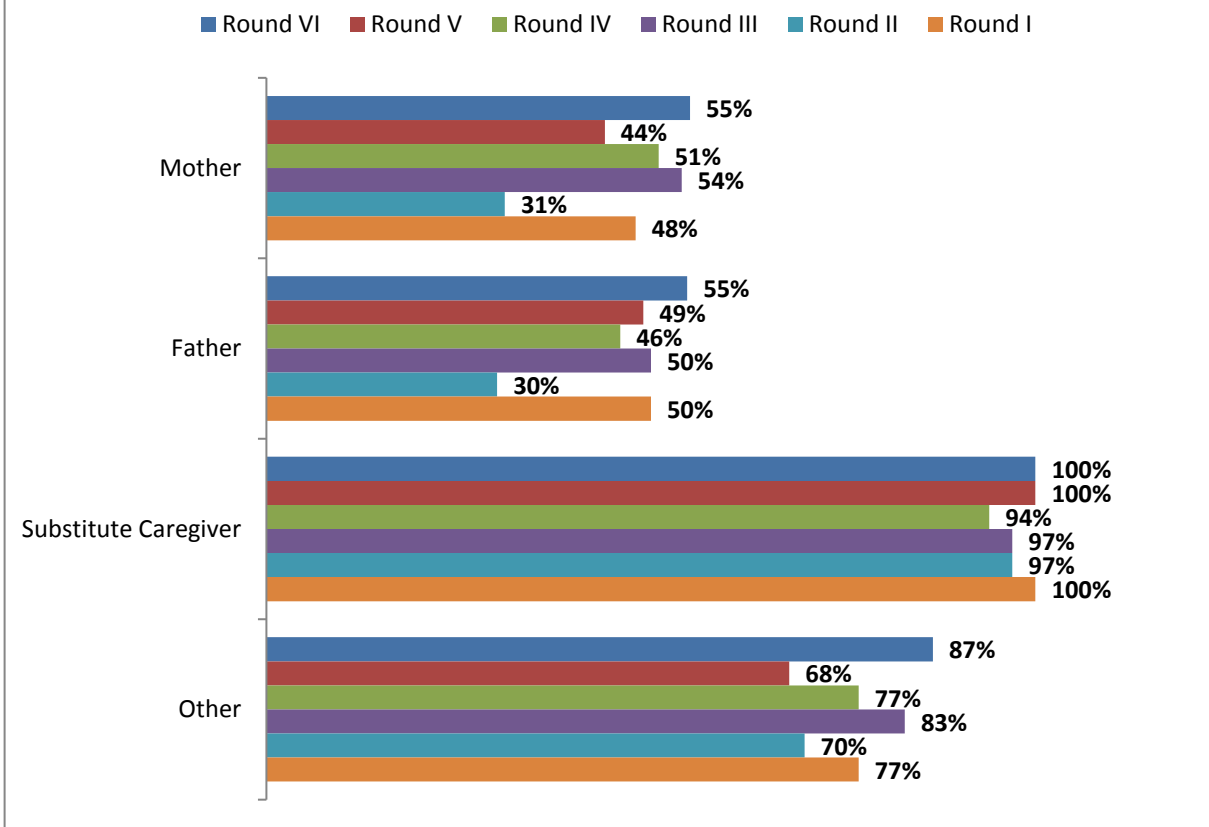
Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

Further breakdown of the QSR data from Round 6 shows that of all 71 **cases rated on the “Intervention Adequacy” sub-indicator**, nearly 50.7% of all cases (n=36) were given the most optimal rating possible on the QSR scale.

To understand whether services are appropriately improving the ability of families to meet the needs of their children, the QSR also includes a child, youth, and family status indicator that measures parent and caregiver functioning. The **indicator “Parent and Caregiver Functioning” measures the degree to which the parent(s), other significant adult and/or substitute caregiver(s), is/are willing and able to provide the child/youth with the assistance, protection, supervision, and support necessary for daily living.** This indicator also assesses if, in the event added supports are required in the home to meet the needs of the child/youth and assist the parent(s) or caregiver(s), the added supports are meeting the needs.

In rating this indicator, QSR reviewers take into account a number of different factors. Reviewers may consider, among many things, whether the parent(s) and/or substitute caregiver(s) have the ability, understanding, and willingness to engage in informal and formal support systems; do the parent(s) and/or substitute caregiver(s) demonstrate that they have and actively use knowledge, skills, and emotional capacity to take care of the child/youth and protect the child/youth from harm and do they respond in ways that **appropriately meet the child’s needs and the child/youth’s parent(s) and/or substitute caregiver have sufficient income and resources to provide basic necessities adequately, reliably and consistently on a daily basis such as food, safe shelter, clothing, transportation, health care, and child care.**

Figure 27. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on QSR Indicator "Parent/Caregiver Functioning"



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

Parent/caregiver functioning for mothers and fathers is an indicator that has been identified as having some of the consistently lowest percentages of acceptable ratings throughout all six rounds of the QSRs. Substitute caregivers, however, have consistently been rated acceptable on functioning in a high percentage of cases. This may suggest that when children/youth are placed with another caregiver, this individual has the skills and is receiving the supports necessary to function so as to keep the child/youth safe and meet their needs.

A review of data from the National Youth in Transition Database provides another source of information for identifying that services are being provided to youth necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues **relevant to the agency's involvement with the youth**. Assessing and identifying the service needs of youth and linking them to services that will prepare them for transitioning into adulthood is a critical step towards successful case closure. Figure 28 below provides a comparison of the NYTD Served Foster Care Population to the total AFCARS population of children ages 14 and older. The NYTD Served Foster Care Population is comprised of any youth receiving at least one service paid for through the Independent Living (IL) program. The figure

also provides a breakdown of the specific service categories and utilization among the NYTD Served Population. The chart demonstrates that approximately a quarter of all IL eligible youth receive some type of IL service during the course of a reporting period.

Figure 28. Comparison of NYTD Served Foster Care Population to the Overall AFCARS Population of Children Ages 14+.

	2013- A #	2013- A %	2013- B #	2013- B %	2014- A #	2014- A %	2014- B #	2014- B %	2015- A #	2015- A %	2015- B #	2015- B %
Total AFCARS Served Population	18,614	--	18,958	--	19,533	--	20,260	--	19,799	--	20,368	--
AFCARS Population < 14 Years Old	7,670	--	7,677	--	7,855	--	7,843	--	7,472	--	7,625	--
Total Served NYTD FC Population	1,694	22%	1,910	25%	1,971	25%	2,028	26%	1,846	25%	2,002	26%
Independent Living	952	12%	907	12%	1,305	17%	1,338	17%	1,271	17%	1,366	18%
Academic Support	909	12%	970	13%	889	11%	882	11%	921	12%	998	13%
Post-Secondary	762	10%	761	10%	812	10%	825	11%	815	11%	743	10%
Career Preparation	851	11%	1,053	14%	1,171	15%	1,311	17%	1,165	16%	1,194	16%
Employment Programs	751	10%	780	10%	689	9%	718	9%	632	8%	660	9%
Budget Financial	919	12%	1,029	13%	1,083	14%	1,208	15%	1,067	14%	1,159	15%
Housing Education	910	12%	1,075	14%	1,039	13%	1,135	14%	1,015	14%	1,104	14%
Health Education	1,024	13%	1,288	17%	1,234	16%	1,354	17%	1,237	17%	1,400	18%
Family Support	929	12%	1,013	13%	787	10%	846	11%	840	11%	951	12%
Mentoring	382	5%	482	6%	266	3%	331	4%	302	4%	291	4%
Supervised Independent	205	3%	189	2%	199	3%	185	2%	184	2%	215	3%
Room/Board	107	1%	166	2%	222	3%	323	4%	194	3%	199	3%
Education Financial	251	3%	325	4%	392	5%	459	6%	333	4%	339	4%
Other Financial	532	7%	620	8%	654	8%	647	8%	552	7%	695	9%

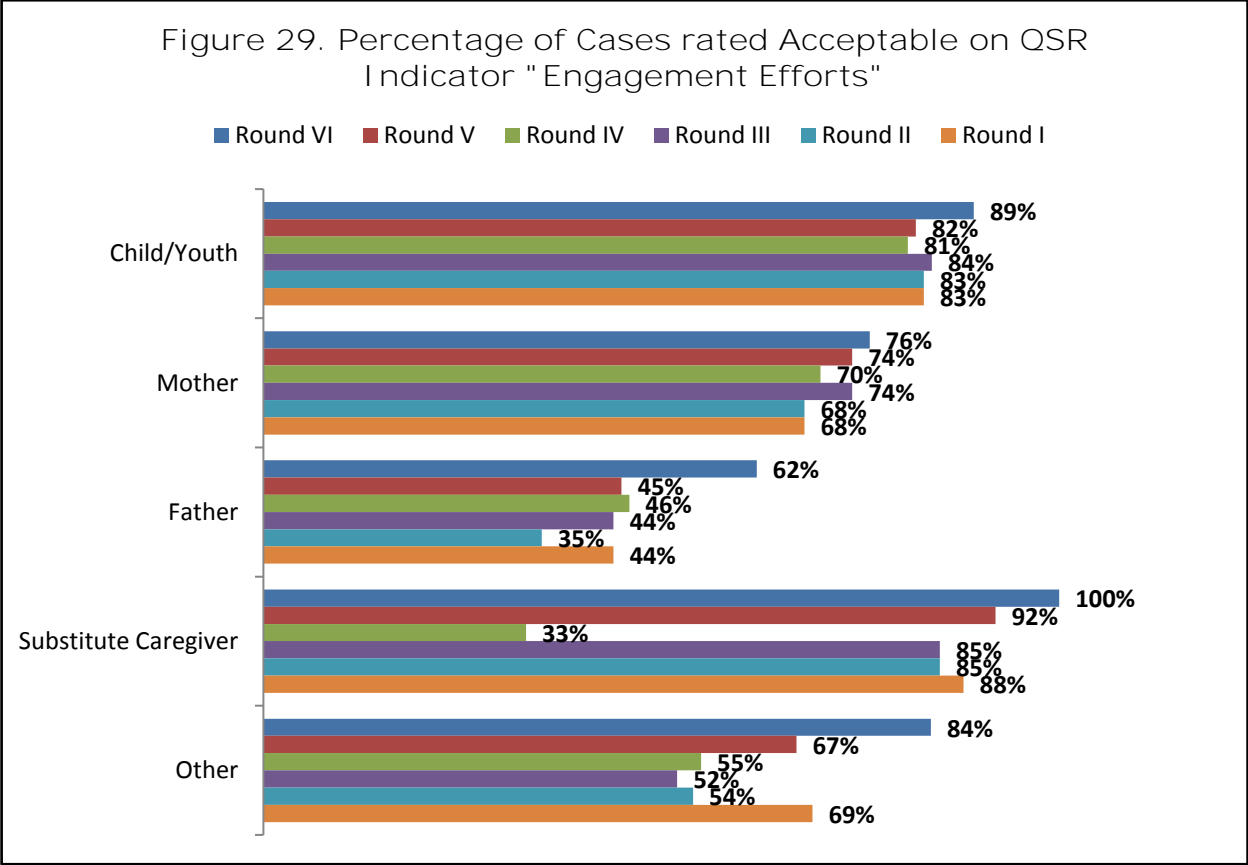
Data Source: AFCARS and NYTD, HZA, April 2016

- ❖ *CFSR Item 13: Did the agency make concerted efforts to involve the parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis?*

Another important component of Well-Being Outcome #1 looks at efforts to engage the child and parents in the case planning process. Child and family involvement in the case planning process helps ensure that services identified to **improve family functioning are appropriately tailored to meet the family's need. Engagement of children, youth, and families is a critical component of PA's Child Welfare Practice model** and formalized engagement practices, such as Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and Family Team Conferencing (FTC) have become a critical part of child welfare practice throughout PA.

The QSR helps to assess family involvement in the case planning process **across three different indicators. The first indicator, "Engagement," looks at the degree to which those working with the child/youth and family are finding family**

members who can provide support and permanency for the child/youth. This indicator also looks at whether those working with the child/youth and family are developing and maintaining a culturally competent, mutually beneficial trust-based working relationship with the child/youth and family, are receptive, dynamic, and willing to make adjustments in scheduling and meeting locations to accommodate family participation in the service process, including case planning and offering transportation and child care supports, where necessary, to increase family participation in planning and support efforts. In rating this indicator, QSR reviewers take into consideration what outreach and engagement strategies team members are using to build a working partnership with the child/youth and family, whether the child/youth and family report being treated with dignity and respect and how the child/youth and family are involved in the ongoing assessment of their needs, circumstances and progress. Reviewers are also instructed, when applicable, to consider what efforts are made by congregate care providers in involving the child/youth and family in treatment planning.

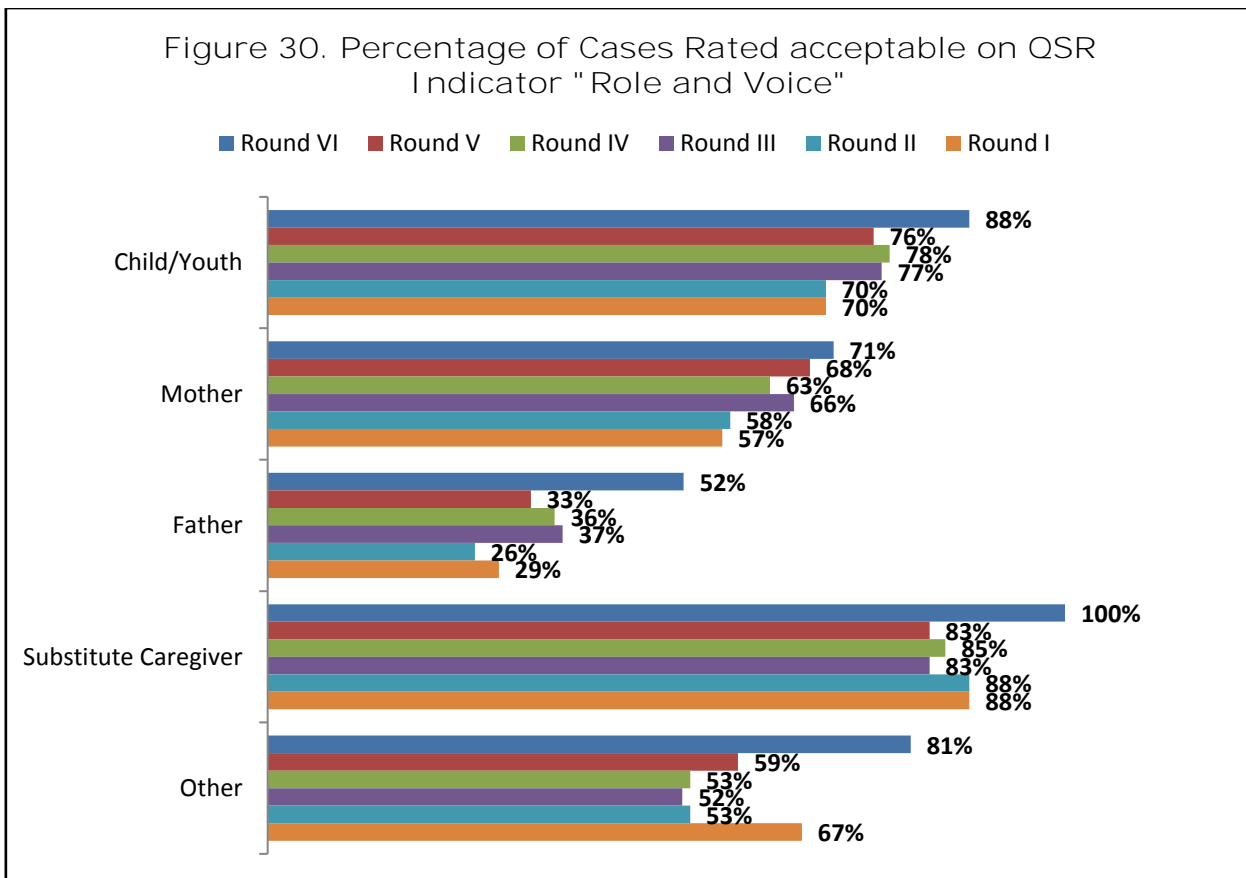


Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

As seen in Figure 29, findings from all six rounds of the QSRs indicate that engagement efforts are rated acceptable for the child/youth or substitute care

giver more often than the mother, father, or other individuals considered to serve a caregiving role. Again, as seen in other indicators, fathers were rated as acceptable on the indicator in a much smaller percentage of cases than all other case members rated.

The second QSR indicator which helps to assess family involvement in the case planning looks at the role and voice of the child/youth and caregivers in the case. QSR indicator "Role and Voice" looks at the degree to which the child/youth, parents, family members, and caregivers are active, ongoing participants (e.g., having a significant role, voice, choice, and influence) in shaping decisions made about child/youth and family strengths and needs, goals, supports, and services. QSR reviewers consider several factors in rating this indicator which include the degree to which the family influences all phases of service, whether the child/youth and family routinely participate in the assessment, planning, monitoring/modification of child/youth and family plans, arrangements and evaluation of results, and to what degree is the family change process owned by family members.



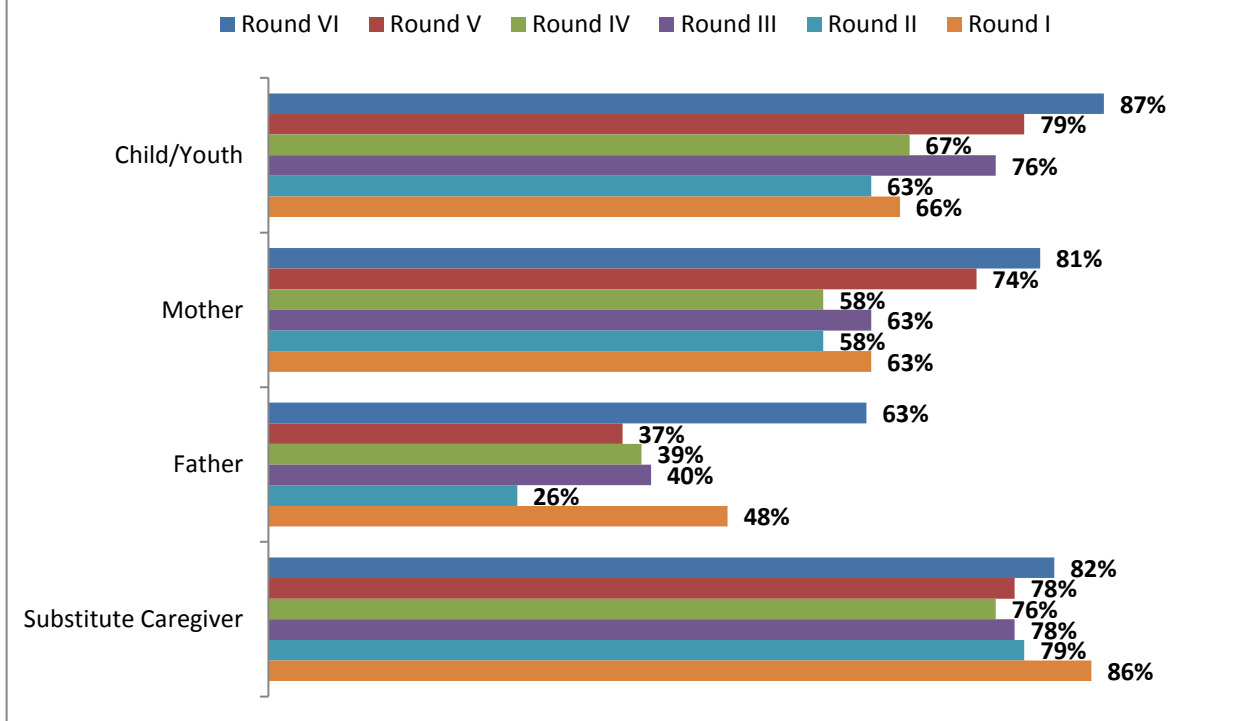
Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016.

