

**Final Report**  
**Missouri Child and Family Services Review**  
**September 2010**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Administration for Children and Families**  
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**  
**Children's Bureau**

## INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) for the State of Missouri. The CFSR is the Federal Government's program for assessing the performance of State child welfare agencies with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. It is authorized by the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The CFSR is implemented by the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families within HHS.

The Missouri CFSR was conducted the week of June 7, 2010. The period under review for the onsite case review process was from April 1, 2009, through June 11, 2010. The findings were derived from the following documents and data collection procedures:

- The Statewide Assessment, prepared by the State of Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS), Children's Division (CD)
- The State Data Profile, prepared by the Children's Bureau, which provides the State's child welfare data for the 12-month CFSR target period ending September 30, 2008
- Reviews of 64 cases (40 foster care and 24 in-home services cases) at three sites: 17 cases in the 35th Circuit (Dunklin/Stoddard), 17 cases in Greene County, and 30 cases in St. Louis County<sup>1</sup>
- Interviews and focus groups (conducted at all three sites and at the State level) with stakeholders including, but not limited to, children, youth, parents, foster and adoptive parents, all levels of child welfare agency personnel, collaborating agency personnel, service providers, court personnel, child advocates, Tribal representatives, and attorneys

All 64 cases were open child welfare agency cases at some time during the period under review. The key characteristics of the children in the cases reviewed are presented in the table at the end of this section. For this table, and for other tables in the report, figures displayed may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

The first section of the report (Section A: Outcomes) presents the CFSR findings relevant to the State's performance in achieving specified outcomes for children in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being. The second section of the report (Section B: Systemic Factors) provides an assessment and discussion of the systemic factors relevant to the child welfare agency's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children.

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<sup>1</sup> Originally, there were 25 in-home services cases. However, one case was found to be ineligible for the CFSR because the child was in the custody of another State but placed in Missouri and received in-home services through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.

### Key Characteristics of Cases Reviewed

<b>Case Characteristics</b>	<b>Foster Care</b>	<b>In-Home Services</b>
<b>Total Number of Cases</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Date case was opened</b>		
Opened prior to the period under review	28 (70%)	11 (46%)
Opened during the period under review	12 (30%)	13 (54%)
<b>Child entered foster care during the period under review</b>	14 (35%)	N/A
<b>Child's age at start of period under review</b>		
Younger than 10	25 (62.5%)	*
At least 10 but younger than 13	3 (7.5%)	*
At least 13 but younger than 16	6 (15%)	*
16 and older	6 (15%)	*
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Alaskan Native Non-Hispanic	0	*
Asian Non-Hispanic	0	*
Black Non-Hispanic	19 (47.5%)	*
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Non-Hispanic	0	*
Hispanic (of any race)	1 (2.5%)	*
White Non-Hispanic	15 (37.5%)	*
Unknown/Unable to Determine	0	*
Two or More Races Non-Hispanic	5 (12.5%)	*
<b>Primary reason for opening case</b>		
Physical abuse	5 (12.5 %)	2 (8%)
Sexual abuse	0	2 (8%)
Emotional maltreatment	0	0
Neglect (not including medical neglect)	14 (35%)	4 (17%)
Medical neglect	1 (2.5%)	0
Abandonment	4 (10 %)	0
Mental/physical health of parent	2 (5%)	2 (8%)
Mental/physical health of child	2 (5%)	3 (12.5%)
Substance abuse by parent	6 (15%)	5 (21%)
Child's behavior	1 (2.5%)	3 (12.5%)
Substance abuse by child	1 (2.5%)	1 (4%)
Domestic violence in child's home	4 (10%)	0
Child in juvenile justice system	0	1 (4%)
Other	0	1 (4%)

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

## SECTION A: OUTCOMES

In the Outcomes Section of the CFSR Final Report, an overall rating of Strength or Area Needing Improvement is assigned to each of the 23 items reviewed. An item is assigned an overall rating of Strength if 90 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed were rated as a Strength. The item ratings are used to determine the performance of a State on the seven outcomes, each of which incorporates one or more of the individual items. The evaluation options for these outcomes are “substantially achieved,” “partially achieved,” and “not achieved.” For a State to be in substantial conformity with a particular outcome, 95 percent or more of the applicable cases reviewed must be rated as having substantially achieved the outcome. Two outcomes—Safety Outcome 1 and Permanency Outcome 1—also are evaluated based on State performance with regard to six national data indicators. For a State to be in substantial conformity with these outcomes, both the national standards for each data indicator and the case review requirements must be met. A State that is not in substantial conformity with a particular outcome must develop and implement a Program Improvement Plan to address the areas of concern identified for that outcome.

The Children’s Bureau has established very high standards of performance for the CFSR. The standards are based on the belief that because child welfare agencies work with our nation’s most vulnerable children and families, only the highest standards of performance should be considered acceptable. The standards are set high to ensure ongoing attention to achieving positive outcomes for children and families with regard to safety, permanency, and well-being. This is consistent with the goal of the CFSR to promote continuous improvement in performance on these outcomes.

It should be noted, however, that States are not required to attain the 95-percent standard established for the CFSR Onsite Review or the national standards for the six data indicators by the end of their Program Improvement Plan implementations. The Children’s Bureau recognizes that the kinds of systemic and practice changes necessary to bring about improvement in particular outcome areas often take time to implement. Also, improvements are likely to be incremental rather than dramatic. Instead, States work with the Children’s Bureau to establish a specified amount of improvement or to determine specified activities for their Program Improvement Plans. That is, for each outcome that is not in substantial conformity or item that is rated as an Area Needing Improvement, each State (working in conjunction with the Children’s Bureau) specifies the following: (1) how much improvement the State will demonstrate and/or the activities that it will implement to address the Areas Needing Improvement and (2) the procedures for demonstrating the achievement of these goals. Both the improvements specified and the procedures for demonstrating improvement vary across States. Therefore, a State can meet the requirements of its Program Improvement Plan and still not perform at the 95-percent (for outcomes) or the 90-percent (for items) levels established for the CFSR.