In relation to Well-Being Outcome #1, it is also important to note that in rating this indicator, reviewers consider whether the quality of visits between the caseworker and child/youth, mother and father are sufficient to address issues pertaining to the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child/youth and promote achievement of case goals. This requires QSR reviewers to consider the length and location of visits, whether the caseworker sees the child/youth alone or whether parent/foster parent is usually present, the topics discussed during **the visits and if they pertain to the child/youth's needs, services and case goals**, and whether the visits between the caseworker and the father/mother focus on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery and goal achievement.

As seen in Figure 30, of all individuals rated on the **indicator "Role and Voice," the substitute caregiver was rated acceptable most often, followed by the child/youth.** Mothers were rated as acceptable for role and voice in a higher percentage of cases than fathers; however, overall improvement was seen for both mothers and fathers on this indicator over the course of the past six rounds of QSRs.

The third QSR indicator that helps assess family involvement in the case planning **process is "Child/Youth and Family Planning Process."** This indicator attempts to identify the degree to which the planning process is individualized and **matched to child/youth's and family's** present situations, preferences, near-term needs and long-term view for case closure. In rating this indicator, reviewers consider several factors which include how well the child/youth and family are engaged and participating in planning and whether all members of the family team (which includes the family) are involved in the planning process and contributing to plan revisions. As seen in Figure 31, similar to the engagement indicators, the child/youth and substitute caregiver were rated acceptable in a higher percentage of cases than mothers and fathers. Additionally, fathers were rated acceptable on this indicator less often than other case members rated on this indicator.

Figure 31. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on QSR Indicator "Child/Youth and Family Planning Process"



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016.

- ❖ *CFSR Item 14: Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and children sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the children and promote achievement of case goals?*
- ❖ *CFSR Item 15: Were the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the child(ren) sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency and well-being of the child(ren) and promote the achievement of case goals?*

PA continues to monitor caseworker visitation and submit data on the number of visits with children in federally-defined foster care in accordance with the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011. Pennsylvania has been meeting or exceeding the federal measure of 90% since 2009 and since 2007 has continued to far exceed the requirement that a majority of the visits **must occur within the child's primary place of residence.**

OCYF regulations at §3490.61 require that when a case has been accepted for services, the county is required to make face to face contact with the parent(s) and the child as often as necessary for the protection of the child but no less often than:

- (1) Once a week until the case is no longer designated as high-risk by the county agency, if the child remains in or returns to the home in which the abuse occurred and the county agency has determined a high level of risk exists for the case.
- (2) Once a month for six months or case closure when the child is either:
 - a. Placed out of the home or setting in which the abuse occurred.
 - b. Not at a high risk of abuse or neglect.

Additionally, OCYF Bulletin 3490-08-04 outlines specifically the requirements for the frequency and tracking of caseworker visits with children in federally defined foster care.

Adherence to state laws and regulations pertaining to caseworker visitation is monitored during annual licensing inspections of the CCYAs. Figure 32 outlines the number of citations issued for both in-home and placement cases regarding provisions related to caseworker visits with children and families. For licensing inspections occurring during calendar year 2016, one fully licensed county was identified as having five cases where the records were missing monthly visits. For all other counties, the violations were case specific and not identified as linked to any systemic issues.

Figure 32. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Caseworker Visits with Parents and Children

--	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	3 cases (1 county)	3 cases (3 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	9 cases (6 counties)	25 cases (7 counties)
Total Cases Cited	12	28
In-Home Cases	8	11
Placement Cases	4	17
Total Counties Without Citation	60	51

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

OCYF has continued to support CCYAs efforts to improve the quality of caseworker visitation by disseminating caseworker visitation grant funds directly to the counties. Counties have used the grant funding to purchase mobile technology to enable caseworkers to work on plans and other service delivery while in the field with families, to improve visitation centers and visitation

programs, and by engaging in various training opportunities to address trauma informed care, motivational interviewing and visitation coaching.

With regards to **caseworkers'** visits, caseworkers who participated in focus groups through the QSR process noted the importance of caseworker visits in helping move families towards meeting their goals and working to ensure children and youth receive permanency. A key theme that was mirrored across the majority of the caseworker focus groups was that caseworkers would like to spend more time with their families, but feel they are often limited in their ability to do so as a result of the abundance of paperwork they are required to complete.

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

- ❖ **CFSR Item 16: Did the agency make concerted efforts to assess children's educational needs and appropriately address identified needs in case planning and case management activities?**

State regulations require that the child's educational information be maintained in the case record. As part of the case planning process and the delivery of services to the child and family, the worker assists the family in **accessing services to meet the child's** educational needs. State regulations require that children in substitute care be enrolled in, or have access to, education in conformance with state law. If a child is beyond the age of compulsory school attendance, the county agency or placement provider is required to ensure that the child has the opportunity to obtain career counseling or continuing education.

The QSR captures information regarding **meeting children's educational needs through the indicator "Academic Status."** This indicator looks at the degree to which the child/youth, consistent with age and/or ability, is regularly attending school, placed in a grade level consistent with age or developmental level, actively engaged in instructional activities, reading at grade level or IEP expectation level, and meeting requirements for annual promotion and course completion leading to a high school diploma or equivalent. Some of the factors taken into consideration by

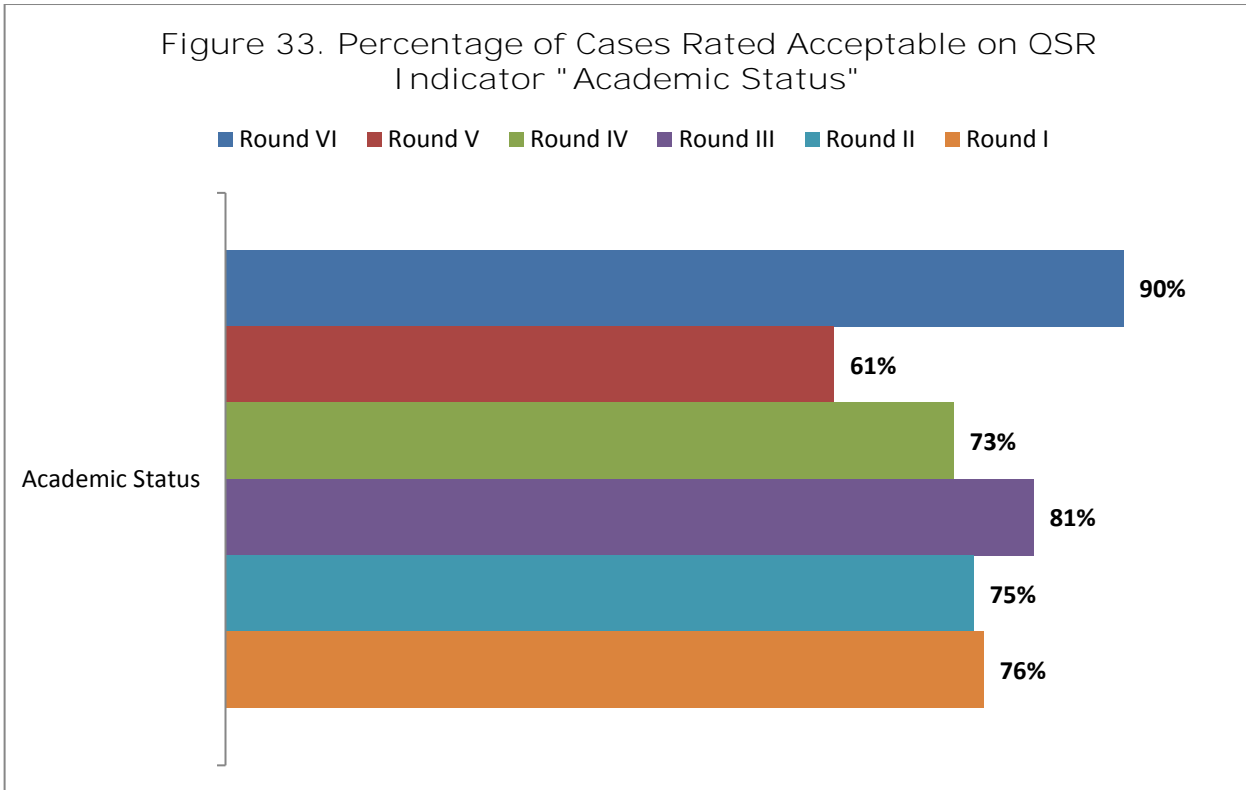
PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Outcome:

[OCYF Bulletin 3130-10-04 \(Educational Stability\)](#)

Past PA Performance on Well-Being Outcome #2

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was also determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

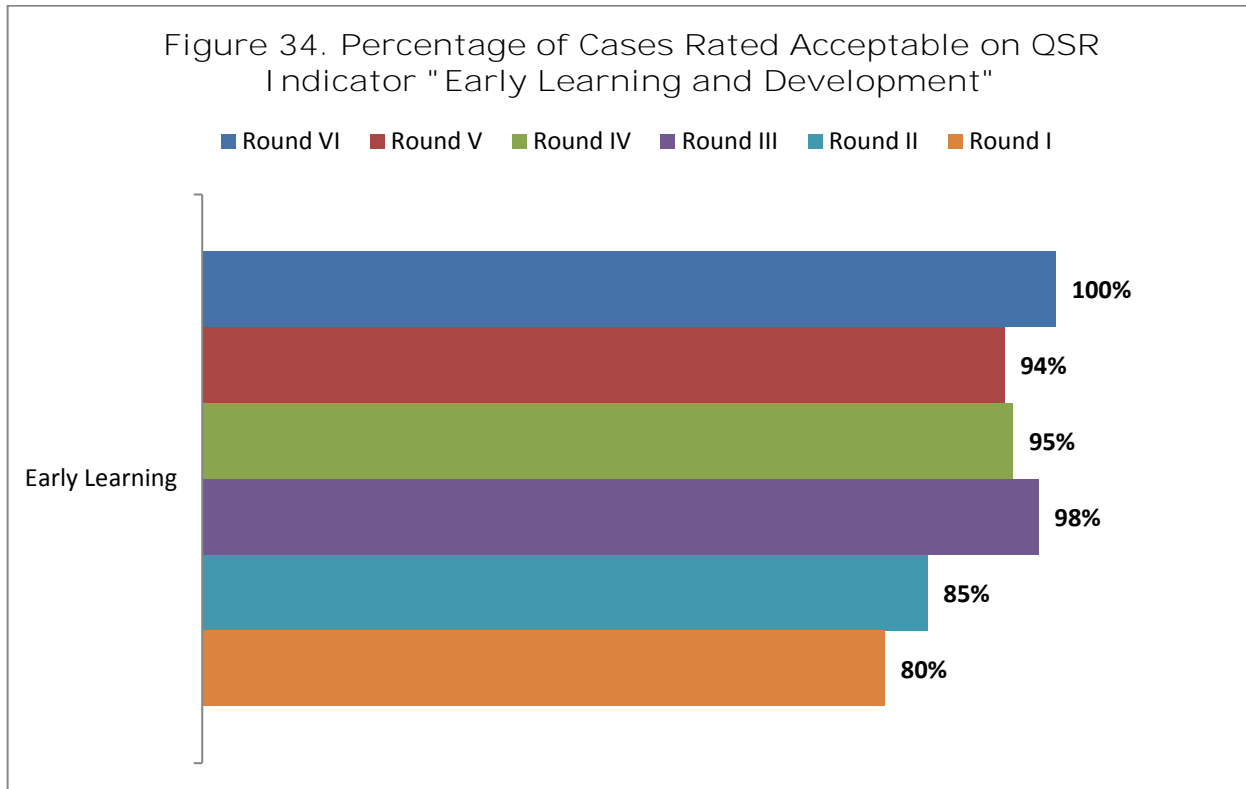
reviewers in assessing performance on this indicator include whether the **child/youth's enrolled in an educational program consistent with age and/or ability**, whether the child/youth actively and consistently engaged in the instructional processes and related activities necessary for acquisition of expected skills, competencies and performance associated with curricular goals and activities and whether the child/youth has been tardy, absent from school without an excuse, truant, suspended or expelled in the last 30 days.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

While the QSR takes into consideration academic status of school age children, the reviews also look at early learning and development outcomes for children eight years of age or younger who are not attending a formal school program. **The indicator "Early Learning and Development" looks at the degree to which a child's developmental status is commensurate with age and developmental capacities and whether the child's developmental status in key domains is consistent with age and/or ability-appropriate expectations.** In rating this indicator, reviewers consider several factors including whether the child has been referred for screening of developmental delay or disability and whether the child appears to be achieving developmental milestones in at or above age-appropriate levels in the areas of social/emotional development, cognitive development, physical/motor development, language development, self-care

skills and school readiness skills. This indicator continues to be one in which counties consistently show strong performance during the QSRs.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016.

OCYF monitors CCYA efforts to ensure that children’s educational needs are being met through the annual licensure process. In particular, licensing looks at county CCYA compliance with educational stability requirements and provisions **that outline requirements that the child’s educational information be obtained and documented in the case record and on the family service plan (FSP) or, if applicable, the child’s permanency plan (CPP).** For annual licensing inspections conducted in calendar year 2015, there were six cases cited across three counties (all under provisional licenses) in relation to lack of educational **documentation in the case file or missing educational information on the child’s permanency plan.** There were no citations issued for any failure by the counties to meet requirements regarding educational stability. For licensing inspections that occurred in calendar year 2016, one provisionally licensed county was cited on three cases for failure to include required educational information on the placement amendment.

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

- ❖ *CFSR Item 17: Did the agency address the physical health needs of children, including dental health needs?*

PA foster care regulations establish requirements and time frames for medical and dental care for children entering care, as well as children in ongoing foster home care. A child is to receive a medical appraisal by a licensed physician **within 60 days of the child's admission to foster family care**, unless the child has had an appraisal within the last 90 days and the results of the appraisal are available. The appraisal includes: a **review of the child's health history; physical examination of the child; and laboratory or diagnostic test as indicated by the examining physician, including those required to detect communicable disease.** Children placed in residential and day treatment facilities are required to have a health examination within 15 days after admission or more frequency as specific at specific ages in the periodicity scheduled recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Additionally, children in these facilities ages three years or older are required to have a dental examination performed by a licensed dentist and teeth cleaning performed at least semi-annually. If the child has not had a dental examination and teeth cleaning within six months prior to admission, a dental examination and teeth cleaning must be performed within 30 days after admission.

During the QSR, as part of the measures used to examine child well-being, reviewers are asked to **assess the child's physical health.** Under the QSR indicator "Physical Health" reviewers are asked to rate the degree to which the child/youth is achieving and maintaining his/her optimum health status or if the child/youth has a serious or chronic physical illness, the

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Outcome:

[55 Pa Code §3700.51](#)
(Medical and dental care)

[55 Pa Code 3130.67\(v-viii\)](#)
Placement planning

[55 Pa Code §3800.141](#)
(Child health and safety assessment)

[55 Pa Code §3800.143](#)
(Child health examination)

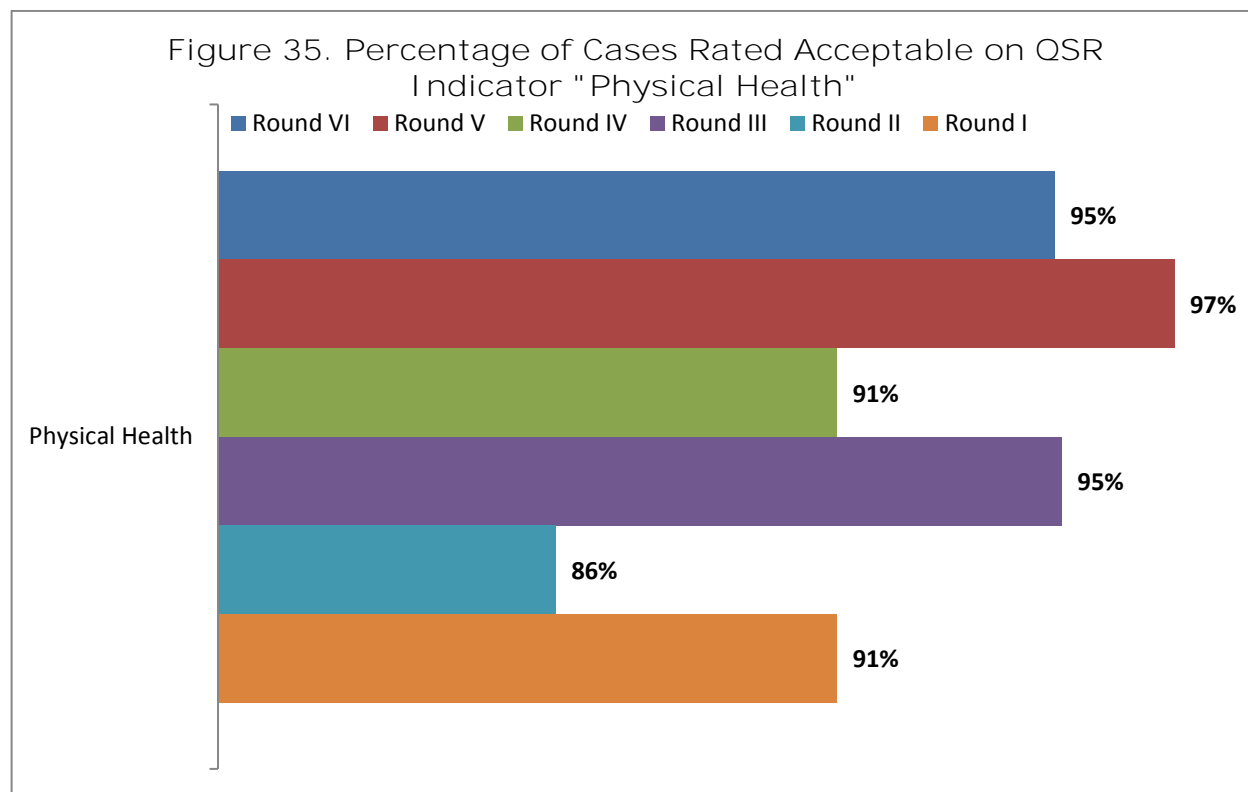
[55 Pa Code §3800.144](#)
(Dental care)

[55 Pa Code §3800.148](#)
(Health and behavioral health services)

Past PA Performance on Well-Being Outcome #3

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was also determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

child/youth is achieving his/her best attainable health status given the disease diagnosis and prognosis. In rating this indicator, reviewers may consider several **factors, some which include whether the child/youth’s basic physical needs are being met on a daily basis, does the child/youth’s preventative health care follow the EPSDT guidelines, does the child/youth appear underweight or overweight and has this been investigated and if the child/youth takes medication for health maintenance on a long-term basis, is the medication properly managed for the child/youth’s benefit.** As seen in Figure 35 the physical health indicator has consistently been an area of strength in Pennsylvania.



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016.

During annual licensure, OCYF regional office staff review case records for compliance with policies and regulations that govern assessment protocol to **ensure children’s physical health needs are being met.** As seen in Figure 36, of the 425 placement records reviewed in 2016, 97 percent of all cases were in compliance with requirements regarding initial and ongoing medical and dental examinations. In half the cases cited, there were issues with the initial dental exam either not occurring or not being documented. Six cases were cited for a lack of documentation verifying that an initial medical exam was conducted within the required timeframe.

Figure 36. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Medical and Dental Examination Requirements

--	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	10 cases (2 counties)	3 cases (1 county)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	25 cases (9 counties)	9 cases (8 counties)
Total Cases Cited	35	12
Total Placement Cases Reviewed	503	425
Total Counties Without Citation	56	52
Rate of Compliance (%)	93.04	97.17

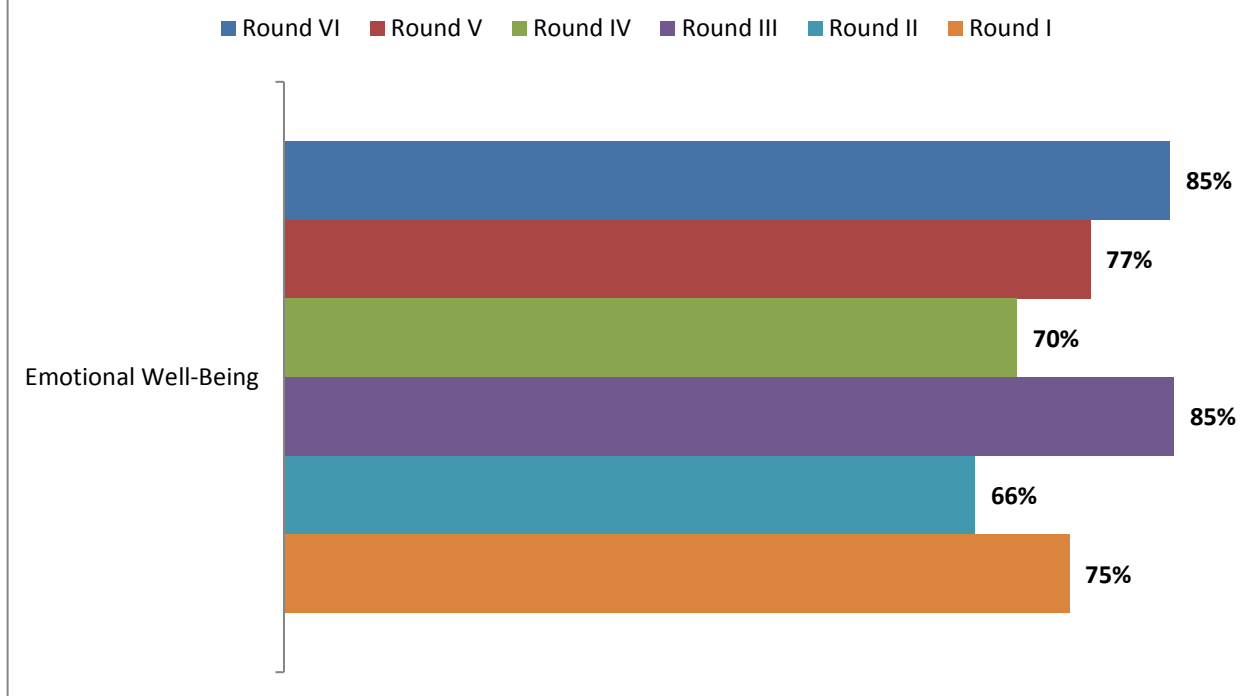
Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

- ❖ *CFSR Item 18: Did the agency address the mental/behavioral health needs of children?*

With regards to regulations governing mental/behavioral health assessment and treatment, there is no specific requirement for a standard mental health assessment for a child coming into placement. State requirements for mental health examination and treatment are covered by the same provisions that govern physical health care and treatment.

One manner in which PA evaluates how agencies are meeting the mental/behavioral health needs of children is through the QSR. The QSR indicator **“Emotional Well-Being”** rates the degree to which the child/youth, consistent with age and/or ability, is displaying a pattern of attachment and positive social relationships, coping and adapting skills, and appropriate self-management of emotions and behaviors. When rating this indicator, reviewers are to take into consideration factors such as whether the child has a history of unmet needs, such as a history of abuse or trauma; was an Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social Emotional (ASQ-SE™) **completed (if age appropriate)** and were there any concerns; does the child/youth have a history of psychiatric hospitalization and has he/she been prescribed psychotropic medication and does the child/youth have age appropriate positive peer relationships.

Figure 37. Percentage of Cases Rated Acceptable on QSR Indicator "Emotional Well-Being"



Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016.

A specific area that should be considered when looking at performance around physical health and mental/behavioral health outcomes for children and youth involves psychotropic medication and monitoring. Over the past few years, PA has worked with the PolicyLab at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia to review data on psychotropic medication usage among children in PA’s foster care system. A full report of the findings were issued in June 2015 and overall found that foster children in PA enrolled in Medicaid were up to four times more likely to be prescribed psychotropic medications than other PA children enrolled in MA. Furthermore, youth in foster care were found to be more likely to have not received any visits within the year with a provider for their behavioral health concerns while on psychotropic medications.

In response to the findings regarding psychotropic medication usage among children in foster care, DHS and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) convened a Psychotropic Medication Subcommittee to review the PolicyLab findings and recommendations, current policies and procedures and develop recommendations for the appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medication for Medical Assistance-enrolled out of home care children and youth in PA. In June 2016, DHS released the subcommittee recommendations and **PolicyLab findings at a press conference. Information regarding the DHS’s psychotropic medication initiatives and the PolicyLab report can be found at the**

DHS website listed below:

<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/psychotropicmedicationuseamongmedicaideligiblefosterchildren/>

The Psychotropic Medication Dashboard Report (PMDR) was developed by DHS in response to the PolicyLab report and Psychotropic Medication Subcommittee recommendations. The PMDR is a quarterly report which contains child-specific, clinical **information and utilizes a “Red Flag” alert to identify clinical indicators** that may potentially impact a child or youth's health and well-being. In January 2015, DHS initiated a PMDR pilot program with seven counties. As a result of the success of the PMDR pilot, DHS agreed to release the report statewide in September 2016 to all CCYAs.

The purpose of the report is to assist CCYA in their efforts to monitor psychotropic medication use, improve care coordination efforts and outcomes for children and youth out of home care, and ensure compliance with the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011. The PMDR is a useful tool CCYAs can use to monitor psychotropic medication use and other healthcare related services for children and youth in out of home care. The expectation is not for child welfare professionals to become medical experts or to interpret lab values and clinical information. Instead, CCYAs are encouraged to utilize the PMDR to improve care coordination efforts between the **child or youth’s** Primary Care Physician (PCP), Physical Health (PH) Managed Care Organizations (MCO) Special Needs Unit (CNU) Coordinator and Behavioral Health (BH) care manager and to educate children, youth and families about psychotropic medication use, behavioral health alternatives and the right to consent to treatment. CCYAs should also encouraged to share PMDR information with other individuals, who have a signed non-disclosure agreement on file, and are directly involved in the **child or youth’s** care plan and treatment, like their Juvenile Probation Office (JPO), and/or Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities (MH/ID) case manager. This enhanced education, coordination and monitoring of psychotropic medication will help to improve the health and well-being of children and youth in out of home care.

Well-Being Summary:

When reviewing the current data available to assess performance on the CFSR Well-Being Outcomes, there are a number of areas that appear to be strengths for PA. Among counties participating in the QSR over the past six rounds, there appears to be adequate assessment of the needs of children and their substitute caregivers. QSR findings also indicate that on average the interventions being provided to children, youth, and families are adequate to address their needs and help move the case towards successful closure. Furthermore, QSR findings suggest children and their substitute caregivers are

engaged by the agency in case planning and other case activities. Caseworker visitation data and findings from annual CCYA licensing inspections confirms that counties are successful in ensuring they are visiting with children at the necessary frequency.

Data from the first six rounds of QSRs also seem to suggest that county agencies are very successful in ensuring that the learning and developmental needs of young children are being addressed appropriately, regardless of whether children are residing in their own homes or out-of-home placement. QSR findings provide strong evidence that county agencies are also successful in ensuring the physical health needs of children involved with the child welfare system are being met. Information currently available from annual licensing of county children and youth agencies confirms that counties are compliant in ensuring children in out-of-home care received required medical and dental examinations and are diligent in their efforts to keep children connected to their school if placed out of their homes.

With regards to areas needing improvement, QSR findings suggest that the assessment and understanding of the needs of fathers and engagement of fathers in case planning and related case activities is an area that may warrant further attention. While there has been some improvement across some practice indicators related to fathers, overall, agency practice still is rated unacceptable in a high proportion of cases reviewed during the course of the QSRs.

Assessment of Systemic Factors

Statewide Information System

- ❖ *CFSR Item 19: How well is the statewide information system 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?*

PA assesses the statewide information systemic factor as an area needing improvement.

Currently, PA does not have a statewide information system functioning statewide that contains information regarding the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for the placement of every child who is (or has been within the preceding 12 months) in foster care. PA is currently in the first phase of implementation of a statewide information system, the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS). Information system capacity to meet the requirements for this systemic factor will be met with the implementation of CWIS Phase II.

Further information regarding PA's work related to CWIS, AFCARS reporting and data integrity is outlined below.

Background

DHS implemented Phase 1 of a Statewide Child Welfare Solution (CWIS) in December 2014. Phase I focused on the intake, investigation and assessment of CPS and GPS reports that come to the attention of the state child abuse hotline, ChildLine, and CCYAs.

The state level system went live on December 31, 2014 and is being used by OCYF staff. The seven systems used by the counties were all updated allowing the data exchanges between the counties and the state system to also go-live on December 31. In addition, the public-facing child welfare portal went live on December 31, 2014 allowing child abuse clearance applications to be submitted and paid for on-line, and allowing mandated reporters to submit child abuse referrals on-line. In calendar year 2015, one-third of the almost 42,000

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Systemic Factor:

CPSL §6305 Electronic reporting

§6336 Information in Statewide database

Past PA Performance on Systemic Factor: Information System

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was determined to be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

Child Protective Services referrals and 57 percent of the approximately 141,400 General Protective Services referrals were transmitted to CWIS via the CWIS data exchange with counties and the self-service portal. Additionally, over one million clearance applications were submitted via the self-service child welfare portal.

While OCYF had originally planned to begin work on CWIS Phase 2 in 2015, some operational challenges have led to the delay of this phase of the project. In 2015 and 2016, OCYF implemented several system enhancements releases to fulfill additional legislative requirements, expand data management capabilities, and improve operational efficiencies. A release in December 2016 addressed improvements to functionality for OCYF Regional Offices.

2015-2016 Accomplishments

CWIS 1.1 Enhancements - In this initiative, the Office of Children, Youth and Families implemented enhancements to fulfill additional legislative requirements and expand data management capabilities implemented in the initial release of the CWIS. The system enhancements included changes to CWIS Expunction Policies, Juvenile Perpetrator Expunction, Modifications to Law Enforcement Only (LEO) Referral Type, School and Child Care Employee Notification, Clearance Purpose Types, Unfounded Perpetrator on Indicated Report, Unknown Addresses and Correspondence Tracking, Person Management Enhancements, Auto-Notification and Usability, and Bypass Volunteer Clearance Application Payment. These enhancements were implemented in July 2015.

CWIS 1.2 Enhancements - OCYF identified additional enhancements to the Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS). These enhancements fulfilled legislative requirements from House Bill 1276, enacted on 7/1/2015. The enhancements were high priority for OCYF and included: 1) Requires payment for volunteers if multiple requests are made within a given time period, indicates the purpose for a Child Abuse History Clearance on the certificate to enable employers to differentiate, supports additional reasons for obtaining a Child Abuse History Clearance, and changes the expiration timeframe for Child Abuse History Clearances; 2) Clearance quality enhancements that includes an additional level of review of high-risk clearance applications and additional monitoring/user confirmation to add quality control measures during the clearance application process; and 3) Referral legislative enhancements that requires modifications to the definition of a perpetrator of child abuse and mandated reporter. OCYF has identified modifications to CWIS to capture this data as well as restructuring how mandated reporter information is collected to more closely align with existing legislation. The maintenance release took place in November 2015.

Lackawanna County System Transition - Since the implementation of Phase I in December 2014, OCYF has provided additional testing efforts to assist in the implementation of changes to their systems and the enabling of additional data exchanges. OCYF supported the County Children Youth Agency in Lackawanna County to transition their IT system from CAPS to the ACYS system. This included the set up as a new instance in ACYS, requiring both CWIS Worker Portal and EDX to add this instance as a new interfacing system (ACYS3), and update the routing logic to transmit and receive Referrals, Investigation Outcomes and Notifications for Lackawanna County to this new system; in addition to the application of a security configuration for the new system. This transition occurred on February 27, 2016.

National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) Report Changes - The Office of Children, Youth and Families is looking to enhance NCANDS **reporting functionality for the Children's Bureau**. NCANDS is a federally-sponsored national data collection effort created for the purpose of tracking the volume and nature of child maltreatment reporting each year within the United States. The NCANDS Child File data set consists of child-specific data of all reports of maltreatment to state child protective service agencies that received an investigation or assessment response. Child File data is collected annually **from states which opt to voluntarily participate**. **Participating state's submitting** their data after going through a process in which the state's administrative system is mapped to the NCANDS data structure. Data elements include the demographics of children and their perpetrators, types of maltreatment, investigation or assessment dispositions, risk factors, and services provided as a result of the investigation or assessment. This initiative was implemented in March 2016.

Automated Investigation Finalization - With this initiative, the Office of Children, Youth and Families aimed to optimize the processing of investigation outcomes. The automated closure based on business rules of the unfounded CPS investigations looked to significantly decrease the number of cases which required worker review, allowing staff to focus on substantiated cases for quality reviews. This project was completed in June 2016.

2016-2017 Accomplishments

CWIS 1.2.1 Enhancements - With this initiative, OCYF has worked to implement high priority system enhancements that support effective follow through of re-evaluated referrals and pending corrections referrals. The changes with this release also facilitate the expedited entry of investigation information by OCYF staff. This project was implemented in July 2016.

CWIS Regional Enhancements – OCYF Regional Offices benefited from an enhancements release in December 2016. This release included changes to the workload dashboard to make it more efficient. It also added flexibility to for documenting the investigations of Complaints and referrals.

2016-2017 Planned Activities

In the January through June 2017 timeframe, OCYF will focus on documentation and design for a number of system enhancements. Enhancements are needed to address new federal and state legislation and to incorporate additional data validations. We will also continue with the planning efforts for CWIS Phase 2.0 in anticipation of beginning that Phase upon the release of CWIS 1.3.

CWIS 1.3 Enhancements - This initiative will include high priority enhancements identified by OCYF to comply with legislation, streamline referral business processes, and incorporate additional data validations.

CWIS Phase 2.0 - This phase of CWIS focuses on children and builds the **functionality to provide a complete view of a child’s case management data**. This phase improves the accuracy and timeliness of data to evaluate performance and outcomes in terms of child and family characteristics, service type, and outcomes. The key goals and objectives include: NCANDS compliance; improved AFCARS, NYTD, and CVT reporting; visibility to child assessment and outcomes; ICPC and ICAMA function screens for OCYF users; and a single access point for counties. The system will also provide ChildLine and clearance related functions. Pennsylvania anticipates CWIS Phase 2.0 will be built in compliance with the new federal CCWIS requirements.

In this phase, the following key features will be available:

- **Child’s case management data including demographics, case plans, service plans, case notes, case visitation logs, outcomes and others** will be received from all counties and made available in CWIS;
- County users will have the ability to access up to date child information from CWIS;
- National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) reporting;
- AFCARS reporting;
- Transactional component to support the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) and Interstate Compact on Adoptions and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) functions at state level; and
- Enhanced reporting and visibility to child welfare data including canned reports, dashboard, and ad-hoc reporting capabilities.

AFCARS Reporting Solution - OCYF will look to implement a new AFCARS Reporting Solution as a component of CWIS Phase 2.0 to support the compilation of county reports for state reporting to the federal government. The new solution will replace the existing reporting solution, which currently relies on an outdated technology platform. This initiative will also allow for the addition of any newly required data elements that need to be captured for future AFCARS reporting. At the completion of this component, complete near time data will be available at the state level that readily identifies 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. The AFCARS final rule was published on December 15, 2016. OCYF will perform an analysis of the final rule and incorporate the new AFCARS requirements into Phase II.

CWIS Mobile Solution - The CWIS Phase 1 deployment was designed to primarily support traditional desktop users. However, based on analysis of Google Analytic reports for the period from January through November 2015, the Session Profile report shows that 553,000 users accessed CWIS via a mobile device **and another 186,000 via a tablet. The users' ability to navigate the** application met with mixed success as those on mobile (phone) devices experienced a 45 percent bounce rate while those on tablets had a 30% bounce rate. Overall, 19 percent of users making a referral (77,738 of 419,454) used mobile/tablets to access CWIS. Twelve percent (25,863 of 206,625) of those using the Clearance application used a mobile device. As part of this initiative, OCYF will be exploring functionality within CWIS to be accessible from mobile devices.

Future CWIS Phases

The remainder of the phases for CWIS will occur after implementation of Phase 2.0. Those phases are briefly outlined below:

Phase 3.0

Phase 3 of CWIS focuses on providers and builds the functionality to provide a complete view of provider data. This phase provides statewide view of providers and resources for reporting and performance tracking. Key goals/objectives include: provider licensing information available in CWIS; provider incident information available in CWIS; improved quality assurance; analysis available on program performance and outcomes; and single access point for counties and providers.

In this phase, the following key features will be available:

- Provider data including placements, home study, services offered, contracts, and other relevant information will be received from all counties and made available in CWIS;
- Transactional component to support family centers functions will be made available; and
- Enhanced reporting and visibility to child welfare data including canned reports, dashboard, and ad-hoc reporting capabilities.

Phase 4.0

The final phase of CWIS, Phase 4 focuses on accounting and builds the functionality to provide county and state financial expenditures and plans. Key goals/objectives include: providing a fiscal picture to evaluate program performance and outcomes; providing a comprehensive view of county spending of state and federal funds; and providing (QSR) data integration for program quality monitoring.

In this phase, the following key features will be available:

- Accounting-related data including components of NBPB will be received from all counties and made available in CWIS
- Transactional component to support Title IV-E QA functions
- Enhanced reporting and visibility to child welfare data including canned reports, dashboard, and ad-hoc reporting capabilities

Throughout the four phases, reporting functionality is incorporated to ensure that the state can use data to monitor performance and drive decision making.

Until AFCARS functionality is incorporated into CWIS, Pennsylvania will continue to rely on AFCARS data submitted quarterly by the 67 CCYAs to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for children in placement. The information is limited to the data elements within the current AFCARS file and is point in time as of each quarter. OCYF coordinates with each CCYA to obtain any additional information needed on the location of a child or any other information needs. Each CCYA is required to know and document the location and placement status of each child in placement.

In 2015, OCYF focused on addressing feedback from county stakeholders rather than on a broader range of stakeholders. Through already established communication channels, County Children and Youth Agencies identified key

areas of operational and data exchange concerns. As a result a monthly OCYF/County CWIS Workgroup was formed to provide a forum for working collaboratively to address any concerns. The workgroup consists of IT and program representation from the seven county systems, OCYF headquarters and regional staffs, representatives from the state IT contracted agencies (Deloitte and KPMG) and DHS Bureau of Information Systems, and members of the Child Welfare Resource Center. Some of the topics worked through with this group are refinement of CWIS data definitions; clarifications on system to system mapping and data exchange validations; and, system change requests proposed by counties. This group continued to meet monthly in 2016 and will be meeting quarterly in 2017.