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

The following sections provide information on how Missouri performed on each outcome in the first round of the CFSR as well as the current CFSR. If the outcome was not substantially achieved during the first round, the key concerns observed at that time and the strategies implemented in the Program Improvement Plan to address those concerns are discussed.

Because many changes were made in the CFSR process based on lessons learned during the first round and in response to feedback from the child welfare field, a State's performance in the second round of the CFSR is not directly comparable to its performance in the first round, particularly with regard to comparisons of data indicators or percentages regarding Strength and Area Needing Improvement ratings. Key changes in the CFSR case review process that make it difficult to compare performance across reviews include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An increase in the sample size from 50 to 65 cases
- Stratification of the sample to ensure a minimum number of cases in key program areas, resulting in variations in the number of cases relevant for specific outcomes and items
- Changes in criteria for specific items to enhance consistency and ensure an assessment of critical areas such as child welfare agency efforts to involve noncustodial parents in planning for their children

For each outcome, there is a table presenting the data for the case review findings and national indicators (when relevant). The table is followed by a discussion of Missouri's status with regard to substantial conformity with the outcome at the time of the State's first CFSR, which was held in fiscal year (FY) 2003, the State's status relevant to the current review, and a presentation and discussion of each item (indicator) assessed under the outcome. Performance of individual sites included in the Onsite Review is presented in the tables. Variations in outcome and item ratings as a function of type of case (i.e., foster care or in-home services) also are identified when appropriate.

## I. SAFETY

### Safety Outcome 1

<b>Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	8	7	9	24	85.7
Partially Achieved	0	0	1	1	3.6
Not Achieved	0	0	3	3	10.7
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	9	10	17	36	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69%</b>		

<b>Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards</b>			
<b>National Data Indicators</b>	<b>National Standard (%)</b>	<b>State's Percent</b>	<b>Meets Standards?</b>
Absence of maltreatment recurrence	94.6+	97.1	Yes
Absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff	99.68+	99.71	Yes

### Status of Safety Outcome 1

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 85.7 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to the case review findings, the State met the national standards for the data indicators pertaining to absence of maltreatment recurrence and absence of maltreatment of children in foster care by foster parents or facility staff. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent in initiating investigations of child maltreatment or establishing face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim in accordance with the State-established timeframes.
- The State was not effective in preventing the recurrence of child maltreatment.

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

- Clarified policy regarding timeliness of initiating reports of child maltreatment, refined the definition of “initiating” reports, and strengthened policy regarding chronic neglect and accumulation of harm
- Increased the accuracy of data regarding initial contacts through changes to the information system and established local protocols in order to respond to reports of maltreatment in a timely manner
- Implemented a non-child maltreatment alternate response process in some areas of the State
- Implemented call management and structured decision-making (SDM) protocols at the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Unit (CANHU) to ensure consistent screening and classifications of calls received
- Modified training curriculum to include SDM safety and risk assessment information to ensure consistent and accurate completion of the required SDM forms
- Used Practice Enhancement Teams (PET) to assist circuit managers in the development of strategies to reduce repeat maltreatment and maltreatment in foster care

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

### **Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

#### **Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

#### **Case Review Findings**

The assessment of item 1 was applicable for 28 (44 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable when there were no child maltreatment reports during the period under review. In assessing item 1, reviewers were to determine whether the response to a maltreatment report occurring during the period under review had been initiated in accordance with the State child welfare agency policy requirements.

The CD has a two-track system for responding to reports made to CANHU. The two tracks are investigation and family assessment, and the decision about track assignment is made by the CANHU at the time the report is received. Reports are assigned to investigation when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The report of abuse or neglect includes reported risk and injury to the child.
- The acts of the alleged perpetrator, if confirmed, are criminal violations and/or the action/inaction of the alleged perpetrator may not be criminal but, if continued, would lead to the removal of the child or the alleged perpetrator from the home.

The report is assigned to the family assessment track when the reported risks or injuries to the child are of mild or moderate concern. Children involved in family assessments are not classified as victims of abuse.

Missouri’s policy requirements with regard to initiation of an investigation are the following:

- If a report is not considered an emergency, the initiation of an investigation must begin within 24 hours of receipt of the report and every child named as an alleged victim must be seen face-to-face.
- If the report is determined to be an emergency, the investigation must be initiated and alleged victims seen within 3 hours.
- If the report is for educational neglect, initial contact is required within 72 hours of receipt of the report.

Direct contact should be made by the CD whenever possible; however, initial face-to-face contact may be made by a multidisciplinary team member if he or she can assure safety. The results of the assessment of item 1 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 1 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	8	7	9	24	<b>86</b>
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	4	4	<b>14</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	
Not Applicable	9	10	17	36	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69%</b>		

Item 1 was rated as a Strength in 24 cases when the investigation was initiated and face-to-face contact was made within the timeframes required by State policy. It was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in four cases in St. Louis County when the investigation was not initiated within the required timeframes. The four cases rated as an Area Needing Improvement included five reports that were not investigated in a timely manner. Of these five reports, three reports required an emergency response (within 3 hours) and two reports were non-emergency (response required within 24 hours). In all five reports, face-to-face contact did not occur within the timeframes required by State policy.