In addition to the above workgroup there are monthly CWIS "All County Calls" and a monthly "CWIS Updates" newsletter, which are forums to provide CWIS information to counties and receive feedback.

CCWIS

DHS is in the process of submitting an Advanced Planning Document (APD) Update to request approval for our Statewide CWIS to be eligible for CCWIS funding. As a result, Phases 2.0 through 4.0 of CWIS would be designed in compliance with CCWIS requirements.

AFCARS I Improvement Plan

During the week of June 23, 2014, the Children's Bureau, in collaboration with OCYF, completed a review of the State's AFCARS data. On October 5, 2015, the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families provided the AFCARS Assessment Review (AAR) Report to Pennsylvania. The final report contained detailed findings at both the state and county levels. This report included the State AFCARS Improvement Plan (AIP) and a working copy of AIP matrices. A copy of the report can be access through the [Children's Bureau website](#).

Individual meetings were held with the individual county case management system owners regarding specific state level and county system findings as well as to outline the requirements for development of county system improvement plans. All county work plans were returned to OCYF on December 18, 2015. OCYF submitted the AIP to ACF on May 10, 2016. OCYF submitted the first AIP update to ACF on October 30, 2016. The update is currently under review by ACF.

Data

OCYF continues to work on improving the completeness and accuracy of state and local data.

Unique Child Identifiers – OCYF will continue to work on consistency regarding the use of unique identifiers for children and other participants that are included in our information systems. With the implementation of the CWIS a more standardized approach to assigning and maintaining unique identifiers for individuals will be in place. OCYF will continue to make use of the department-wide Master Client Index (MCI) number and will also assign a unique CWIS ID to individuals. This will enable us to better link child IDs across multiple federal files. The full transition to CWIS IDs will take several years as not all historical state level and county level data has been or will be converted in each phase.

Pennsylvania’s Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) requires the expunction of identifying information for certain types of child abuse reports (CPS reports) and reports of the need for protective services (GPS reports). Due to this requirement, OCYF is not able to link a unique child identifier of a child on an **expunged report to another report or to the same child’s AFCARS record.** The CPSL provides the following definition at 23 PA C.S. Sec. §6303(a):

*“Expunge.” To strike out or obliterate entirely so that the expunged information may not be stored, identified or later recovered by any mechanical or electronic means or otherwise. The CPSL also clearly states **that when information is required to be expunged that “The expunction shall be mandated and guaranteed by the department.”** (23 PA C.S. Sec. §6337(a)).*

Pennsylvania knows at the time of the reported child abuse incident if a child was in foster care or allegedly abused by a foster care provider and can provide this information to ACF in another format. OCYF will work with ACF to explore acceptable alternatives to providing data on the number of children abused in foster care. Pennsylvania will also work with ACF to determine the cause of NCANDS ID discrepancies and determine options for correcting the issues.

CWIS Data – Data collection at the state level will be expanded as part of the CWIS project. Most of the data collected in CWIS will be accessible through the DHS Data Warehouse. Over the past year OCYF has performed focused data quality efforts on Phase 1 CWIS data, related to CPS and GPS referrals and outcomes. These efforts have identified specific data validation improvements that are needed to ensure data accuracy and consistency across the state.

Additional validations are slated to be added to CWIS and the county data exchanges in 2017. Data quality monitoring is an ongoing process that will require adjustments along the way as any new issues are identified. OCYF is prepared to make those adjustments as needed.

As part of our request to have our Statewide CWIS approved as a CCWIS our current data quality processes will be evaluated and improved upon as needed.

In addition, OCYF is participating in a department-wide initiative referred to as DHS Interactive Data Analytics. This initiative will provide a new analytics solution to track an array of strategic performance indicators across the DHS organization. At a high level the DHS Interactive solution will contain a series of visualizations to allow stakeholders the ability to analyze information across the secretary's five core strategic priorities. These strategic priorities include improved customer service, access to high-quality services, serving more people in the community, increased employment opportunities and modernization of program integrity. This enterprise solution will enable DHS executive staff the ability to derive insight from their data through a series of interactive visualizations which include graphs, charts, maps, and drill through capabilities. This initiative occurred in two phases. Phase 1 was completed in September 2016 and Phase 2 in December 2016.

Case Review System

- ❖ *CF SR Item 20: How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that each child has a written case plan developed jointly with the child's parent(s) and includes the required provisions?*

OCYF regulations at §3130.61 require that the county agency prepare a written service plan for each family receiving services through the agency within 60 days of accepting the family for service. For children placed in out of home care, regulations at §3130.67 outline additional specific requirements for written placement planning and include all required federal written case plan **elements as described in PA's title IV-E plan.**

OCYF Regulations, in compliance with federal statute, require that the county agency shall

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CF SR Systemic Factor:

[55 PA Code §3130.61 \(Family Service Plans\)](#)

[55 PA Code §3130.67](#)

[The Juvenile Act §6351\(e\) \(Permanency hearings\)](#)

[55 Pa Code §3130.71 \(Placement reviews\)](#)

[The Juvenile Act §6351\(f\)\(9\) \(Matters to be determined at permanency hearings\)](#)

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[The Juvenile Act §6336.1 \(Notice and hearing\)](#)

provide family members, including the child, their representatives, and service providers, the opportunity to participate in the development and amendment of the service plan if the opportunity **does not jeopardize the child’s safety. The agency** is required to record the method by which these opportunities are recorded within the plan. Monitoring of county adherence to these regulations pertaining to written case plans occurs during the annual county licensing process where a sample of case records are pulled and reviewed for compliance. The following data outlined in the table below demonstrates licensing inspection findings regarding provisions for written case planning, which includes the family service plan (FSP) and the child permanency plan (CPP) (for children in foster care to) include existence of all required case plan elements, adherence with timeliness of plan development, and joint development of the plan with the child/youth and parents.

Past PA Performance on Systemic Factor: Case Review System

PA was determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and as a result was required to address this outcome in our PIP. PA was also determined to not be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2002 CFSR.

Figure 38. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Written Case Planning

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	78 cases (2 counties)	52 cases (3 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	152 cases (26 counties)	159 cases (35 counties)
Total Cases Cited (Duplicated Count) ⁸	230	211
Total FSP Citations	195	129
Total CPP Citations	35	30
Total Counties Without Citation	39	23

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

With regards to written case plan requirements, a review of licensing inspections which occurred in 2016 found that in 13% (n=28) of the case cited,

⁸ In some instances, the same case may have been cited more than one time depending on the existence of different violations in relation to written case planning requirements.

there was no initial or updated FSP or CPP documented. Approximately 16% (n=33) of the cases cited involved cases where plans were completed, but not within required timeframes set forth in regulations. Nearly 45% (n=95) of cases cited were found not to meet regulations related to parental participation. In some instances, there was no documentation to verify parents participated in the plan development, parent signatures were not obtained on the plan, or there was no documentation that parents were provided a copy of the plan. One provisionally licensed county was identified as having systemic issues related to service planning, with 36 cases cited in regards to FSP or CPP requirements.

QSR indicators related to engagement, role and voice and case planning also provide a venue for monitoring the development of case plans in conjunction **with the child's parents**. As reported on in the discussion regarding Well-Being Outcome #1, engagement of fathers in case activities and case planning is an area that in particular may warrant additional attention as a generally low percentage of fathers are rated as acceptable in relation to these indicators.

- ❖ *CFSR Item 21: How well is the case review system 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?*
- ❖ *CFSR Item 22: How well is the case review system functioning statewide to ensure that, for each child, a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body occurs no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?*

In looking at the systemic factor for case review system, states must examine performance around ensuring that periodic reviews occur no less frequently than outlined in federal law. Due to the manner by which PA regulations define permanency hearings and require such hearings no less frequently than every six months, CFSR systemic items 21 and 22 will be assessed together for the purpose of this report.

After a child has been adjudicated dependent and the court has issued a disposition order under 42 Pa.C.S. **§ 6351(a), Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act** requires the court to continue its oversight of the case by holding a series of **subsequent hearings "for the purpose of determining or reviewing the permanency plan of the child, the date by which the goal of permanency for the child might be achieved and whether placement continues to be best suited to the safety, protection and physical, mental and moral welfare of the child"** (42 Pa.C.S. § 6351(e)). All such post-dispositional hearings, whenever they occur, **are denominated "permanency hearings" in Pennsylvania**. Moreover, the Juvenile Act specifies a long list of determinations that must be made at all permanency hearings—again, whenever they occur.

As noted above, however, hearings that are denominated “permanency hearings” in the Juvenile Act may have different functions, depending on when they occur in the dependency proceeding. Hearings will vary substantially, depending on the posture of the dependency case involved. In general, early permanency hearings often serve as status review hearings, in which the primary concerns are with issues of compliance with the initial permanency plan, progress being made towards plan goals, and minor plan adjustments that may be necessary in view of changes in circumstances. In later permanency hearings, on the other hand, the focus is likely to shift to the steps that are needed to finalize permanency—and whether the original goal still appears to be appropriate and feasible. In some cases, it is necessary to hold a permanency hearing to choose a new goal. Some of the basic sub-types of permanency hearings include⁹:

Expedited Review Hearings for Youth in Shelters — If at the time of disposition, the child has not been returned to the care of the parents or guardians and remains in shelter care, respite care, or other short term/temporary placement, the Judge or Hearing Master should review the **child’s** placement within 30 days to ensure that the child has either returned home or has been placed as directed by the dispositional order.

Expedited FSP Status Hearings — Pennsylvania statutes encourage an expedited court process through adjudication and disposition. Ideally, adjudication occurs within 10 days of petition filing and most courts routinely consider dispositional issues immediately after adjudicatory determinations are made. Review of the appropriateness of the Family Services Plan (FSP) should be a central component of the dispositional process. However, the agency has up to 30 days in removal cases and 60 days in non-removal cases to fully complete the case plan. Consequently, a fully-developed FSP might not be available for consideration at the time of disposition. The court has statutory discretion to proceed with disposition even if a FSP is not available. Waiting six months for the next *required* permanency review to examine the FSP is probably too long, given the short permanency timeframes envisioned by ASFA and Pennsylvania statutes. In these instances, it makes sense for the court to schedule an expedited FSP status hearing that allows for an in-court examination of the FSP (with all parties present). This practice helps to ensure that all parties understand FSP provisions/expectations, and it allows the court to examine the steps that have

⁹ Information on permanency hearings taken from **Pennsylvania Children’s Roundtable Initiative**. Pennsylvania Dependency Benchbook. Harrisburg, PA: Office of Children and Families in the Courts, 2014.

<http://www.ocfcpcourts.us/assets/upload/2014%20Revision%20of%20Benchbook.pdf>.

already been taken with respect to the plan. This hearing should occur within 45-60 days of the disposition hearing.

Six-Month Permanency Hearing — This is the first statutorily required permanency hearing after disposition. At this hearing, the agency is required to submit an updated FSP and, depending on the court, a report summarizing case progress to date. The report usually also addresses the continuing appropriateness of the placement, the permanency plan and an estimated date for achieving this plan. At this hearing the judge or hearing master makes sure that all the services are in place and fine-tune the permanency plan. As in every proceeding, the court must determine, through proper inquiry, whether the children are safe. This hearing marks the beginning of a transition in focus from examining case progress to the initiation of some definitive steps to finalization of the **child's permanency plan**. **Serious discussion of a child's concurrent plan** is appropriate if substantial case progress has not occurred.

12-Month Permanency Hearing — By this time (unless extenuating circumstances apply) the focus of the permanency hearing process should clearly **shift to finalization of the child's permanent plan**. If the plan goal remains reunification but the child cannot now be returned home, the judge or hearing master should set very clear expectations regarding what needs to happen to achieve this goal within a clearly defined timeframe. In these situations it is also appropriate for the judge or hearing master to schedule expedited status reviews to ensure that steps are being taken to return the child home. The judge or hearing master should make it clear, that if expectations are not met, a goal change is likely to occur at the next permanency hearing.

18-Month Permanency Hearing — Again, unless some very extenuating circumstances apply, the primary decision made at this hearing will be to immediately reunify the child with the parents or guardians or, if this is still not possible, to schedule a permanency hearing to consider changing the goal (with the agency being required to file the appropriate pleading requesting termination of parental rights or permanent legal guardianship) or a hearing to determine the specifics of an alternative permanent plan.

Permanency Hearing: To Consider Change of Goal — The Juvenile Act generally requires the agency to request a goal change and file a petition for termination of parental rights when the child has been in care for 15 out of 22 months (42 Pa.C.S. § 6351(f)(9)). This requirement is consistent with federal law, as amended by ASFA (42 U.S.C. § 675 (5)(C) and (E)). In addition, there are other points when the agency should request or the court should consider a goal change. In cases involving aggravated circumstances, including severe physical abuse, sexual abuse, or aggravated physical neglect, where it is demonstrated at the outset of the case that the circumstances that led to

removal cannot be remedied and that the child cannot be safely reunified with the parents, the court can establish a goal other than reunification from the beginning. The permanency goal should also be changed when there have been aggravated circumstances found and the court has determined that reasonable efforts to preserve or reunify the family are not required, when the child has been abandoned and no parent has made substantial or continuing contact for a period of six months, or at any time when it is clear to the judge that reunification is not viable and another permanency goal seems to be more appropriate for the child.

It is worth noting that over the past few years, county agencies have moved to expedited reviews with at least 37 counties having hearings every three months as a result of the permanency practice initiative (PPI). Some counties have also instituted Permanency Planning Conferences at various intervals within the first 12 months of placement to review the efforts made toward permanence. This has proven successful in adhering to the required ASFA timelines.

During the annual licensing inspections, OCYF regional office staff review the records to ensure that permanency hearings are held every six months, and if not, the agencies are cited for statutory non-compliance. Findings from licensing inspections suggest that counties are consistently meeting these requirements.

Figure 39. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Permanency Hearings

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	0	0
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	0	1 case (1 county)
Total Cases Cited	0	1
Total Number of Placement Cases	503	425
Total Counties Without Citation	67	60
Rate of Compliance	100.00	99.76

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

Findings from the annual CCYA licensing inspection summaries were further corroborated during a focus group conducted with the SWAN Advisory Committee

in the fall of 2016. Participants in the focus group were asked to describe how **PA's case review system is functioning to ensure periodic reviews occur as required**. The consensus of the focus group was that PA is consistently meeting this federal requirement and even exceeding with many counties doing court reviews every three months. Focus group participants discussed the following areas of strengths in meeting this requirement:

- Through the Permanency Practices Initiative (PPI), 37 counties are currently doing three month court reviews;
- Some counties are still only reviewing every six months but are careful not to go over this time frame;
- Mediation has been a helpful process in keeping the process moving so that timelines are met; and
- Counties and courts are generally collaborating very well
 - Hearing officers are aware of the meeting dates
 - SWAN paralegals help with the scheduling and make sure that dates are adhered to
 - Few counties are struggling with getting their dates listed in court.

When focus group participants were asked to identify any barriers that might impact meeting the required timeframes, they noted the following:

- The volume and complexity of the cases coming before the court;
 - There is more that the courts now have to address during hearings, such as school, permanency and well-being;
 - Multiple child cases are more time-consuming, which adds to the **complexity of the proceedings and takes time on everyone's schedule; and**
 - More people are participating in court proceedings, which can sometimes cause longer timeframes.
- ❖ *CFSR Item 23: How well is the case review system functioning to ensure that the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions?*

When evaluating the performance of PA's case review system, the filing of termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings in accordance with required provisions must be considered. Under PA law and in compliance with ASFA, if a child has been in placement at least 15 or the last 22 months, the county must file a TPR petition or an exception if applicable.

During the annual CCYA licensing inspection, placement cases are reviewed for compliance with meeting ASFA requirements related to timely filing of TPR. Review of annual licensing inspection summaries from inspections that occurred in calendar years 2015 and 2016 suggest no systemic issues related to timely filing of TPR.

Figure 40. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Meeting ASFA Timeframes for Filing TPR

--	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	0 cases (0 counties)	0 cases (0 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	7 cases (4 counties)	1 case (1 county)
Total Cases Cited	7	1
Total Placement Cases Reviewed	503	425
Total Counties Without Citation	63	60
Rate of Compliance (%)	98.60	99.76

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

Information regarding filing of TPR is also assessed during the QSR. Reviewers are asked to utilize information from the case record and interviews to assess whether the child/youth meets ASFA criteria, if TPR was filed timely, and report if there were compelling reasons or an appeal of the TPR petition by the the mother and/or father. Data collected from the four most recent rounds of QSR is reported in Figure 41 below.

Figure 41. Meeting ASFA Timeframes for TPR – QSR Rounds III-VI

Applicable Cases	Round Three	Round Four	Round Five	Round Six
# foster care cases	60	74	25	29
# meeting some ASFA criteria	35	23	14	22

TPR Status	Mom #	Mom %	Dad #	Dad %	Mom #	Mom %	Dad #	Dad %	Mom #	Mom %	Dad #	Dad %	Mom #	Mom %	Dad #	Dad %
# with TPR date	15	43%	16	46%	10	43%	9	39%	4	29%	4	29%	9	41%	9	41%
# without TPR date	20	57%	19	54%	13	57%	14	61%	10	71%	10	71%	13	59%	13	59%
# timely TPR	11	73%	12	75%	6	60%	5	56%	3	75%	3	75%	6	67%	6	67%
# untimely TPR	6	40%	5	31%	4	40%	4	44%	1	25%	1	25%	3	33%	3	33%
Compelling Reasons	24	--	23	--	17	--	18	--	3	--	2	--	3	--	3	--
No compelling reason(s) for TPR not filed timely	14	58%	16	70%	7	41%	8	44%	1	33%	1	50%	3	100%	3	100%
At the option of the County , the child/youth is being cared for by a relative	1	4%	1	4%	2	12%	2	11%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
The county has documented in the case plan a compelling reason for determining that TPR would not be in the best interests of the child/youth	9	38%	6	26%	8	47%	8	44%	2	67%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
The county has not provided to the family the services that the County deemed necessary for the safe return of the child/youth to the child/youth's home if reasonable efforts of the type	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

Stakeholders were also asked to provide feedback related to this systemic factor during a focus group conducted with the SWAN Advisory Committee in the **fall of 2016. Participants in the focus group were asked to describe how PA's** case review system is functioning to the filing of TPR proceedings occurs in accordance with required provisions. The consensus of the focus group was that PA is consistently meeting this federal requirement.

Focus group participants discussed the following areas of strengths in meeting this requirement:

- The QSR makes note timely filing of TPR to help counties assess and monitor if this is a deficit area for them;
- Hearing officers know more about the timelines which helps with timely filings
 - Hearing officers are being trained better on the cases that go before them and this has helped with timely filing
- **It is easier when the judge is the same for dependency and orphan's court;**
- Permanency Round Tables (PRTs) have been helpful in achieving timely filing
 - Paralegals are sitting in on these meetings
 - Judges feel more confident and are making more of a commitment to the children
- The work by the American Bar Association (ABA) on full disclosure has been helpful as it gets all those involved with the case informed of timeframes up front
 - If parents have confidence in being able to have the relationship with the child maintained, voluntary TPRs are more likely
- Counties have been working to improve father engagement and engagement of the paternal family, which can also help with the TPR process.

When focus group participants were asked to identify any barriers that might impact meeting the required timeframes, they noted the following:

- Caseworker turnover;
- Inability to demonstrate reasonable efforts were made due to services not being provided or offered;
- Recovery from drug and alcohol is a lengthy process which impacts timeframes; and
- Having a new county solicitor or a new judge can sometimes impact process.

- ❖ *CFSR Item 24: How well is the case review system 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 hearing held with respect to the child?*

Based on the quantitative and qualitative data available, PA assesses performance on this systemic factor to be an area of strength. With regards to notification to foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relative caregivers, PA follows the federal mandate in Section 104 of ASFA to provide caregivers with notice of and the opportunity to be heard at all court proceedings involving the child placed in their home for foster care services. The mandate is incorporated into Pennsylvania's Juvenile Act in §6336.1. **The Resource Family Care Act requires CCYAs to inform resource families of scheduled meetings and the opportunity to be heard: 'opportunity' was changed to 'right' by the passage of the federal Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006.** The Juvenile Act, PA Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure regarding Dependency Matters and child welfare regulations require that notice and the opportunity and right to be heard be provided to foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care. These notices are sent either by the Court, and/or CCYA or juvenile probation office (JPO).

During annual licensing inspections, records are reviewed for documentation verifying that agency 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 hearing held with respect to the child. Review of findings from licensing inspections conducted in calendar years 2015 and 2016 indicate that statewide counties are meeting requirements for providing notification to resource families. In 2015, two counties were identified as having issues pertaining to documentation verifying notice was provided. Only one county received a citation in relation to this notification during inspections conducted in 2016.

Figure 42. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Notification of Right to be Heard

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	0 cases (0 counties)	0 cases (0 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	16 cases (2 counties)	1 case (1 county)
Total Cases Cited	16	1
Total Resource Family Records Reviewed	908	781
Total Counties Without Citation	65	60
Rate of Compliance (%)	98.23	99.87

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

During interviews that are conducted as a part of the annual CCYA licensing process with agency resource homes, resource parents are specifically ask how the agency involves them in the court process. Of the 144 agency resource family interviews conducted in 2015 and 69 interviews conducted in 2016, no issues related to this CFSR systemic factor item were noted. The following examples from the narratives in the licensing inspection summaries regarding agency resource home interviews provide further confirmation that counties are complying with requirements regarding notification and right to be heard:

- *"The families are invited to attend Court Hearings pertaining to all the children in their home."*
- *"The families were able to attend court hearings for their foster children and provide feedback to the court in regards to the progress of the child."*
- *"Families provided a generally favorable review of the agency and indicated they have been able to participate in court hearings."*
- *Families are also provided the opportunity to speak at court on behalf of the children in their homes."*
- *"The resource families report that they have the opportunity to attend court reviews and are able to provide input."*
- *"The families are invited to attend Court Hearings pertaining to the children in their home and sometimes they are asked to speak at the Hearings. Resource families are also given a questionnaire which they can fill out for the Court. This is especially beneficial if the resource family cannot attend the hearing."*
- *"All resource homes acknowledged that they are routinely apprised of the various legal proceedings relating to the children/youth placed with them and have the opportunity to attend the legal proceedings."*
- *"The resource parents reported they are always involved in the court process and encouraged to come to court to participate."*
- *"Resource parents are able to provide information to the court during review hearings regarding the cases of the children in their home."*

Quality Assurance System

- ❖ *CFSR Item 25: How well is the quality assurance system functioning statewide to ensure that it is (1) operating in all jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, (2) has standards to evaluate the quality of services, (3) identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, (4) provides relevant reports, and (5) evaluates implemented program improvement measures?*

The assessment of this systemic factor is based on available quantitative and qualitative data as well as feedback from the Sustaining Change Workgroup. This workgroup meets monthly and provides ongoing **monitoring for PA's CQI** effort. Members were consulted throughout the development of PA's Statewide Assessment development to identify information to include in the assessment and **discussion about strengths and gaps related to PA's** QA system are topics of ongoing conversation with the group. One of the most commonly identified gaps has involved making connection between the various data sources produced through both county and statewide quality assurance efforts to make connections to identification and development of improvement strategies. Through the development of the PA Child Welfare Council, PA is looking to help remedy this gap area by utilizing this group as to more consistently connect, review and monitor data to drive statewide strategic improvement efforts.

PA currently has a number of processes in place that help provide data used to drive CQI efforts and monitor the quality of services provided to children and families throughout the commonwealth. These processes are outlined in more detail in the *Quality Assurance System* section of the 2017 APSR (pg. 344) and include:

- Quality Service Reviews
- Annual Licensing Inspection
- Needs Based Plan and Budget (NBPB) Process
- Fatality/Near Fatality Review Process
- Independent Living (IL) Site Visits

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSR Systemic Factor:

Article VII of the Public Welfare Code, 62 P.S. §§ 701 et. seq.

OCYF Bulletin 3490-15-01

Past PA Performance on Systemic Factor: Quality Assurance System

PA was determined to be in substantial conformity with this outcome during the 2008 CFSR and the 2002 CFSR.

1. *Operating in all jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided*

Annual licensing reviews are required by statute to occur in all 67 counties. Inspections may be conducted more frequently if the county is issued a provisional license or the OCYF Regional Office generates an inspection based upon complaints received regarding a county agency. Between the period of January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016, annual licensing inspections were conducted on all county children and youth agencies. At the time of this report, the finalized licensing inspection summaries were available for 61 of the counties with the number of cases reviewed for these counties as follows:

Figure 43. Type and Number of Cases Reviewed During Annual CCYA Licensing¹⁰

Case Record Type	Total Number of Cases
CPS	541
GPS	616
Screen Outs	185
In-Home	473
Placement	425
Resource Family	781
Resource Family Interviews	82
Adoption	64
New Staff	1223
Ongoing Staff	825

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

The submission of the annual NBPB is also required for all 67 counties under state statute. Each year, OCYF issues instructions to counties regarding the preparation and submission of the NBPB through a bulletin.

Child fatality/near fatality reviews are required to occur in any county where a child dies or nearly dies as a result of suspected child abuse. If the case is not unsubstantiated or an investigation outcome reached within 30 days of the report of the fatality/near fatality, the county agency must convene a

¹⁰ Not all Licensing Inspection Summaries from this time period provided counts for the total number of cases reviewed from all the case record type areas, therefore the total number of cases reviewed is lower than the actual number of cases reviewed for this reported period.

multidisciplinary team to review the circumstances of the incident and develop recommendations related to practice at the county and state level. A copy of the **revised Act 33 Bulletin outlining PA’s child fatality/near fatality review process** is provided as Attachment F.

Independent living site visits occur annually for all 67 counties in Pennsylvania, however there are exceptions for counties, on occasion, who do not have youth meeting the criteria and are not providing IL services or utilizing Chafee funds.

Currently, twenty-eight counties (includes two new counties in Round VII) have joined the CQI effort being phased in across the state and are participating in the QSR. Through phased in implementation, PA will strive to add a minimum of 15 new counties to the CQI effort between FFY 2015-2019. The table below represents the number of cases that have been reviewed throughout Rounds I through VI of the QSR as of December 31, 2016.

Figure 44. QSR Metrics for Rounds I through Round VI

--	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI
Total Cases Reviewed	99	155	143	181	62	71
Out-of-Home Cases	59	92	60	74	25	29
In-Home Cases	40	63	83	107	37	42
Total Counties	6	11	11	14	6	7
New Counties		5	7	5	3	0

Data Source: QSR Database, HZA, December 2016

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)*

At the state level, the PA Child Welfare Practice Model sets the standards for all child welfare system partners working together in providing quality services to child/youth and families. The [QSR Protocol](#) is designed to measure safety, permanency and well-being outcomes, as well as implementation of core practice components such as engagement, teaming and assessment and understanding as outlined in the Practice Model. The QSR Protocol specifically

evaluates child safety (across multiple settings), physical health and emotional well-being outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system.

PA child welfare laws and regulations set specific standards related to services to protect the health and safety of children in foster care which are monitored through the annual CCYA licensing. These standards include:

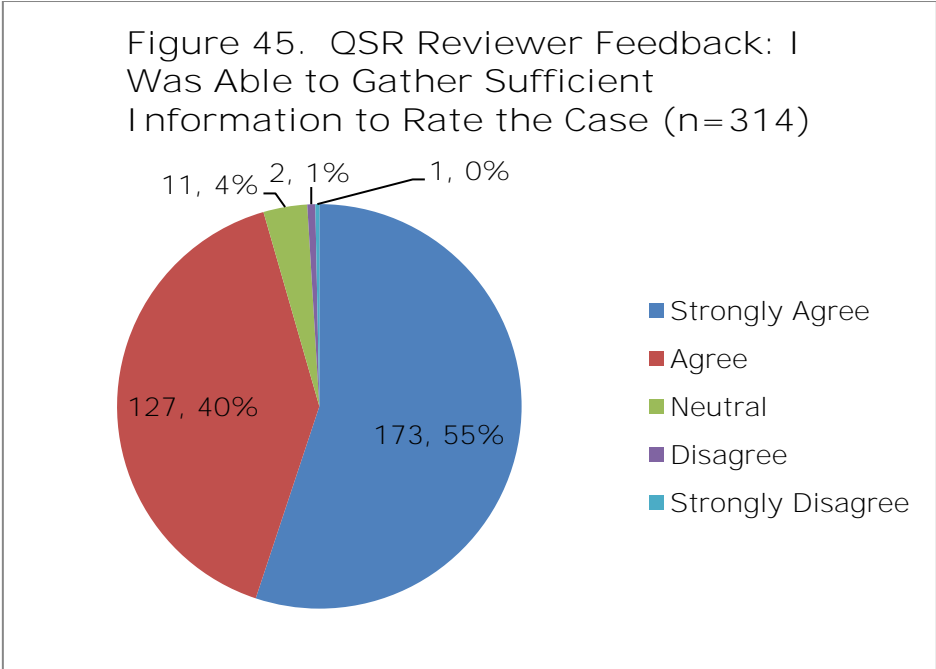
- Safety standards for licensing and approving private foster and adoptive homes and annual review of foster homes
 - [55 PA Code §3700.67](#) (Safety requirements)
 - [55 PA Code §3700.69](#) (Annual reevaluation)
 - [55 PA Code §3700.70](#) (Temporary and provisional approvals of foster families)
- Requirements for medical/dental care
 - [55 PA Code §3700.51](#) (Medical and dental care)
 - [55 PA Code 3680.51](#) (Health care policies and procedures)
- Caseworker visits
 - [55 PA Code 3490.61](#) (Supervisory review and child contacts)
- Background checks
 - [CPSL §6344\(d\)](#) (relating to prospective adoptive or foster parents)

3. Identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system

The QSR utilizes a six-point scale to rate the current status of outcomes and practice performance that break out scoring in a manner that better helps to identify strength and gap areas as it rates on a continuum, not just whether something is a strength or an area needing improvement. A copy of the QSR rating scale logic has been provided as Attachment H. This information is utilized in combination with feedback received through focus groups and stakeholder interviews to help identify key areas for improvement, as well as recognize strengths in the current county practice. **The indicator “Intervention Adequacy and Resource Availability” looks specifically at the degree to which planned interventions, services and supports being provided to the child/youth and family have sufficient power and beneficial effect to meet the near term needs and achieve the conditions necessary for safe case closure.** This indicator also evaluates the degree to which the resources required to implement current child/youth and family plans are available on a timely, sufficient and convenient basis. Many other indicators such as parent/caregiver functioning, pathway to independence and child/youth and family planning process all require reviewers to take into consideration the provision of services to the child/youth and family as a factor in rating the indicator. Focus groups conducted as part of the QSR also provide opportunities for counties to obtain additional feedback from caseworkers that can be used to assess the service delivery system.

As part of the ongoing monitoring of the QSR process, CQI Project Managers review feedback to help assess the effectiveness of the QSR process to appropriately identify the strengths and needs of the service delivery system. As part of the QSR on-site activities, QSR reviewers and participants complete surveys to provide feedback to the state/local site leads and CQI project managers which can be found in the QSR Manual 4.0, [Appendices 24 and 25](#). Some of the questions are used to monitor that appropriate information is being gathered through the process and youth, caregivers and systems partners participating in the process feel that they are able to communicate the necessary information to the reviewers.

Data collected from the past six rounds of QSRs suggest that the process is successful in gathering necessary information and feedback from to inform an understanding of strengths and needs of the service delivery system through the QSR process. As seen in Figure 45, a large proportion of reviewers felt that they were able to gather the information needed to appropriately rate the case.



Data Source: QSR Review Feedback Surveys, SurveyMonkey, April 2016

Beginning in Round VI, the QSR Reviewer and Participant Feedback surveys were revised and data collected using Qualtrics. The surveys were amended based on feedback from the Sustaining Change Workgroup regarding what metrics would be most appropriate for continued measurement to aid in the monitoring of the QSR process. At the time of the writing of this report, full round data from only the QSR Reviewer Surveys from Round VI is available. The

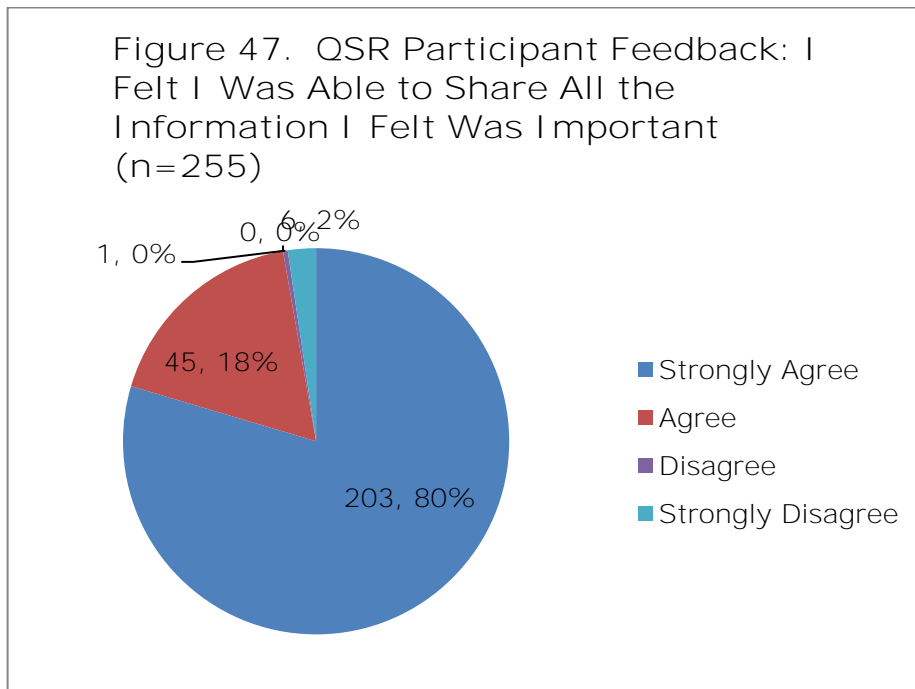
graph below highlights updated information regarding reviewer’s ability to gather information needed to rate the case based on feedback from Round VI reviewers.

Figure 46. QSR Reviewer Feedback – Sufficient Information Gathered

I was able to gather sufficient information during the case review to score the case.	%	Count
Strongly Agree	45.07%	32
Agree	47.89%	34
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.04%	5
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
Total	100%	71

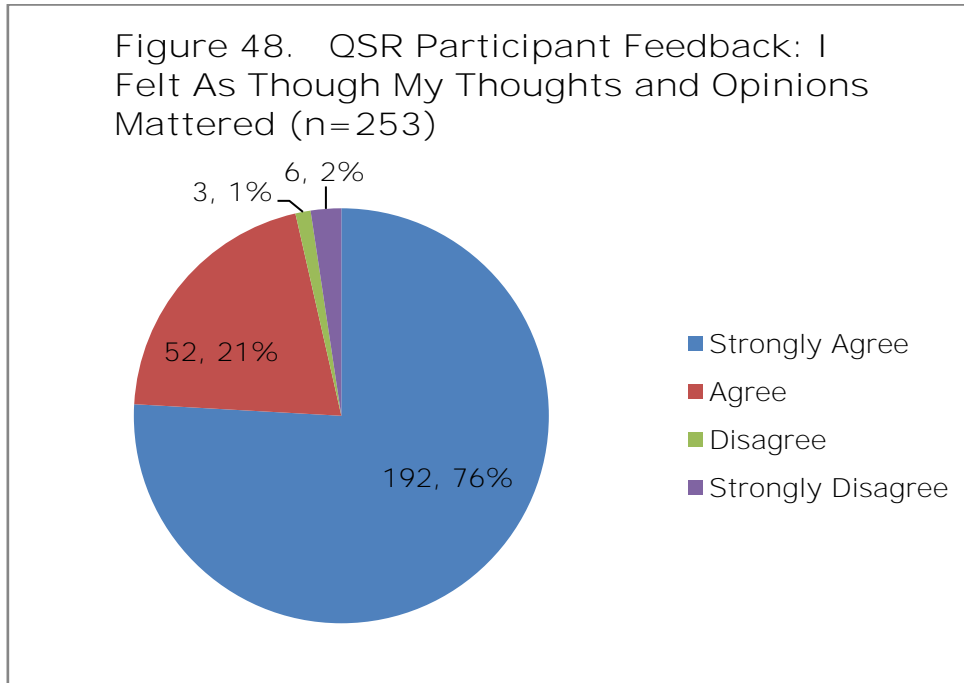
Data Source: QSR Reviewer Feedback Surveys, Qualtrics, December 2016.

With regards to participant feedback, 98 percent of those completing the participant feedback surveys felt that they were able to successfully share all the information that they felt was important with the reviewers.



Data Source: QSR Review Feedback Surveys, SurveyMonkey, April 2016

As seen in Figure 43 below, a large proportion of QSR participants who responded to the surveys also felt that their thoughts and opinions mattered and were heard during the interview with the reviewers.

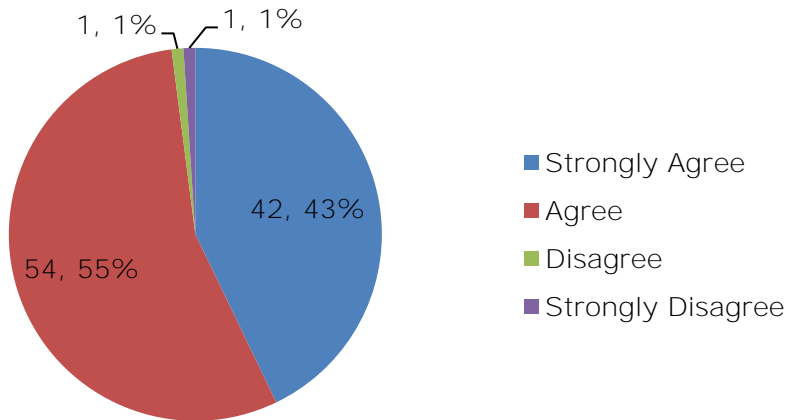


Data Source: QSR Review Feedback Surveys, SurveyMonkey, April 2016

Another key group that is the focus of feedback on the QSR process is caseworkers and supervisors whose cases are reviewed. As part of the QSR participant survey, there are two questions applicable to only caseworkers and supervisors.

The first of these questions looks at whether caseworkers and supervisors **felt that the reviewers' recommendations given at the end of the review process** were helpful. The results from the surveys show that those caseworkers and supervisors who responded found the recommendations helpful 98 percent of the time.