**Rating Determination**

Item 1 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had initiated an investigation of a maltreatment report in accordance with required timeframes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 1 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

Missouri’s Statewide Assessment reports data relevant to the outcomes and items reviewed by the CFSR. The data reported are from the following sources:



- The Supervisor Case Review (SCR): Cases are randomly selected and reviewed monthly by the supervisor using an electronic case review tool that is based on the Federal CFSR instrument. In calendar year 2009, 16,379 cases were reviewed.
- The Peer Record Review (PRR): Cases are randomly selected and reviewed quarterly by peers who perform the same job duties. Approximately 1,500 cases are reviewed annually.
- CFSR Mock Case Reviews: Cases were reviewed in six sites with a modified tool and database similar to those used for the Federal CFSR. The reviews occurred from May 2009 through February 2010.
- CD Child Welfare Outcomes Report: This report is produced on a quarterly basis, consists of 20 outcome measures, and was the primary means for monitoring progress for the 2003 CFSR Program Improvement Plan.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD has made improvements in initiating timely investigations since the 2003 CFSR. However, the Statewide Assessment also indicates that some circuits have large geographical areas to cover and thus initial contact sometimes is delayed. The following data relevant to the timeliness of investigations are reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 90 percent of the applicable cases.
- Data from the 2009 PRR indicate that timeliness of investigations was rated as a Strength in 96 percent of the applicable cases.
- Data from the 2009 Child Welfare Outcomes Report indicate that in 85.33 percent of investigations, initial contact was made in accordance with the timeframes established in policy.
- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that 71 percent of the applicable cases were rated as a Strength for this item. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the Mock Case Reviews also assessed the State's requirement to see all children residing in the home within 72 hours.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the CD generally is timely in its response to reports of alleged abuse and neglect. A few stakeholders reported that if the CD is unable to respond in a timely manner, a member of the multidisciplinary team will be used to meet the response time requirements.

### **Item 2. Repeat maltreatment**

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

### **Case Review Findings**

The assessment of item 2 was applicable for 17 (27 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable for this item if there was no substantiated or indicated maltreatment report during the period under review. For all applicable cases, reviewers were to determine if there had been a substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family during the period under review and, if so, whether another substantiated or indicated report involving similar circumstances had occurred within a 6-month period before or after that identified report. The results of the assessment of item 2 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 2 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	5	5	7	17	<b>100</b>
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	
Not Applicable	12	12	23	47	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Item 2 was rated as a Strength when there was only one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report on the family within a 6-month period.

In addition to the recurrence of substantiated maltreatment reports, reviewers reported the following findings with regard to the number of maltreatment reports on the family during the life of the case (“life of the case” refers to the time from the date of the first allegation of abuse or neglect to the time of the Onsite Review):

- In four cases, there were no maltreatment reports because the case was opened for reasons other than maltreatment.
- In 13 cases, there were fewer than 3 reports.
- In 22 cases, there were at least 3 reports but fewer than 6 reports.
- In 18 cases, there were between 6 and 11 reports.
- In seven cases, there were 12 or more maltreatment reports, including one case with 29 reports.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 2 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 100 percent of the applicable cases, there was no recurrence of substantiated or indicated maltreatment within a 6-month period. Item 2 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, if a duplicate report is received within 24 hours of the first report and has the same perpetrator and victims, the information is added to the initial report. However, if the information is received 24 hours after the first report, a new report is created, and the county is alerted.

The Statewide Assessment provides the following data from the CD’s Child Welfare Outcomes Report on child abuse and neglect recidivism:

- 3.20 percent of the children with a substantiated report during the first quarter of FY 2009 had a substantiated report within the previous 6 months.
- 4.40 percent of the children with a substantiated report during the second quarter of FY 2009 had a substantiated report within the previous 6 months.

- 4.10 percent of the children with a substantiated report during the third quarter of FY 2009 had a substantiated report within the previous 6 months.
- 3.80 percent of the children with a substantiated report during the fourth quarter of FY 2009 had a substantiated report within the previous 6 months.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the item pertaining to maltreatment recurrence was rated as a Strength in 96 percent of the applicable cases reviewed during the CFSR Mock Case Reviews.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that repeat maltreatment occurs more frequently in cases involving neglect. A few stakeholders reported that when a family has been the subject of at least five child abuse and neglect reports, a Repeat Maltreatment Form must be completed and the case must be staffed with the supervisor.

A key State-level stakeholder reported that the CD formed a repeat maltreatment group and, in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, identified cases with repeat maltreatment, reviewed case histories, and worked intensively with the families. This stakeholder expressed the opinion that that process has been successful in addressing repeat maltreatment.

**Safety Outcome 2**

<b>Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	11	14	18	43	<b>67.2</b>
Partially Achieved	5	1	5	11	<b>17.2</b>
Not Achieved	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15.6</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	17	17	30	64	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>60%</b>		

**Status of Safety Outcome 2**

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Safety Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 67.2 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

## **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Although the agency was assessing families to identify service needs, it was not consistent in providing services to the children or the parents, particularly in the in-home services cases.
- The agency was not consistent in assessing risk of harm to children.

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

- Developed and implemented supplemental Family Support Team (FST) training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes
- Developed a standardized supervisory case review tool to improve supervisory capacity to monitor enhanced casework practice relating to case planning
- Established procedures for caseworkers to access various funding resources
- Modified training curriculum to include SDM safety and risk assessment information to ensure consistent and accurate completion of the required SDM forms
- Modified the family assessment and case plan tools to better link services to the needs of the family and to include a mechanism for family self-assessment, and identified areas specifically related to child safety and risk concerns
- Strengthened policy regarding assessment of a child's safety throughout placement in foster care, implemented enhanced background screenings for foster/kinship and court ordered providers, and developed the Culture of Care initiative to improve the safety and well-being of children placed in residential settings

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

## **Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Safety Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

### **Item 3. Services to family to protect child(ren) in the home and prevent removal or reentry into foster care**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

#### **Case Review Findings**

An assessment of item 3 was applicable in 42 (66 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were excluded if the children entered foster care prior to the period under review and there were no other children in the home, or if there were no concerns regarding the safety of any children in the home during the period under review. For applicable cases, reviewers assessed whether, in responding to a

substantiated maltreatment report or risk of harm, the agency made diligent efforts to provide services to families that would prevent placement of children in foster care and at the same time ensure their safety. The results of the assessment of item 3 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 3 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	12	9	15	36	<b>86</b>
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	5	6	<b>14</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>42</b>	
Not Applicable	4	8	10	22	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75%</b>		

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

- Although no services were provided when the child was removed from the home, the removal was necessary to ensure the safety of the child (10 cases).
- Efforts were made to provide services prior to removal (two cases).
- Services were provided to the family to ensure the safety of the child and prevent removal (18 cases).
- Services were provided after reunification to prevent reentry (six cases).

Case review information indicates that a range of services was offered or provided to families. This included but was not limited to the following: substance abuse assessment and treatment, intensive in-home services (IIS), family counseling, individual counseling, psychological evaluations, family reunification services, child care services, parent aide, medical evaluation, domestic violence services, anger management, psychological evaluations, and psychiatric services.

Item 3 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Services were not provided to the family, and the children remained at risk in the home (two cases).
- Services were provided, but they did not target the key safety concern in the family, leaving the children at risk in the home (two cases).
- Appropriate services were not provided to protect the children in the home, and the children were subsequently removed (two cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 3 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 86 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain children safely in their own homes. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 3 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are required to make reasonable efforts to preserve the family and prevent out-of-home placements for children. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the selection of resources and services to prevent removal must be based on a thorough assessment completed by the caseworker, which includes identification of the family's unique strengths and needs, the family's capacity to use and benefit from a given resource, and the desired outcomes.

The following data relevant to agency efforts to maintain children in their homes were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 98 percent of the applicable cases.
- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 89 percent of the applicable cases.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the CD is effective in providing services and/or referring families to services to prevent removal and reentry into foster care. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that two of the primary resources used to prevent the removal of children from their homes are IIS and Family Drug Court.

### Item 4. Risk assessment and safety management

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 4 was applicable for all 64 cases. In assessing item 4, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to address the risk of harm to the children involved in each case. The results of the assessment of item 4 are presented in the table below.

Item 4 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	12	14	18	44	<b>69</b>
Area Needing Improvement	5	3	12	20	<b>31</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>60%</b>		

Item 4 was rated as a Strength in 44 cases when reviewers determined that the risk of harm to children was appropriately addressed by the agency through the following: conducting initial and ongoing assessments of risk and safety either in the children's home or in the children's foster home and addressing all safety-related concerns identified through the assessment.

Item 4 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 20 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was no initial risk assessment (four cases).
- There was no ongoing risk assessment (13 cases).
- There was no initial safety assessment (three cases).
- There was no ongoing safety assessment (14 cases).
- There were safety concerns in the child's home that were not addressed by the agency (nine cases).
- There were safety concerns regarding the child's placement that were not addressed by the agency (four cases).
- A safety assessment was not completed when the child was discharged from foster care (two cases).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 4 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 69 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to assess and address the risk of harm to the child. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 4 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, child safety and risk must be assessed from the initial CANHU call and then on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the case. The Statewide Assessment reports that there is a formal safety and risk assessment process in place for investigations, assessments, and Family Centered Services (FCS) program areas. Investigations cannot be entered as "completed" in the State's management information system, called the Family and Children Electronic System (FACES), unless there is a completed safety assessment in the system.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the CD uses an SDM risk assessment tool to determine the level of risk to children residing in their homes, whether a case should be opened for FCS, and how quickly and frequently an FCS caseworker must make contact with the family. The risk reassessment tool, which must be used every 90 days, is designed to assist caseworkers in evaluating whether risk levels have changed since the initial risk assessment. The Statewide Assessment reports that both the risk assessment and the risk reassessment tools allow supervisory discretion for overriding the risk level to a more severe level; however, the risk level cannot be decreased by an override. The Statewide Assessment also reports that although there are no formal tools to assess risk for children in out-of-home placement, caseworkers assess risk and safety of children in placements through their visits to the children and to the placement.

The following data relevant to agency efforts to assess risk and manage safety were provided in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 72 percent of the applicable cases.
- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the applicable cases. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the SCR focuses only on families in which the children remain in the home.

The Statewide Assessment reports that documentation is a challenge for monitoring safety and risk assessments. Although assessment forms are available, caseworkers are not consistently using them as intended and/or not consistently entering the information into FACES.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the CD generally is effective in conducting safety and risk assessments. Some stakeholders reported that although the CD provides caseworkers with formal tools to conduct the assessments, informal safety and risk assessments also are conducted. Some stakeholders reported that a safety assessment is required at the first contact and that safety plans are reviewed at each contact.

**II. PERMANENCY**

**Permanency Outcome 1**

<b>Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	5	7	5	17	<b>42.5</b>
Partially Achieved	4	3	15	22	<b>55.0</b>
Not Achieved	1	0	0	1	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>25%</b>		

<b>Conformity of Statewide Data Indicators With National Standards</b>			
<b>National Data Indicators</b>	<b>National Standard (Scaled Score)</b>	<b>State Score (Scaled Score)</b>	<b>Meets Standards?</b>
Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification	122.6+	115.5	No
Composite 2: Timeliness of adoptions	106.4+	101.9	No
Composite 3: Permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods	121.7+	103.1	No
Composite 4: Placement stability	101.5+	136.8	Yes

**Status of Permanency Outcome 1**

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 42.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. In addition to case review findings, Missouri did not meet the national standard for the data indicators pertaining to timeliness and permanency of



reunification, timeliness of adoptions, and permanency for children in foster care for extended time periods. However, Missouri met the national standard pertaining to placement stability. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent with regard to ensuring placement stability for children in foster care.
- The State was not consistent with regard to establishing appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The State did not consistently make concerted efforts to achieve children's permanency goals in a timely manner.
- The State did not consistently adhere to the timeframes established by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) pertaining to termination of parental rights (TPR) or to the requirement of documenting compelling reasons when the decision is not to petition for TPR.
- The State was not consistent in providing Independent Living (IL) services to youth with the goal of other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA) (Missouri uses the term "another planned permanent living arrangement" or APPLA).