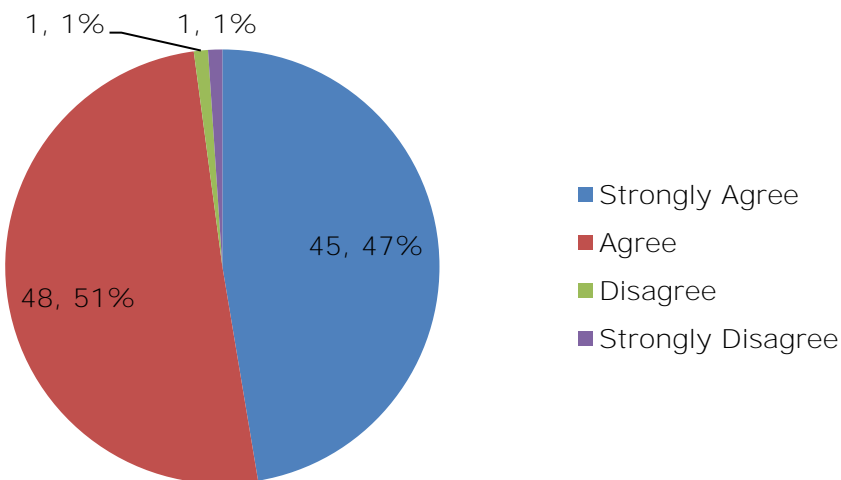
Figure 49. Caseworker/Supervisor Feedback: Reviewers Recommendations Were Helpful (n=98)



Data Source: QSR Review Feedback Surveys, SurveyMonkey, April 2016

Finally, caseworkers and supervisors are asked if they plan to follow through on the recommendations given to them at the end of the review. Figure 50 shows that 98 percent of respondents planned to take action with regards to the recommendations.

Figure 50. Caseworker/Supervisor Feedback: I Plan to Follow Through With the Recommendations (n=95)



Data Source: QSR Review Feedback Surveys, SurveyMonkey, April 2016

Through the NBPB process, counties utilize data to identify county specific strengths and needs. Using this data to conduct analysis, counties request funding that is appropriately justified to continue to support appropriate services and help in the provision of new services to address identified gaps.

The child fatality/near fatality review process, provides local and state teams an avenue by which to review the case in-depth and identify any service **strengths that assisted in meeting the child/youth and family's needs as well as** gap areas in local and statewide service delivery that should be taken into consideration to prevent further instances of abuse and neglect. The ability to identify strengths and needs of the service delivery system is further enhanced by the completion of data collection tools that are completed for each child fatality/near fatality (see Attachment F.1 of the 2017 APSR) and through the recent implementation of content analysis that is conducted on the state generated fatality/near fatality reports.

With regards to IL site visits, prior to the visit, the county completes a pre-site visit questionnaire providing information relative to the services they provide, the youth that they serve, and any progress they have made based on the recommendations discussed at their IL site visit the year prior (see Attachment I). In general, the strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement in their program are evaluated. The discussion focuses on IL referral processes, the IL plan development, life skills classes, youth engagement, court interaction, program administration, transition planning, and aftercare services.

Because the IL reviews are county specific and facilitated with all of those involved in providing services, the review is addressing needs at a local level. OCYF and CWRC identify priority areas to focus on during the annual visits based on recent legislative or policy changes and statewide areas of concern. Recent examples include NYTD, credit checks, transition planning, stipend policies and implementation, subsidized independent living programs, and aftercare services. Additionally, OCYF Program and Regional Representatives occasionally identify counties for IL training and technical assistance based on licensing reviews or other concerns. The strengths and needs are documented in the pre-site visit questionnaire, in the report written based on the on-site meeting and these themes are captured on a statewide level by the Older Youth Project Manager at the Child Welfare Resource Center.

4. Provides relevant reports

PA's current CQI/QA system produces a number of reports that generate data and findings while also offering opportunities for greater analysis to support work aimed at improving outcomes for children, youth and families. Each county

participating in the COI/QSR effort receives a final county level report which provides a breakdown of county performance across all indicators and sub-indicators. These reports are posted publically to the DHS website. As counties participate in multiple QSRs as part of the cycle for case reviews, they will be able to see comparative data, which allows for ongoing monitoring and further analysis of whether continuous quality improvement efforts have had the desired effects in improving outcomes and performance. At the conclusion of each round of QSRs, a statewide report is generated to provide aggregate data on the performance for all counties who participated in the QSR that round. The QSR statewide report also provides a comparison of statewide performance from previous rounds to the findings from the most recent round. [QSR statewide reports](#) are made available to the public through the CWRC website and the results are reviewed and discussed with key stakeholder groups focused on system and practice improvements at the statewide level, such as the TA Collaborative Steering Committee.

Beginning in Round VI, which started in March of 2016, the QSR reviewers began utilizing a new web-based system to complete the rating of QSR cases and to capture their rationale for the case ratings they provide. A copy of the revised web-based roll-up sheet that is generated by the new system is provided as Attachment J of the 2017 APSR. Utilization of this new format will result in an additional report being generated to counties that includes content analysis of the written case rating rationale. Additionally, a new template (see Attachment K of 2017 APSR) was created to capture focus group information in a format that is then utilized by the OCYF data contractor to conduct analysis and provide a report back to the county regarding key findings from the focus groups conducted as part of the QSR. A content analysis is also completed on the written rationale completed by reviewers for each QSR indicator and sub-indicator. This content analysis provides further information related to strengths and concerns identified by reviewers in their rating rationale.

At the conclusion of each licensing inspection, an Annual Survey and Evaluation Summary are completed for the county. Along with the summary is a **list of any regulatory findings requiring a plan of correction and the county's plan** to address the areas of non-compliance. These summaries and plans of correction are made available to the public online through the Human Services Provider Directory on the DHS website.

As one part of the [Annual Child Abuse Report](#), an analysis is provided around **data of PA's child fatalities/near fatalities** from the previous calendar year. PA continues to work on strengthening this data analysis and reporting and has made this an objective within the 2015-2019 CFSP. A report is also issued for each child fatality/near fatality that identifies the basic circumstances contributing to the **fatality/near fatality, history of family's involvement with the agency and county and**

state level recommendations related to the case. Redacted copies of the reports are made available to the public online through the DHS website at <http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/publications/childfatalitynearfatalityreports/index.htm>.

Following an IL site visit, a report is written by the Practice Improvement Specialist (PIS) facilitating the discussion. This report is then reviewed by the PIS supervisor and sent to the Older Youth Project Manager for review. This allows for the collection of statewide trends, which are then shared with OCYF as needed. The reports are then sent to OCYF to be reviewed and approved, providing feedback when necessary. The approved report is then sent to the county so they are able to review the final product and use the document to develop their plan for the following year. An example of a completed report is available as Attachment I.1 of the 2017 APSR.

Data is captured from all pre-site visit questionnaires by CWRC. This information is shared with the Older Youth Continuous Improvement Team at the Child Welfare Resource Center to guide their work and identify areas in which there may be a need to address gap areas. This information is also provided, upon request, to counties or other stakeholders. For example, there have been gaps identified as to the number of older youth receiving appropriate SWAN units of service leading to discussions at the local and statewide level to address the issue(s). Information gathered from these reports assists in identifying systemic issues on a local and statewide level, as well as informs county and/or state training needs related to serving older youth and achieving the goals of safety, permanency and well-being. The information is also used to contribute to annual reports.

5. Evaluates implemented program improvement measures

Counties joining the statewide CQI efforts participate in a state supported QSR on an ongoing basis at least once every three years. Each subsequent QSR provides an opportunity to evaluate the implementation of improvement efforts outlined in **each county's CIP**. Some counties (including Philadelphia and Allegheny) also select to utilize internal QSRs to help monitor ongoing implementation in between state-supported reviews. Counties have the ability to request additional analysis of QSR results in order to target key indicators that may be related specifically to county improvement efforts or priorities. CIP monitoring at the county level is conducted by the OCYF Regional Office and at the state level through the Sustaining Change Workgroup and TA Collaborative.

Over the course of the past five Rounds of the QSRs, themes can be found in the areas identified by counties for improvement. The table below provides a breakdown of the most commonly selected areas for improvement from the 49 CIPs developed as a result of the QSRs that occurred between 2010 and 2015.

Figure 51. Top Five Most Commonly Identified Areas for Improvement in County Improvement Plans (CIPs) for QSR Rounds I-V¹¹

QSR Indicator/Area	Number of CIPs
Teaming	29
Engagement - Fathers	17
Permanency	13
Pathway to Independence	10
Assessment and Understanding	10

Data Source: QSR County Improvement Plans, PA Online Human Services Provider Directory, April 2016

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) and the University of Pittsburgh; School of Social Work, Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center (PACWRC) jointly sponsored an evaluation of the practices that are outlined in the APHSA Organizational Effectiveness (OE) model, used as part of Pennsylvania’s continuous quality improvement efforts. The first phase, completed in 2014, consisted of a retrospective survey and key informant interviews of APHSA and PACWRC client agencies. The primary goal of this phase was to identify key elements of the APHSA OE practice that were associated with achieving and sustaining organizational goals. 98.1% of survey respondents indicated that their organizations had maintained the improvements resulting from the OE project for periods of time ranging from two weeks to three years, and another 92% maintained strong sponsorship for future work. Information from [Component 1 Evaluation Findings](#) has continued to inform Quality Assurance efforts at the state and local level. The second component of this evaluation included an in-depth case study of the OE work in two Pennsylvania counties, focused on the achievement of specific Continuous Improvement (CI) plan goals, as well as enhanced organizational capacities and functioning in areas targeted by the counties’ CI plans.

With regards to annual county children and youth licensing, the counties must articulate a plan to address each citation that is found through the licensing inspection. The OCYF Regional Office reviews, approves and monitors implementation of these plans. These plans for improvement are public and posted online with the licensing inspection summary on the PA DHS Human Services Provider Licensing webpage.

Through the annual NBPB process, the data packages provided to counties allow them to continually track progress across similar measures over time. In outlining their plan for improvement, each county must identify measures they

¹¹ Counties generally select up to three areas of improvement for their County Improvement Plans.

will focus on to monitor if implementation of program improvements appears to be having the intended impact. As part of the justification for funding, counties must identify any factors that they believe may have contributed to instances where the predicted outcomes are not achieved and how these factors will be overcome in the future.

While the child fatality/near fatality review process provides basic data for analysis of trends/factors related to child fatalities and near fatalities, PA recognizes that there is great need to better use this data within a CQI context. PA is actively working to improve this process to ensure data collection and analysis related to child fatalities and near/fatalities is not only used to help identify gap areas and identify solutions, but also enhance ongoing monitoring of implemented improvement measures. Beginning in the summer of 2016, the trend analysis team began receiving quarterly data reports and is working at identifying what additional data or analysis is needed and reviewing recommendations coming from the county and regional child fatality/near fatality reports.

The CWRC provides consultation and support services across Pennsylvania with the goal of facilitating positive, strategic, organizational change, and the implementation of best practice to improve family serving systems. Technical assistance is provided through facilitating work sessions, cultivating organizational leadership, encouraging meaningful staff and consumer involvement, identifying root cause needs, embedding application of new knowledge and skills through transfer of learning, and supporting the monitoring and resourcing of continuous improvement efforts. Practice Improvement Specialists are assigned to specific counties and are able to integrate independent living assistance with other technical assistance services. IL specific technical assistance and training is provided to address issues identified in the county IL monitoring plan or other continuous improvement plan as requested by the county or OCYF. Technical assistance is typically provided in conjunction with other statewide and county partners. If the county is participating in the statewide QSR process, attempts are made to conduct the IL site visit during the QSR to incorporate the strengths and concerns from both processes into the **county's continuous improvement efforts**. Counties report their progress in their **annual Needs Based Plan and Budget as well as during their next year's site visit process**.

Staff and Provider Training

- ❖ *Item 26: Initial Staff Training: How well is the staff and provider training system 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?*
- ❖ *Item 27: Ongoing Staff Training: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning statewide to ensure that ongoing training is provided for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP?*

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSP Systemic Factor:

[55 PA Code §3490.312 Training program requirements for direct service workers](#)

[55 PA Code §3700.65 Foster Parent Training](#)

[55 PA Code §3800.58 Staff Training \(Child Residential Day and Treatment Facilities\)](#)

Initial and Ongoing Staff Training

Training provision

Public child welfare workers must complete the 126 hour certification training, Charting the Course (CTC), within 18 months of hire. However, data reflects the average new worker completes their requirements within a much briefer period of time. Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, 60 rounds of CTC have been completed. The average new worker completed their certification training 111 days from their effective date. This data represents every new worker that completed Module 10 between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, which was a total of 1067 workers. The minimum number of days to completion was 20, while the maximum was 539. The minimum is due to a policy which permits and promotes **Bachelor’s level child welfare CWEB interns completing CTC while they are a student.** Upon hire, they are already certified and ready to assume job responsibilities. With regards to the child welfare workforce, for state fiscal year 2015/2016, a total of 3246.54 caseworker and 809.67 caseworker supervisor positions were approved for funding. As of the close of the state fiscal year (June 30, 2016), 2887.25 caseworker positions and 777.18 caseworker supervisor positions were filled.

Past CFSP Performance

Pennsylvania was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in both the 2008 and 2002 CFSPs.

In addition, staff must receive 20 hours of ongoing training on an annual basis. Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, the CWRC held 523 workshops, which were attended by over 3,820 existing staff, including 599

private provider staff. Samples of training records are reviewed in each county during the annual licensure process to ensure compliance with the requirements for initial and ongoing training hours and timeframes, as well as the requirements that staff have an individual training needs assessment (ITNA) with an individual training plan completed annually.

Information obtained through annual CCYA licensing indicates that staff is consistently fulfilling requirements related to initial and ongoing training hours across the state. For annual CCYA licensing inspections that occurred during calendar year 2016, one provisionally licensed county was cited for failure to ensure 158 direct care workers received certification or 34 caseworker supervisors completed **a supervisor’s training program. The county submitted a plan of correction to remedy this issue, which is being monitored by the OCYF Regional Office.** In one fully licensed county, 27 staff records were cited due to staff not completing the required mandated reporter training. Sixteen staff records (8%) were cited for failing to have documentation verifying staff completed the required 20 hours of ongoing training.

Figure 52. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Initial and Ongoing Staff Training

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	99 cases (2 counties)	192 cases (1 county)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited (n=1)	13 cases (1 county)	47 cases (6 counties)
Total Records Cited	112	239
Total Staff Records Reviewed	1443	2048
New Staff	586	1223
Tenured Staff	857	825
Total Counties without Citation	64	54
Rate of Compliance	92.24	88.33

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

Prior to working with children alone and within 120 calendar days after the date of hire, the director and each full-time, part-time, and temporary staff person of child residential and day treatment facilities who have regular and significant direct contact with children are required to have at least 30 hours of training which covers required categories outlined in regulation. After initial training, the director and each full-time, part-time and temporary staff person who have regular and significant direct contact with children are required to have at least 40 hours of training annually relating to the care and management of children. Adherence to these training requirements is monitored through the PA DHS Bureau of Human Services Licensing.

Quality Assurance

To ensure training covers the knowledge and skills needed by staff to carry out their duties and the consistent and competent delivery of training sessions and workshops, the CWRC engages in multiple activities and strategies, including but not limited to:

- The Office of Children, Youth, and Families participates in the development and approval of all certification curriculum.
- Content is driven by stakeholders and regularly revised based on their respective feedback. Several years ago, CTC was significantly revised, and the next set of major revisions will occur over the next two years. This revision will include expanding the online portions of CTC, which will allow counties greater flexibility in completing the series.
- The CWRC will also be moving towards participant focused curriculum, which puts learning more in the control of the participants by giving them the content.
- Participant level data is also generated by the completion of the Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNA). This data is put into aggregate and the workforce's **most pressing needs are prioritized for curriculum development**. ITNA results from 2013/2014 identified the following high need areas: Sexual Abuse, Ethics, Family Violence, and Independent Living Services. This data informs what new trainings need to be developed and what existing trainings need to be scheduled.
- Conducting an extensive trainer/consultant selection process consisting of an application, reference check, and panel interview;
- Prioritizing the selection of experienced child welfare professionals who have **worked in Pennsylvania's child welfare system and with training experience**;
- Recruiting youth and parent consumers as co-trainers;
- Providing selected trainers/consultants with a foundational course on training, platform, and facilitation skills;
- Requiring trainer/consultants to deliver a practice training session which includes critical feedback from peers and CWRC staff;
- Supporting trainers/consultants participation in QSRs;
- Training or mentoring trainers/consultants on curriculum content prior to approving them to train the curriculum;
- Observing trainers/consultants the first time they deliver a curriculum and on a periodic basis and providing them critical feedback on their training, platform and facilitation skills;
- Providing trainers/consultants technical assistance;
- Requiring trainers/consultants to obtain a minimum of six professional development hours annually;

- Providing professional development opportunities for trainers/consultants through training sessions, quarterly newsletter, and a trainer/consultant handbook;
- Convening monthly consultant/trainer advisory group conference call meetings;
- Conducting level one evaluations of all training sessions;
- Requesting trainers/consultants to provide feedback after every time they train a curriculum; and
- Developing a trainer utilization process to ensure the equitable assignment of trainers to deliver curriculum.

Evaluation Results: Knowledge and Skills

As noted above, the CWRC is working to enhance the level of training evaluation across all curricula, with particular focus on the certification series. Over the next few years, the CWRC will be implementing the following: a new level 1 participant evaluation for all courses, a knowledge test for Module 9 of CTC, an embedded evaluation for Module 2 of CTC, and eventually components of the Supervisory Training Series (STS). Each of the evaluation activities provide information and have the potential to identify areas for improvement in the curriculum and to determine the extent to which the curriculum achieves the learning objectives. In particular, the knowledge test and embedded evaluation will provide information about how well the training addresses basic skills and knowledge needed by staff to carry out their duties.

The CTC Module 9 knowledge test is a multiple choice pre/post-test which was developed to coincide with concurrent planning updates and a reconfiguration of the course to ensure alignment of the learning objectives with content and assessments. Resource Center Practice Improvement Specialists reviewed the items to help to establish face validity and pilot testing took place with approximately 200 CTC participants. Initial analyses of pilot data are promising; they show a significant increase in post-test scores relative to pre-test scores, indicating gains in knowledge over the course of the module. Analyses will continue as we collect more data, and revisions to the test or the module will be made accordingly.

The CTC Module 2 embedded evaluation was also developed to coincide with incorporating recent CPSL 2014 amendments. Seven scenarios were **developed to reinforce participants' learning and provide them with an** opportunity to apply what they have learned to determine if abuse has occurred and to identify the perpetrator in each scenario. These items were also reviewed by Resource Center Practice Improvement Specialists and the evaluation was pilot tested with participants in 4 deliveries of CTC Module 2. Results from the pilot testing are being reviewed to inform revisions to this activity.

The Resource Center provides the opportunity for each participant to complete a level 1 evaluation upon completion of each module. This year, the level evaluation form was revised to align it more closely with the participants' perspective according to industry standards. To further support the assessment of the quality of CWRC curricula and its delivery, a new process for the administration of the level 1 evaluation was established to encourage participants to provide the receipt of in-depth and candid feedback. The revised forms were implemented in April/May 2016. The following data was generated from the previous evaluation form.