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

- Established agreements with other State agencies and developed diligent search procedures to improve efforts to locate relatives and absent parents
- Ensured the frequency and timeliness of FST meetings through circuit self-assessments and corrective action plans, provided a list of "expert facilitators" for FST meetings that require more expertise, and expanded the use of FST meetings to promote placement stability
- Incorporated targeted foster recruitment plans into circuit management plans, developed a recruitment and retention plan for foster homes serving older youth, implemented an AdoptUsKids campaign, and awarded performance-based recruitment contracts in an effort to increase the number of resource families
- Collaborated with the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning to identify critical factors in placement stability, to conduct a resource family survey, and to develop a placement matching tool to improve placement stability for children
- Strengthened policy and practice relating to concurrent planning
- Developed policy and protocol to ensure that the permanency and services needs of children in temporary adoptive custody, relative/kinship custody, or in another State agency's custody are met
- Collaborated with the Office of State Courts Administrators (OSCA) to explore barriers to allowing the Juvenile Courts to enter temporary custody orders and transfer jurisdiction of the case to Probate and Circuit Courts in order to expedite guardianships
- Conducted meetings with the courts regarding procedures for filing timely TPR petitions and developed policies clarifying caseworkers' and supervisors' responsibilities in documenting compelling reasons

- Awarded performance-based contracts for resource development and committed additional CD staff to conduct home studies and finalize adoptions
- Distributed literature and conducted informational meetings, seminars, and workshops on independent living and secondary education resources available to current and former foster care youth, convened a workgroup to designate CD caseworkers who would work specifically with adolescents in an effort to increase accessibility to the IL program, and charged the workgroup developers with creating a training plan for these caseworkers

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

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

#### Item 5. Foster care reentries

  X   Strength      \_\_\_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

An assessment of item 5 was applicable for 14 (35 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not enter foster care during the period under review. In assessing this item, reviewers determined whether the entry into foster care during the period under review occurred within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode. The results of the assessment of item 5 are presented in the table below.

Item 5 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	4	3	6	13	93
Area Needing Improvement	1	0	0	1	7
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	7	14	26	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

Item 5 was rated as a Strength in 13 cases when the child’s entry into foster care during the period under review did not take place within 12 months of discharge from a prior episode. Item 5 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when the child’s entry into foster care occurred within 4 months of the date of discharge from a prior foster care placement episode.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 5 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. The item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 5 also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

Missouri's performance on the individual measure of foster care reentry (measure C1.4) included in Composite 1: Timeliness and permanency of reunification was the following: In the 12 months prior to the CFSR 12-month target period for the data indicators, 11.4 percent of children exiting foster care to reunification reentered foster care in less than 12 months from the time of discharge. This percentage is less than the national median of 15.0 but greater than the 25th percentile of 9.9 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, in an effort to reduce the possibility of foster care reentry, CD policy requires that caseworkers increase the frequency and duration of visits with parents and children during trial home visits. The Statewide Assessment also reports that an after-care plan is developed that lists the specific needs for the family and the children, and that, depending on the age of the child, there are specific steps that a caseworker must address or put in place to support reunification efforts. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the CD attempts, whenever possible, to ensure that the case is not closed until the family can succeed on its own.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that generally reentry is not a major concern. A few stakeholders also noted that the CD provides after-care services to children and families that have been reunified.

### **Item 6. Stability of foster care placement**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 6. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the child experienced multiple placement settings during the period under review and, if so, whether the changes in placement settings

were necessary to achieve the child’s permanency goal or meet the child’s service needs. Reviewers also assessed the stability of the child’s most recent placement setting. The results of the assessment of item 6 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 6 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	8	8	12	28	<b>70</b>
Area Needing Improvement	2	2	8	12	<b>30</b>
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>60%</b>		

Item 6 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child’s current placement was stable and that the child either did not experience a placement change during the period under review (23 cases) or that the placement changes experienced were in the child’s best interests (i.e., they were intended to further achievement of the child’s permanency goal or to provide specialized services for the child) (5 cases).

Item 6 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The child was in multiple placement settings during the period under review, and at least one placement change was not planned by the agency to attain the child’s permanency goal (11 cases).
- The child’s placement setting at the time of the onsite CFSR was not stable (three cases).

Additional findings of the case review were the following:

- Children in 23 cases experienced only one placement during the period under review.
- Children in 12 cases experienced two placements during the period under review.
- Children in five cases experienced three or more placements during the period under review.

**Rating Determination**

Item 6 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that children experienced placement stability. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 6 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C4.1: 89.2 percent of the children in foster care for at least 8 days but less than 12 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 86.0 percent.
- C4.2: 94.4 percent of the children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 65.4 percent.
- C4.3: 91.1 percent of the children in foster care for at least 24 months experienced two or fewer placement settings. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 41.8 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, an FST meeting must be held prior to any action relating to a change in placement of a child in CD custody. The FST must determine if additional services can be put in place to prevent the placement change. When a foster child requires an immediate or emergency change of placement, the CD places a child in a temporary setting and schedules an FST meeting within 72 hours. The State has emergency residential facilities and emergency foster homes. The Statewide Assessment indicates that sometimes children are placed in these short-term homes because doing so is convenient for caseworkers.

The following data relevant to agency efforts to assess risk and manage safety were provided in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 71 percent of the applicable cases.
- Data from the CD's Child Welfare Outcomes Report indicate that of the 6,153 children in foster care in 2009, 85.05 percent had two or fewer placements.
- In a focus group with 24 State Youth Advisory Board members conducted during the process of developing the Statewide Assessment, most of the youth reported that they did not receive advanced notice regarding a placement change. Additionally, over 50 percent of the youth participating in the focus group expressed the opinion that the placement changes they experienced could have been prevented.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State attempts to ensure and maintain stable placements. Various stakeholders made the following comments regarding placement stability:

- The CD makes efforts to match children and placement settings appropriately.
- The CD provides the necessary support services, including in-home counseling and respite care, to foster families when there is a potential for placement disruption.
- FST meetings are held when problems arise with a child's placement and prior to moving the child, if possible.
- Relative and kinship placements often result in increased placement stability for children.

## Item 7. Permanency goal for child

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

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

Item 7 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	7	9	13	29	72.5
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	7	11	27.5
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>65%</b>		

Item 7 was rated as a Strength in 29 cases when reviewers determined that the child's permanency goal was appropriate, had been established in a timely manner, and, if relevant, that the agency had filed for TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA.

Item 7 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 11 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child's permanency goal at the time of the onsite CFSR was not appropriate given the case situation and the needs of the child (four cases).
- The child's permanency goal was not established in a timely manner (five cases).
- The agency had not sought TPR in accordance with the requirements of ASFA, particularly with regard to documenting compelling reasons in the case file for not seeking TPR (seven cases).

ASFA requirements with regard to filing for TPR were met in 61 percent of 18 applicable cases.

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

- Adoption only (12 cases)
- Reunification with parents only (eight cases)
- Guardianship only (four cases)
- OPPLA only (six cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and adoption (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and guardianship (four cases)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and reunification with relatives (two cases)

- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents and OPPLA (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with relatives and OPPLA (one case)
- Concurrent goals of reunification with parents, reunification with relatives, and adoption (one case)

In one case in which the concurrent goals were adoption and reunification with parents, the goal of reunification with parents was achieved within 12 months; therefore, item 9, which pertains to the goal of adoption, was not rated.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 7 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 72.5 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had established an appropriate permanency goal for the child in a timely manner and had met ASFA requirements when relevant. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 7 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C3.1: 18.6 percent of the children in foster care for 24 months or longer at the start of the 12-month CFSR target period were discharged from foster care to a permanent home (adoption, reunification with parents or other relatives, or guardianship) by the end of the target period. This percentage is less than the national median of 25.0 percent.
- C3.2: 95.6 percent of the children exiting foster care during the target period who were legally free for adoption at the time of exit were discharged to a permanent home. This percentage is lower than the national median of 96.8 percent.
- C3.3: 57.7 percent of the children who were discharged from foster care during the 12-month target period with a discharge reason of emancipation had been in foster care for 3 years or longer at the time of discharge. This percentage is greater than national median of 47.8 percent. (For this measure, a lower percentage reflects a higher level of performance.)

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, CD policy requires that a child's permanency goal must be established at an FST meeting within 30 days of the child entering foster care with the court having the final approval on the goal choice. The Statewide Assessment reports that when the primary permanency goal is reunification, CD policy requires that there must be a concurrent goal. However, when the primary goal is adoption, guardianship, placement with a fit and willing relative, or OPPLA, concurrent permanency planning is optional. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the Permanency Planning Review (PPR) Team reviews all permanency

goals and, if the goal is reunification, concurrent permanency planning must begin within 24 to 72 hours of a child's removal from the home and must be discussed at every FST meeting as long as a concurrent permanency plan is required.

According to the Statewide Assessment, reunification usually is the primary permanency goal when a child enters foster care. APPLA is the least desirable permanency option and should be used only after all other permanency options have been explored and determined to be "not in the best interest" of the youth.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR addressed the issues of the timeliness and appropriateness of goals, the use of concurrent goals, and the filing for TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements.

Stakeholders commenting on the timeliness and appropriateness of goals indicated that the State generally is effective in establishing timely, appropriate permanency goals and that the first goal usually is reunification. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the children's permanency goals are reviewed on an ongoing basis and that caseworkers discuss ASFA timelines with parents. Some stakeholders also reported that although the decision to change a permanency goal is made during the PPR Team meeting, the change is not official until the court approves it. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that all other permanency options are ruled out before APPLA is chosen.

With regard to concurrent planning, some stakeholders commenting on this issue expressed the opinion that the State establishes concurrent goals in most cases. A few stakeholders reported that when concurrent goals are established, it generally occurs early in the life of case.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions on the State's effectiveness in filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Some stakeholders indicated that the State routinely files for TPR when children have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. However, other stakeholders reported that the State is not filing for TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements. Many stakeholders reported that the court must grant approval before TPR can be filed and some stakeholders noted that the court sometimes delays the filing for TPR and provides parents with extensions to continue to work toward reunification. A few stakeholders reported that the court will not allow TPR to be filed if there is not an identified adoptive resource for the child. Some stakeholders reported that when the State does not file for TPR, compelling reasons must be approved by the court and must be documented in the court order.

Additional stakeholder information pertaining to the TPR process is provided under item 9 and item 28 of this report.

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

Strength

Area Needing Improvement



### Case Review Findings

Item 8 was applicable for 22 (55 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had achieved the permanency goals of reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner or, if the goals had not been achieved, whether the agency had made, or was in the process of making, diligent efforts to achieve the goals. The results of the assessment of item 8 are presented in the table below.

Item 8 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	5	3	5	13	59
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	7	9	41
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	4	6	8	18	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>42%</b>		

Item 8 was rated as a Strength in 13 cases when reviewers determined that the goal had been achieved in a timely manner or that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve the goal in a timely manner. Item 8 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in nine cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to achieve reunification or guardianship in a timely manner. Some of the concerns identified pertained to a general lack of effort to achieve reunifications, not pursuing the concurrent goal of guardianship not pursuing the concurrent goal of reunification with a relative, and not engaging parents while parents are incarcerated.