Participants are asked to rate their level of understanding of the topic both before and after the training on an updated 5 point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). In order to examine the relationship between participants' responses to these two questions, a paired samples t-test was conducted at 95 percent confidence interval. Participants rated their level of understanding significantly higher post-training than pre-training ($p < .001$) for each of the modules.

Charting the Course Participant Evaluation

Figure 53. Level of Understanding Pre- and Post- Training

	<i>n</i>	Mean Before Training	Mean After Training
Mod 1	952	3.19	4.11
Mod 2	991	3.28	4.24
Mod 3	920	3.42	4.39
Mod 4	942	2.96	4.15
Mod 5	912	3.16	4.20
Mod 6	973	3.19	4.18
Mod 7	957	3.26	4.17
Mod 8	808	3.18	4.24
Mod 9	862	3.28	4.24
Mod 10	879	3.66	4.41

Data Source: ENCOMPASS, CWRC, April 2016

In addition we also ask participants to answer if the "Content had an impact on my understanding of the subject". The scale is 1 to 5.

Figure 54. Content Impact on Understanding of Subject

	Mean – Impact on my understanding of the subject
Mod 1	4.54
Mod 2	4.61
Mod 3	4.67
Mod 4	4.64
Mod 5	4.61
Mod 6	4.54
Mod 7	4.56
Mod 8	4.63
Mod 9	4.58
Mod 10	4.57

Data Source: ENCOMPASS, CWRC, April 2016

Finally, we ask participants if the “Content improves my ability to Practice in Child Welfare”. The scale is 1 to 5.

Figure 55. Content Improves Ability to Practice Child Welfare

	Mean – Content improves my ability to practice in child welfare
Mod 1	4.51
Mod 2	4.61
Mod 3	4.67
Mod 4	4.64
Mod 5	4.62
Mod 6	4.53
Mod 7	4.56
Mod 8	4.61
Mod 9	4.60
Mod 10	4.57

Data Source: ENCOMPASS, CWRC, April 2016

The certification training for supervisors consists of 5 modules with a total duration of 60 hrs. Between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016, 146 supervisors completed the series. Participants were asked to rate their level of understanding of the topic both before and after the training on a 5 point Likert Scale (1 = Poor, 5=Excellent). In order to examine the relationship between **participants' responses to** these two questions, a paired samples t-test was conducted at 95 percent confidence interval.

Participants rated their level of understanding significantly higher post-training than pre-training ($p < .001$) for each of the modules.

Supervisor Training Series – Statewide

Figure 56. STS Level of Understanding Pre- and Post- Training

	<i>n</i>	Mean Before Training	Mean After Training
Mod 1	195	3.22	4.16
Mod 2	182	2.98	3.90
Mod 3	134	3.17	4.20
Mod 4	143	3.52	4.11
Mod 5	138	3.46	4.27

Data Source: ENCOMPASS, CWRC, April 2016

Finally, the CWRC offers an extensive list of training opportunities for seasoned child welfare professionals. **Below is the mean “before” and “after”** scores for every completed evaluation received for ongoing trainings held between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2016. Participants were asked to rate their level of understanding of the topic both before and after the training on a 5 point Likert Scale (1 = Poor, 5=Excellent). In order to examine the relationship **between participants' responses to** these two questions, a paired samples t-test was conducted at 95 percent confidence interval. Participants rated their level of understanding significantly higher post-training than pre-training ($p < .001$) for each of the modules.

Ongoing Trainings – Statewide

Figure 57. Ongoing Trainings Level of Understanding Pre- and Post-Training

<i>n</i>	Mean Before Training	Mean After Training
5371	3.24	4.17

Data Source: ENCOMPASS, CWRC, April 2016

- ❖ *Item 28: How well is the staff and provider training system functioning 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 needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children?*

Regulations at 55 Pa Code §3700.65 require that foster parents participate in a minimum of six hours of agency approved training annually. Private agencies and CCYAs develop and conduct much of the foster parent training. Current regulation does not specify specific training topics that must be covered; therefore, the content of the training curriculum is at the discretion of the public or private foster family provider. It should be noted, however, that 55 Pa Code §3700.38 speaks to those topics that foster parents must be made of aware of during orientation, prior to placing a child in their home. Those topics include foster family care agency philosophy and practices, roles of the foster family, foster family care agency policies and procedures for discipline/punishment and control of foster children, first aid procedures and applicable statutes, regulations and general procedures.

Act 31 of 2014 made changes to Title 23, Chapter 63 (The Child Protective Services Law) and set the following requirements related to child abuse recognition and reporting training for foster parents:

- Effective December 31, 2104, new employees having direct contact with children in child-serving institutions, facilities or agencies that DHS licenses, approved or registers and new foster parents must receive 3 hours of training within 90 days of hire or approval and 3 hours of training every five years thereafter.
- Beginning July 1, 2015, the following must receive 3 hours of training prior to the re-issuance of a license, approval or registration certificate and three hours of training every five years thereafter:

- Current operators of child-serving institutions, facilities or agencies that DHS licenses, approved or registers;
- Current employees having direct contact with children in child-serving institutions, facilities or agencies that DHS licenses, approved or registers;
- Current caregivers and employees in family day care homes; and
- Current foster parents.

Currently private foster family care agencies and CCYAs that provide foster care services must track foster parent training to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. **OCYF’s regional offices** assess compliance with foster parent training requirements during the annual licensure of private foster family care agencies and CCYAs that provide foster care.

Figure 58. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Agency Resource Family Training

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	0 cases (0 counties)	Unspecified # of cases ¹² (1 county)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	8 cases (4 counties)	11 cases (1 county)
Total Records Cited	8	11
Total Resource Family Records Reviewed	978	781

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

During annual CCYA licensing inspection, OCYF Regional Office representatives conduct visits and interviews with agency resource homes. During these interviews, resource families are asked specifically how training is offered and if it meets the needs of the resource family. For calendar years 2015 and 2016, a total of 226 agency resource family interviews were conducted. Review of the findings from these interviews as reported in the licensing inspection summaries provides evidence to suggest there are not any systemic issues of concern with regards to agency resource family training. In general, the licensing inspection summaries reported that resource families provided

¹² The licensing inspection summary noted that the county had an issue in which resource families were not trained on the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard as required, however the specific number of agency resource homes found to have not received the training was not specified.

positive feedback with regards to training. Specific examples from the licensing inspection summaries include:

- ***"The foster mother stated that the agency has treated the family with respect and that the information regarding the training topics was very helpful."***
- ***"The agency provides training opportunities in a classroom setting as well as online that assist the parents in understanding the trauma the children have experienced."***
- ***"The resource parents feel the agency is responsive to their training needs. A monthly newsletter is sent to all the families which contain information on any opportunities for the resource family to earn a training credit."***
- ***"The families feel they are supported by CYS and receive the appropriate dosage of training to meet the needs of the children placed in their homes."***

There were two counties in which training concerns were specifically noted. As reported in the licensing inspection summaries:

- ***"The foster parents did express that more specialized training after their initial training would be helpful in dealing with children with trauma or special needs."***
- ***"There needs to be better communication surrounding training and the convenience of training."***

The Child Welfare Resource Center develops and provides some training opportunities for resource parents. Every year, the CWRC is responsible for delivering up to ten courses at the annual Pennsylvania State Resource Family Association conference. Those courses and others are then available to be delivered at county request throughout the state. The curriculum topics are selected to correspond with prominent legislative, policy, and/or best practices curriculum topics that were developed for child welfare professionals. Curriculum topics developed for resources parents this year include: Concurrent Planning, Independent Living, Child Protective Services Law, and Maintaining Resilience during Exposure to Traumatic Stress.

Many public and private foster care agencies exceed the six-hour minimum **requirement found in PA's foster family care regulations before certifying foster families.** A key training resource available to help address the skills and knowledge foster parents need to effectively carry out their responsibilities is the Pennsylvania Parents As Tender Healers (PATH) Training developed by the

PSRFA, in collaboration with Spaulding for Children. The PA PATH Training is different than most of the foster and adoptive training that child welfare has relied upon in the past. It is a training that discusses the grief and loss foster children experience and what types of behaviors and difficulties resource families can expect and how to respond to such difficulties. In addition to covering Pennsylvania specific laws, regulations and policies related to foster care and adoption, the training includes such topics as Understanding Hurt Children, Tender Healing, Crisis Intervention and the Characteristics of Successful Resource Families. The training features real families who have been foster and/or adoptive families and uses their expertise to reach out to potential foster families. PSRFA also holds an annual conference to provide training to resource families and child welfare professionals. Training received by resource families at this annual event helps to meet state requirements for annual re-certification.

There are currently no specific requirements outlined in statute or regulation regarding a number of training hours required of adoptive parents. As part of the adoption process, SWAN provides family profiles of potential adoptive families. During the process of developing the family profile, adoptive parents must attend a SWAN certified preparation program that contains a minimum of the following components prior to completion of the family profile:

- How the system works;
- Who the children are;
- Child development;
- Parenting;
- Attachment;
- Grief and loss;
- Who the adoptive parents are;
- Resources; and
- Additional components as may be required by the individual affiliate/county.

The Family Profile process includes on-going training throughout the process about who the children are in out of home care and the types of on-going supports and services they may need and how to access them. The Family Profile process is designed to train families about the reality of becoming an adoptive family; it is not simply a home study. Foster family training is offered by many of the same agencies that provide adoptive family training and many families are approved to both foster and adopt.

Additional feedback regarding the functioning of the training system to ensure training is provided to prospective foster and adoptive parents that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adoptive children was also gathered during a focus group

conducted with the SWAN Advisory Committee in the fall of 2016. The consensus of focus group participants was that training is occurring, however the quality of these trainings may vary. Some points of discussion that arose during the focus group included:

- There is not a standard for training across the board for training of resource families from county to county or from family to family within an agency or provider;
- There needs to be some attention given to how training for kinship families is looked at;
- Training is often made accessible to resource families, however sometimes they seem unresponsive to these training opportunities;
- Certain child behaviors and needs are different, training needs to be specific to ensure the resource family can meet the specific needs of the child;
- Ongoing practice with skills introduced through training as well as transfer of learning opportunities need to occur to better support learning
- There is a need for more structured/support around trainings, to include looking at use of simulation;
- More training is needed for adoptive families.

With regards to resource family training, feedback from focus groups conducted with resource families through the QSR process, as well as interviews with resources families which occurred during CCYA licensing inspections, revealed an identifiable theme in which resource parents expressed success with, or interest in, peer to peer mentoring opportunities or making supportive connections with other resource parents to further their learning. This aligns with the feedback from SWAN Advisory Committee members with regards to a need for further training supports to resource families that goes beyond basic models of classroom training.

Service Array and Resource Development (see also *Child and Family Service Continuum in 2017 APSR*)

- ❖ *CFSR Item 29: How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP*

- o *Services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs;*
 - o *Services that address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment;*
 - o *Services that enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable; and*
 - o *Services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency.*
- ❖ *CFSR Item 30: How well is the service array and resource development system functioning to ensure that the following array of services is accessible in all political jurisdictions covered by the CFSP?*

The philosophy of the child welfare system is based on the premise that children should be maintained safely within their own families and that if children require placement they should remain within their own community whenever possible. OCYF regulations require that a comprehensive array of services be available in each county to support these efforts. The availability of services is reviewed each year during the annual licensing inspection through the case record review. Additionally, each county must sign an assurance of compliance with this requirement as part of the annual plan submission and identify in the plan how it will arrange for any needed service that is not provided in the county. Through the NBPB process, counties assess and identify service needs specific to the families and children in their community, outline strategies to institute those services, and develop a supporting budget.

PA Laws, Regulations and Policies Relevant to Assessment of CFSP Systemic Factor:

55 Pa Code 3130.34
Required services
55 Pa Code 3130.35
(Placement and reunification services)

55 Pa Code 3130.38 (Other required services)

55 Pa Code 3130.36
(Adoption services)

55 Pa Code 3130.37
(Emergency and planned temporary placement services)

55 Pa Code 3490.60
(Services available through the county agency)

55 Pa Code 3490.235
(Services available through the county agency for children in need of general protective services)

Past PA Performance on Systemic Factor: Service Array and Resource Development

Pennsylvania was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in both the 2008 and 2002 CFRs.

Under PA regulations at § 3130.34, county children and youth agencies are required to provide or arrange for the provision of:

- (1) Placement prevention and reunification services.
- (2) Adoption services.
- (3) Emergency and planned temporary placement services.
- (4) Other required services, including services or care ordered by the court.

Placement prevention and reunification services include all of the following:

(1) *Counseling service.* Supportive and therapeutic activities provided to a child **or a child's family and directed at preventing or alleviating conditions, including crisis conditions, which present a risk to the safety or well-being of the child by improving problem-solving and coping skills, interpersonal functioning, the stability of the family, or the capacity of the family to function independently.**

(2) *Parent education.* Practical education and training for parents in child care, child development, parent-child relationships and the experience and responsibilities of parenthood.

(3) *Homemaker/caretaker service.* Home help, home care skills instruction **and/or child care and supervision provided to a child and the child's family in the child's home by a trained homemaker or caretaker.**

(4) *Part day service.* Care and supervision for a child for less than 24 hours per day provided under a family service plan to enable the child to remain in or **return to the child's own home.**

Other required services may include any of the following:

(a) *Court-ordered services.* The county agency shall provide or arrange for the provision of service and care ordered by the court;

(b) *Child protective services.* Other services required by §3490 (relating to protective services);

(c) *Family service plans.* Other services required by the service plan and service plan reviews.

Adoption services are those agency activities designed to culminate in legal adoption. These activities include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Adoptive home recruitment.
- (2) Study of the child and natural parents.
- (3) Study of the adoptive applicants.
- (4) Placement and supervision of the child in the adoptive home.
- (5) Preparation and presentation of material for the adoption hearing.
- (6) Assuring provision of adoption subsidies when needed.

In addition to those services required in regulation at §3130 (relating to administration of county children and youth social service programs) the county agencies must also, arrange or otherwise make available the following services for the prevention and treatment of child abuse:

(1) Emergency medical services which include appropriate emergency medical care for examination, evaluation, and treatment of children suspected of being abused.

(2) Self-help groups to encourage self-treatment of present and potential abusers.

(3) Multidisciplinary teams composed of professionals from a variety of disciplines who are consultants to the county agency in its case management responsibilities as required by Chapter 3130 who perform one of the following functions:

- Pool their knowledge and skills to assist the county agency in diagnosing child abuse.
- Provide or recommend comprehensive coordinated treatment.
- Periodically assess the relevance of the treatment and the progress of the family.
- Participate in the state or local child fatality review team convened by a professional, organization and the county agency for the purpose of investigating a child fatality or the development and promotion of strategies to prevent child fatality.

The county agencies are also required to provide, arrange or otherwise make available the same services for children in need of general protective services as for abused children.

The NBPB process and the Human Services Block Grant are efforts to allow the individualization of services at the county level to provide flexibility to counties in developing an array of services that meet the needs of the local community. In the development of the NBPB, county children and youth agencies are required to consult with a number of stakeholders in the local **community and identify strengths and challenges that shape the agency's funding** requests. A survey of all 67 county NBPB submissions for FFY 2017-2018 (submitted by counties August 2016), provides an assessment of themes in relation to service gap areas that counties currently struggle with in PA. The NBPB submissions were reviewed for information in the county strengths and challenges section of the plan template to look for any identified service strengths of gaps. It should be noted that this review is preliminary and not an exhaustive review of all facets of the NBPB submission, nor did every county identify service gap areas.

In general, counties identifying service gaps tended to note a need for more resource homes in general, as well as more resource homes equipped to handle the children and youth with highly complex behavioral or mental health needs. Behavioral and mental health service needs were not commonly identified as a gap area in terms of the existence of or array of services available, however turnover among staff providing these services and long waiting lists were noted

to be barriers that made accessibility of some of these services limited for children and families.

Another commonly cited service gap was related to transportation. Reliable, accessible transportation was cited in the context of serving as a barrier to individuals being able to utilize services when they were in place. This was an area cited most often by rural counties. Another commonly discussed service gap emerged related to housing. In general, lack of affordable housing was identified by some counties as a service gap that serves as a barrier to children being able to safely remain in their homes. Safe, stable housing for older youth transitioning out of the system was an area in particular related to housing where some counties identified additional service needs. Twenty-three counties, in identifying independent living program outcomes for the upcoming fiscal year, selected to focus on improving programming to help securing stable housing for the older youth that they serve. This need was further corroborated during focus groups conducted with youth participating in the Independent Living retreat during the summer of 2016. In addition to housing, the older youth identified assistance in linking to stable, reliable employment to be an important service need that they value but sometimes find lacking.

Through the NBPB and HSBG program, counties may request special grant funding to support efforts to design a service array appropriate to meet the needs of those served by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Over the past few years, OCYF has continued to expand the special grants program (SGI) to support CCYAs in identifying evidence-based programs (EBPs) or promising practices that will meet the unique needs of the children, youth and families they serve in their communities. Special grant funds may be requested following for the following areas:

Promising Practice

Dependency and delinquency outcome-based programs - request must include the number of children expected to be served, the expected reduction in placement, the relation to a benchmark selected by a county, or a direct **correlation to the county's Continuous Quality Improvement Plan.**

Housing

Activity or program designed to prevent children and youth from entering out of home placement, facilitate the reunification of children and youth with their families or facilitate the successful transition of youth aging out or those who have aged out of placement to living on their own.

Alternatives to Truancy

Activity or service designed to reduce the number of children referred for truancy, increase school attendance, or improve educational outcome of student participants, increase appropriate advancement to the next higher grade level, decrease child/caretaker conflict or reduce percentage of children entering out of home care because of truancy.

Evidence Based Programs

Evidence-based programs use a defined curriculum or set of services that, when implemented with fidelity as a whole, has been validated by some form of scientific evidence. For SFY 2017-2018, CCYAs were permitted to select any that is designed to meet an identified need of the population they serve that is not currently available within their communities given that need is justified.

A review of special grant requests from the NBPB submissions for 2017-2018 found that overwhelmingly the most requested program was FGDM (57 counties). The selected counties requesting FGDM represent counties serving 77% of the children in out of home placement as of September 30, 2016. Grants to support housing were requested by 54 of the counties who also represent approximately 77% of children in out of home care. Funds to support multi-systemic therapy were requested by 45 counties, covering 34% of children in out of home care. A total of 39 counties, representing 36% of children in out of home care, requested funding to support truancy prevention services. Nineteen counties, representing 61% of children in out of home care, requested funding to support implementation of the CANS. Requests for other EBPs and Promising Practices showed great diversity, with several counties working with local providers to develop innovative programming to better meet the individualized needs of the local community.

The Human Services Block Grant consists of seven funding streams that allow counties the flexibility to decide where the money is needed most. Counties, in partnership with community members, identify service strengths and gaps and have the ability to adjust the different funding streams as needed to target service gap areas. Thirty counties currently participate in the HSBG. The seven funding streams include:

Mental Health Community Programs – based on local priorities around unified intake, community consultation, and education, support for families caring for members with mental disorders and community residential programs;

Intellectual Disabilities Community Base – services to individuals of all ages with an intellectual disability diagnosis not eligible for other specific waiver programs;

Homeless Assistance Program – services that help those who are homeless with shelter, housing, rental assistance, and general case management;

Act 152 – non-hospital residential detoxification and rehabilitation services for persons eligible for Medical Assistance;

Behavioral Health Services Initiative – for treatment for individuals with serious mental health and substance use disorders who are not eligible for Medical Assistance; and

Human Services Development Fund– assistance to combat isolation, poverty and dependence.