### Rating Determination

Item 8 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 59 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to attain the goals of reunification, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 8 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C1.1: 67.3 percent of the reunifications occurred in at least 8 days but less than 12 months of the child's entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 69.9 percent.

- C1.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children discharged to reunification was 7.4 months. This length of stay is greater than the national median of 6.5 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C1.3: 33.4 percent of children entering foster care in the 6 months prior to the 12-month target period were discharged from foster care to reunification in more than 7 days but less than 12 months of entry into foster care. This percentage is less than the national median of 39.4 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, reunification usually is the primary permanency goal when a child enters foster care. The Statewide Assessment also reports that the State operates an Intensive Family Reunification Services (IFRS) program, a short-term, intensive, family-based program designed to reunify children in out-of-home care with their parents and who, without intensive intervention, are likely to remain in out-of-home care longer than 6 months. The FST determines reunification readiness by considering a number of criteria, including but not limited to the following:

- The parents are able to meet the physical, social, emotional, medical, educational, and safety needs of the child.
- The parents have rectified the conditions that led to out-of-home care.
- The levels of parental functioning, family relationships, communication patterns, conflict resolution skills, and children's relationships are appropriate for reunification.
- There are supports and/or services available to the family through natural helpers, the CD, and the community.
- The family problems that impeded reunification (e.g., mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, homelessness) have been resolved.
- The family and the child are willing and ready to be reunited.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, guardianship is a desirable permanency goal if a child cannot be reunified with his or her parents because it allows the child to maintain a connection with relatives or kin. The Statewide Assessment notes, however, that prior to establishing the goal of guardianship, it must be determined that family reunification is not likely in the foreseeable future and that TPR is not appropriate. Additionally, the parent and the child, if older than 14 years of age, must consent to the guardianship. The Statewide Assessment reports that the State has a guardianship subsidy, which is available if eligibility requirements are met, that permits some relative and kin caregivers to pursue legal guardianship as opposed to being available only as a foster placement resource.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in providing reunification services to families primarily through the IFRS. However, a few Greene County stakeholders noted that these services are no longer available in that county.

Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the permanency goal of guardianship is being used more frequently now than in the past. A few stakeholders from the 35th Circuit reported that the permanency goal of guardianship often is used when parents are incarcerated to ensure that parents can regain custody of their children on release.

**Item 9. Adoption**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 9 was applicable for 13 (32.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether diligent efforts had been, or were being, made to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. The results of the assessment of item 9 are presented in the table below.

Item 9 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	0	3	3	6	46
Area Needing Improvement	3	1	3	7	54
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	7	6	14	27	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>50%</b>		

\*Note: Although 14 cases involved a child who had a goal of adoption as either the single or concurrent goal, only 13 cases were rated for item 9 because in 1 case, the concurrent goals were reunification and adoption, and the goal of reunification with parents was achieved within 12 months.

Item 9 was rated as a Strength in six cases when reviewers determined that the State had made diligent efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. Item 9 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers identified the following:

- Delays in filing for TPR (one case)
  - Delays in the TPR process after filing (three cases)
  - Delays in the identification of an adoptive home (one case)
  - Delays in the adoption process after TPR (two cases)
- (Although TPR was filed in a timely manner and granted by the court, delays in finalization occurred because the agency did not proceed with adoption for the children in these two cases until their siblings were free to be adopted by the same families.)

Additional findings relevant to this item were the following:

- Of the 13 children with a goal of adoption that were rated for this item, 5 achieved the goal during the period under review.
- Of the five children who had a finalized adoption during the period under review, two had been in foster care for less than 24 months.

- Of the eight children with a goal of adoption who were not adopted during the period under review, four had been in foster care for at least 24 months.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 9 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 46 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 9 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

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

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

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

- C2.1: 40.5 percent of the children exiting to adoption were discharged in less than 24 months from the time of entry into foster care. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 36.6 percent.
- C2.2: The median length of stay in foster care for children adopted was 27.2 months. This median length of stay is less than the national 25th percentile of 27.3 months. (For this measure, a lower number of months reflects a higher level of performance.)
- C2.3: 14.6 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year were discharged to a final adoption by the last day of the year. This percentage is less than the national median of 20.2 percent.
- C2.4: 11.4 percent of children who were in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year became legally free for adoption (i.e., there was a TPR for both mother and father) within the first 6 months of the year. This percentage is greater than the national 75th percentile of 10.9 percent.
- C2.5: 45.1 percent of children who were legally free for adoption were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free. This percentage is less than the national median of 45.8 percent.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

The following data relevant to agency efforts to finalize adoptions in a timely manner were provided in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 77 percent of the applicable cases.
- Data from the CD's Child Welfare Outcomes Report indicate that for 2009, 36 percent of the 1,078 adoptions were finalized within 24 months, and the average number of months in foster care for the 1,078 children was 32 months.

The Statewide Assessment reports that an adoption subsidy is available to children who meet certain eligibility requirements and, at the time of Statewide Assessment preparation, about 13,000 children in the State receive an adoption subsidy.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFPSR identified the following challenges to the agency's ability to achieve finalized adoptions in a timely manner:

- The difficulty of scheduling TPR hearings in a timely manner
- Appeals to TPR decisions by the biological parents
- Delays in completing the paperwork for an adoption subsidy
- Delays in the adoptive parents completing the required training

Some stakeholders reported that permanency review hearings are held for each child who is free for adoption until permanency is achieved. These stakeholders suggested that holding the hearings ensures that the CD is working diligently to finalize the adoption.

A few stakeholders expressed concern that pre-adoptive parents are not provided all relevant information about the child until well into the adoption process.