An important component of PA’s service array is Family Centers. For nearly a decade, Pennsylvania's Family Centers (FCs) have integrated and provided community services to help families become healthier, better educated and self-sufficient. Family Centers help parents:

- Learn about their children's development.
- Engage in parent education and child development activities.
- Access health care information as well as assistance regarding health care services and insurance.
- Access education, training and employment information.
- Receive information and assistance on other community resources, such as well-baby care, immunizations and early intervention services.

Since each Family Center takes a unique approach to meeting their community's needs, not all services are available in every center. However, Family Center services may include:

- Adult Education
- Job Training and Placement
- Language Skills
- Literacy Programs
- Parent Support Groups
- Parenting Skills Programs
- Child Health and Development Screenings
- Family Activities
- Toy and Book Lending Libraries
- Child Care Programs
- Summer and After-School Activities
- The PAT Program

There are 32 state-funded FCs in Pennsylvania. Twelve are school-based, and 20 are community-based centers. FCs are located in 28 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties and includes 62 sites. Almost 60 percent of Pennsylvania's population lives in counties served by FCs.

During the QSR, one of the critical indicators which speak to agency performance related to service array measures intervention adequacy and resource availability. This indicator takes into consideration whether an adequate, locally available array of services exists in order to implement the individualized intervention and support strategies planned for the child/youth and family in a timely manner. The sub-indicator resource availability looks at the degree to which resources required to implement current child/youth and family plans are available on timely, sufficient and convenient local basis. In rating this sub-indicator, reviewers consider if each service and support is readily accessible when needed (i.e. the team has an array of service options) and if supports and services are sustainable as needed over time. As shown in Figure 53, availability of resources was considered to be acceptable in a high percentage of the cases reviewed during the QSRs.

Figure 59. QSR Sub-I Indicator Resource Availability

	Round I	Round II	Round III	Round IV	Round V	Round VI
Percentage of Cases Rated as Acceptable	92%	91%	94%	90%	90%	92%

Data Source: QSR Electronic Roll-Up Sheets, HZA, December 2016

During a focus group conducted with members of the SWAN Advisory Committee in the fall of 2016, participants were asked to provide feedback specifically related to services that help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency. The group did not reach consensus on their assessment of the statewide functioning as they noted that access to specific services can be different from county to county. During the focus group discussion, participants noted some of the following areas for improvement:

- Ensuring availability and access to appropriate drug and alcohol treatment services;
- Access to post permanency services is not always consistent;
- Private providers are not always aware of the full range of services being offered by the CCYAs;
- Greater attention needs to be given to prevention focused services; and

- High caseworker turnover impacts the ability to provide targeted, individualized services to children and families.

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

- ❖ *CFSR Item 31: How well is the agency responsiveness to the community system functioning statewide to insure that, in implementing the provisions of the CFSP and developing related Annual Progress and Services Reports (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?*
- ❖ *CFSR Item 32: How well is the agency responsiveness to the community **system 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?***

Past PA Performance on Systemic Factor: Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Pennsylvania was found to be in substantial conformity with this systemic factor in both the 2008 and 2002 CFRs.

PA recognizes that children, youth, families, child welfare representatives, and other child and family service partners need to work together as team members with shared community responsibility to achieve positive outcomes. To this end, PA continues to work to ensure strong collaboration with community partners in the evaluation of current practice and plans for ongoing improvement. Additional information about PA collaborative efforts and engagement of stakeholders is outlined in the *Collaboration* section of the 2017 APSR and Attachment C of the 2017 APSR.

To support compliance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act in PA, **House Bill 2670, Printer’s Number 4849 was signed into law as Act 146** on Nov. 9, 2006 by Governor Edward G. Rendell. **Act 146 amended Pennsylvania’s** Child Protective Services Law (Title 23 Pa.C.S., Chapter 63) to address the establishment, function, membership, meetings and reports as they relate to Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in Pennsylvania. Act 146 required that the department establish a minimum of three Citizen Review Panels. In 2007, a Citizens Review subcommittee was formed to address the establishment and support of Citizen Review Panels in Pennsylvania in accordance with the legal mandates set forth in state and federal statutes. Three panels were established

in 2010. **These panels are located regionally and cover 36 of Pennsylvania's 67** counties. The Citizen Review Panels provide recommendations which are reviewed by DHS annually and published as part of the Annual Child Abuse Report. The CRPs continue to provide important feedback that helps inform OCYF effort to improve the child welfare system.

PA works with systems partners to ensure that services outlined in the CFSP are coordinated with other federal programs serving the same population. OCYF works with OMAP, the state Medicaid Office, and the Office of Income Maintenance (OIM) to ensure policies and procedures are in place to streamline the Medicaid eligibility process for children and youth entering and exiting foster care. At the county level, local CCYAs and the Medicaid physical health managed care organizations are encouraged to develop health service coordination agreements to ensure the coordination of care to children in foster care, which includes working cooperatively to ensure children have timely access to Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) screening. County agencies also work with their local County Assistance Office to coordinate assisting families in accessing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), housing assistance, heating assistance, and other available benefits.

PA's Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) administer Part C and Part B, Section 619 of the federal law Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004. OCDEL oversees the provision of **PA's Early Intervention (EI) Program** which consists of services and supports designed to help families with children who have developmental delays and disabilities. CCYAs work closely with local Early Intervention (EI) providers to ensure that all eligible children from birth to five in the child welfare system receive appropriate developmental screening through use of the Ages and Stages **(ASQ™)** and **Ages and Stages: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE™)** tools and when eligible receive services and supports that help promote healthy early child development.

OCYF also coordinates with various other governmental entities through the use of MOUs or interagency agreements to assist in the coordination of services to similarly served populations. Some examples of existing MOUs and interagency agreements include the following:

PDE, DHS, L&I, DOH

The IDEA MOU provides the foundation for the work of the PA Community on Transition (PACT) Secondary Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT is comprised of key agency representatives and implements the MOU to improve coordination of services to children across PA. The PA IL Coordinator is a member of this team.

AOPC

Development of a strategic plan focused on reducing entry into foster care, shortening lengths of stay for children who enter care and preventing re-entries into care for children who leave the system (Interagency Agreement)

PCCD

This Notice of Subgrant allows federal Children's Justice Act grant funds to be transferred to PCCD and ultimately disseminated through the Pennsylvania District Attorney's Institute for the establishment, improvement and support of Multi-Disciplinary Investigative Teams and Children's Advocacy Centers.

PA Coalition Against Rape (PCAR)

The OCYF BJS developed a MOU for providing services as required for the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Juvenile Facility Standards between our YDCs/YFCs for compliance to outside resource for services. This agreement provides and option and coordinates access to outside resources for juvenile residents to receive services for sexual assault and/or sexual harassment. The following sites have a MOU which are LYDC, NCSTU, SMTSU, CSTU, YFC#2 and YFC#3. MOUs were signed in 2013 and are ongoing with no renewal date unless significant changes.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

The Department of Human Services and PennDOT have developed a program that can provide residents in the YDC/YFC system with a valid Pennsylvania Photo Identification Card prior to their release. This MOU is in the final stages and is beginning to go through the signature process.

Department of Education

The 2013 MOU between the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Human Services outlines how educational programming will be conducted throughout the Youth Development Center/Youth Forestry Camp System.

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA)

Interagency Agreement between OCYF and PHEAA to administer the Chafee Education and Training Grant Program to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to youth aging out of foster care.

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention (See also *Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan in 2017 APSR*)

- ❖ *CF SR Item 33: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system 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?*

Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3700 (relating to Foster Family Care Agency) provides the regulatory base for approval of foster parents. Annual licensing inspections are conducted by DHS to review agency records to determine compliance with statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements concerning foster and adoptive parent licensing. Any licensing inspection violations and resulting plans of correction are posted online through the DHS Human Services Provider Directory to increase the transparency of the licensing process and hold licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions accountable for any deficiencies. In 2007, OCYF adopted the licensing protocol for managing agencies where a provisional license is warranted. This protocol has strengthened the licensing process by establishing consistent procedures that are implemented statewide in a standardized fashion.

Provisional approval of a foster family may be authorized when a previously approved foster family is determined, in a re-evaluation, not to meet one of more of the requirements outlined in regulations §3700.62 – §3700.67. A provisional approval may be authorized only if the identified areas of regulatory non-compliance will not result in an immediate threat to the health or safety of foster children placed with foster family. During a period of provisional approval, no additional children may be placed with the foster family. Provisional approval may be maintained for no longer than 12 months. The provisional approval of a foster family unable to achieve compliance within 12 months of receipt of provisional improvement will be terminated and the children living with the foster family removed. A written notice is given to each applicant of decision to approve, disapprove or provisionally approve the foster family. The written notice informs the foster parents that they may appeal the decisions to disapprove or provisionally approve the foster family.

To help promote and facilitate greater use of kinship caregivers, OCYF implemented an emergency caregiver policy in 2003, which was revised based on feedback from CCYAs in 2004 and issued via OCYF Bulletin 3140-04-05/3490-04-01. Emergency caregivers must meet the clearance and home inspection requirements, and must have satisfactory physical, social, and emotional characteristics assessment completed before they can become approved emergency caregivers under the requirements of the bulletin. An on-site visit to the caregiver's home must be completed by the county or private agency before placement can occur. The on-site visit must occur regardless of the time of day or night. During the on-site visit, an inspection of the caregiver's home must be completed by the county or private agency. The emergency caregiver's home must meet the requirements listed at §3700.66 (relating to foster family residence requirements).

During annual CCYA licensing inspections, agency resource home records are reviewed to ensure state standards are being applied to licensed foster family homes and emergency caregivers. Records for all new agency resource homes are also reviewed during the licensing inspection process.

Figure 60. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Agency Foster Family Care Standards

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	49 cases (2 counties)	6 cases ¹³ (3 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	41 cases (16 counties)	73 cases (19 counties)
Total Cases Cited (Duplicated Count)	90	79
Total Resource Family Cases Reviewed	978	781

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

With regards to cases that received citations in calendar year 2016 related to agency foster family care standards, the majority citations were related to lack of documentation confirming standards were met. These standards were related **to proof of valid homeowner's insurance, valid vehicle registrations, FBI and ChildLine clearances, and training requirements necessary for licensure.** Some cases were also cited due to issues regarding temporary homes not completing the approval process within 60 days as required.

¹³ One provisionally licensed county noted systemic issues in the area of agency foster care standards, but a total number of cases cited for non-compliance issues with the standards was not provided.

- ❖ *CFSR Item 34: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention system functioning statewide to ensure that 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?*

PA Act 73 of 2007 requires individuals working with children and individuals residing in resource family homes to obtain fingerprint-based federal criminal background checks bringing PA into compliance with the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. Legislation passed in 2014 amended the PA Child Protective Services Law to raise the age of those individuals requiring background check clearances who reside in the home of a prospective foster parent or adoptive parent for at least 30 days in a calendar year to 18 years of age. The CPSL was also amended to raise the age of individuals residing in a prospective foster or adoptive home from 14 to 18 years of age when considering their background checks for approval of the prospective applicants. Additional amendments relating to clearances for foster parents include:

- Foster parents must report changes in clearance status within 72 hours:
- Removal of foster child or children in accordance with Pennsylvania Rules of Juvenile Court Procedure when there is a:
 - Change in household composition where the person has a clearance that prohibits approval; or
 - Failure of foster parent to submit required information.
- Clearances for foster parents must be renewed every 60 months rather than the previously required 24 months.

Amendments as it relates to clearances for foster and adoptive parents also include:

- Clarifies that a prospective foster or adoptive home cannot be approved if a household member over 18 years of age is disqualified:
- Failure to require the applicant to submit documentation prior to employment results in a misdemeanor of the third degree.
- If PSP, ChildLine, or FBI clearances reveal the applicant is disqualified from employment or approval, the applicant shall be immediately dismissed from:
 - Employment
 - Approval.

According to the PA 2015 Annual Protective Services Report, a total of 20,456 ChildLine clearances were requested for foster care, foster parents or individuals over 18 in the foster home. A total of 9,514 adoption clearances

(including individuals over 18 years of age in prospective adoptive home and prospective adoptive parent) were requested.

According to the PA 2015 Annual Protective Services Report, of the 591,964 record requests sent to the FBI, background checks completed on foster and adoptive parents in 2015 were as follows:

- Adoption/Foster & Foster/Adoptive Household Member: 7,368
- Adoption/Adoptive Applicant Household Member: 6,009
- Foster/Foster Applicant Household Member: 10,776

During annual licensing, OCYF reviews for compliance with these requirements and that background checks and clearances for foster parents are obtained and up to date. Review of information reported from annual CCYA licensing inspections during calendar years 2015 and 2016 suggest that county agencies are largely in compliance with regards to background check and clearance requirements for agency resource homes.

Figure 61. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Background Checks and Clearances for Agency Resource Homes and Emergency Caregivers

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	2 cases (1 county)	2 cases (1 county)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	8 cases (4 counties)	6 cases (6 counties)
Total Cases Cited	10	8
Total Resource Family Cases Reviewed	978	781
Rate of Compliance (%)	98.97	98.97

Data Source: Annual County Licensing Inspection Summaries for Inspections Occurring December 2014-December 2015.

On November 30, 2004, Act 160 established the Resource Family Registry (RFR) and additional requirements relating to the approval of foster and adoptive parent applicants. The RFR cross references new information with existing registry information about families. Act 160 also requires resubmission of criminal and child abuse clearances every five years for all household members age 18 and older; requires applicants to submit much more detailed information about their financial and family histories, including protection from abuse orders, divorce and custody proceedings, and any substance abuse or mental health issues; and requires foster parents to report information changes or changes in household composition to the approving agency within 48 hours. Annual county CCYA licensing monitors whether information regarding agency resource homes is

reported to the RFR as required. Findings regarding compliance of CCYA’s with RFR requirements are outlined in Figure 56.

Figure 62. CCYA Annual Licensing Inspection Violations: Resource Family Registry Registration and Update

	Total Number of Cases Cited 2015	Total Number of Cases Cited 2016
Provisionally Licensed Counties Cited	4 cases (1 county)	0 cases (0 counties)
Fully Licensed Counties Cited	17 cases (6 counties)	26 cases (3 counties)
Total Cases Cited	21	26
Total Resource Family Cases Reviewed	978	781
Rate of Compliance (%)	97.85	96.67

Data Source: Annual CCYA Licensing Inspection Summaries

It is anticipated that Phase III of CWIS, which focuses on providers and builds the functionality to provide a complete view of provider data such as licensing information, will help further enhance **PA’s ability to monitor statewide** performance regarding this systemic factor component.

- ❖ *CFSR Item 35: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention system 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?*

For information related to PA performance regarding how well the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention system functioning to ensure that the process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families please refer to the [Foster and Adoptive Parent Diligent Recruitment Plan](#) of the 2017 APSR.

- ❖ *CFSR Item 36: How well is the foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention system 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 in occurring statewide?*

With regards to use of cross-jurisdictional placement resources, on June 28, 2002, legislation enabling PA to join ICAMA was enacted and became effective on August 26, 2002. On January 1, 2004, OCYF Bulletin#3140-03-02 was issued on

ICAMA with an effective date of October 30, 2002. This bulletin established procedures to implement ICAMA and ensured that moving from one state to another does not serve as a barrier to parents meeting the needs of their adopted children. It prevents delays, denials, and disruptions of necessary medical benefits by having a standard form and procedure to transfer medical assistance for adopted children among Compact states. PA can assure families that services and benefits outlined in adoption assistance agreement will be provided regardless of their state of residence, whether they are receiving a federal or state funded subsidy. Children who are not Title IV-E eligible are able to receive Medical Assistance from the residence state if both states are ICAMA members and agree to reciprocate. Communication with other states will occur through the ICPC Unit or through OIM.

In 2008, OCYF released the bulletin addressing the implementation of the federal Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006. Data showing estimates for the number of children placed into and out of PA through the ICPC is found in Figure 63.

Figure 63. Estimated Placements Into/Out of PA Through ICPC 2011-2015¹⁴

Placement Into PA (Public)

	<u>Foster</u>	<u>Adopt</u>	<u>RTF</u>
2011	79	61	393
2012	112	40	422
2013	100	53	474
2014	88	44	351
2015	96	33	300

Placement Out of PA (Public)

	<u>Foster</u>	<u>Adopt</u>	<u>RTF</u>
2011	50	26	47
2012	59	34	61
2013	57	35	91
2014	57	36	89
2015	39	18 ¹⁵	8 ¹⁶

Data Source: PA ICPC Database, May 2016

¹⁴ Note on Data Limitations: Data is based upon on actual placements recorded through submission of forms to ICPC unit for input into database. As the appropriate form is not always submitted, the numbers shown in the chart are artificially low. There is also some overlap between public foster and adoptive placements due to the fact that a change from a goal of foster care to adoption is considered a new placement within the database.

¹⁵ This number is artificially low due to the DHS ICPC Unit not receiving the appropriate form to show that a child was placed.

¹⁶ This number is artificially low due to the DHS ICPC Unit not receiving the appropriate form to show that a child was placed

PA also tracks the time it takes to facilitate adoptive or foster care placements through ICPC, which includes completion of the home study as seen in Figure 64.

Figure 64. Time from Receiving Packet to Receiving Status at PA ICPC Office (Requests Into PA)

Time to Status	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1 Month or Less	72 (15.10%)	82 (14.60%)	118 (21.00%)	108 (21.47%)	73 (13.22%)
2 Months	108 (22.60%)	123 (21.80%)	137 (24.30%)	89 (17.69%)	127 (23.01%)
3 Months	73 (15.30%)	119 (21.10%)	111 (19.70%)	102 (20.28%)	120 (21.74%)
4 Months	77 (16.10%)	89 (15.80%)	76 (13.50%)	69 (13.72%)	74 (13.41%)
5 Months	46 (9.60%)	44 (7.80%)	42 (7.50%)	43 (8.55%)	53 (9.60%)
6 Months	37 (7.80%)	28 (5.00%)	36 (6.40%)	37 (7.36%)	44 (7.97%)
7 Months	28 (5.90%)	36 (6.40%)	15 (2.70%)	23 (4.57%)	25 (4.53%)
8 Months	11 (2.30%)	20 (3.60%)	15 (2.70%)	17 (3.38%)	10 (1.81%)
9 Months	8 (1.70%)	12 (2.10%)	11 (2.00%)	7 (1.39%)	15 (2.72%)
10 Months	14 (2.90%)	2 (0.40%)	1 (0.20%)	2 (0.40%)	2 (0.36%)
11 Months	2 (0.40%)	8 (1.40%)	0 (0.00%)	6 (1.19%)	6 (1.09%)
12 Months or More	1 (0.20%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.20%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (0.54%)
Total	477	563	563	503	552

Data Source: PA ICPC Database, May 2016

OCFC continues to partner with OCYF to **assess the state’s ICPC laws,** policies and practices to determine what barriers exist in the expedition of these

cases and to implement the necessary changes to improve the quality and timeliness of this process.

Throughout calendar years 2015 and 2016 OCYF continued to facilitate and provide training on interstate processes for local level child welfare agencies (including their legal departments and other supportive service partners). The **department's program representatives are continuing to develop** and refine a licensing tool to assure that ICPC timeframes and requirements compliance is monitored. OCYF also began assessing the viability of utilizing the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE; a nation database support by APHSA and the AAICPC designed as a case management system for ICPC requests) to assist in decreasing the timeframes (particularly the time used to mail requests).