### Item 10. Other planned permanent living arrangement

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 10 was applicable for 8 (20 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. In assessing these cases, reviewers were to determine if the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to assist children in attaining their goals related to OPPLA. The results of the assessment of item 10 are presented in the table below.

Item 10 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	1	2	3	6	75
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	1	2	25
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	9	7	16	32	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>75%</b>		

Item 10 was rated as a Strength in six cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure a long-term placement for the child and/or to provide the necessary service to prepare the child for independent living. Item 10 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when reviewers determined that the child was not in a permanent placement (two cases), or that there was no clear plan to transition the youth to independent living (one case).

The table below provides the ages of the children when the goal of OPPLA was established.

<b>Age of Child When OPPLA Was Established</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>
13 through 15 years of age	5
16 years of age or older	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

### **Rating Determination**

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

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, when a goal of OPPLA is established there must be a placement provider who is in agreement with the APPLA plan; who is able and willing, with the assistance of the CD, to meet the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of the youth; and with whom the youth has strong emotional/familial ties. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, a Planned Permanency Agreement is to be completed whenever the permanency option of APPLA is chosen as the child's goal. The purpose of the agreement is to identify the appropriate planned permanent living arrangement in which the youth wishes to continue living and to specify the adult who will play a permanent role in the youth's life.

The Statewide Assessment reports that all youth in foster care between the ages of 14 and 21 must be referred to the Older Youth Program. In this program, the youth's needs are assessed through a Life Skills Strengths/Needs Assessment form and the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment. Additionally, up to three caregivers who know the youth complete an assessment of the youth. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the youth, caregiver, caseworker, and FST members discuss the assessment results and together set goals and develop a learning plan for the youth. The Statewide Assessment also notes that in a 2009 survey completed by youth in foster care, 48 percent of the youth agreed with the statement, "The Daily Life Skills Classes helped me learn skills important to my future."

The Statewide Assessment reports the following findings of an Older Youth Case Review conducted in February 2010 on 204 randomly selected files of youth aged 14 to 21:

- Referrals for IL services were made in 72 percent of the cases; however, required documentation did not support continued involvement with the youth.
- The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment form was not being updated annually as required.
- Only 89 (44 percent) of the 204 cases reviewed contained documentation indicating that youth were actively involved in developing their Individualized Action Plans (IAP) and that IAP goals were specific in terms of life skills for the youth.
- Over 50 percent of the case files reviewed during the Older Youth Case Review did not contain a strengths/needs assessment and did not have an Adolescent FST Guide and/or an IAP that was updated every 6 months as required.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in providing IL services to youth. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the State is effective in providing services to youth to prepare them for the transition to independence. These stakeholders identified the Educational Training Voucher and structured and unstructured living arrangements as particularly useful in preparing youth for independence. Other stakeholders, however, reported that services to prepare youth for independent living are not provided on a consistent basis. In addition, a few stakeholders noted that the quality of the services available in each community depends on the contractor in that area.

### Permanency Outcome 2

<b>Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	6	7	12	25	<b>62.5</b>
Partially Achieved	4	3	7	14	<b>35.0</b>
Not Achieved	0	0	1	1	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>60%</b>		

### Status of Permanency Outcome 2

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Permanency Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 62.5 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State did not consistently place siblings together in foster care.
- The State was not consistently effective in promoting visitation between children in foster care and their parents or their siblings in foster care.
- The State did not consistently seek and assess relatives as placement resources.
- The State was not consistent with regard to making concerted efforts to preserve connections of children in foster care with extended families and with their cultural, racial, ethnic, or religious heritage.
- The State was not consistent in promoting the relationship between children and their parents.

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

- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes
- Developed policy requiring an FST meeting prior to placing siblings separately and requiring an administrative review within 30 days if the siblings remain separated, and revised CD policy to improve the requirements for the visitation plan for sibling visitation, and parent and child visitation
- Developed an ongoing training module for CD staff, foster parents, and Juvenile Court staff on sibling placements and developed a targeted recruitment plan for sibling group resource homes
- Developed a statewide plan to address preserving relevant connections for children in foster care, established agreements with other State agencies, and developed diligent search procedures to improve efforts to locate relatives and absent parents
- Modified data entry system requirements to document and track kinship placement vendor types accurately, and evaluated and revised The Caregiver Who Knows the Child training based on a relative resource survey

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

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Permanency Outcome 2 are presented and discussed below.

#### Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 11 was applicable for 33 (82.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if TPR was attained prior to the period under review, contact with parents was not considered to be in the child’s best interests, and/or parents were deceased or their whereabouts were unknown. In assessing item 11, reviewers were to determine whether the child’s most current foster care setting was near the child’s parents or close relatives. The results of the assessment of item 11 are presented in the table below.

Item 11 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	7	8	17	32	97
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	1	1	3
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	2	2	7	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94%</b>		



Item 11 was rated as a Strength in 31 cases when reviewers determined that the child was placed either in the same community as the parents or near the parents’ community. The item also was rated as a Strength in one case when reviewers determined that even though the child was placed out of his or her community, the placement was necessary to meet the needs of the child. Item 11 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in one case when reviewers determined that the agency did not explore placement resources for the child closer to the parents’ community.

**Rating Determination**

Item 11 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 97 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed children in locations close to their parents or relatives when appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 11 also was rated as a Strength in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD makes concerted efforts to place children in close proximity to birth parents. If this is not possible, the CD attempts to place children within 50 miles of their birth families or communities.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in placing children in close proximity to their families or makes concerted efforts to do so. A few stakeholders reported that when children are placed outside of the community, it usually is necessary to meet the needs of the children or to place them with a relative.

**Item 12. Placement with siblings**

  **X**   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 12 was applicable for 22 (55 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if the child did not have a sibling in foster care at any time during the period under review. In assessing item 12, reviewers were to determine whether siblings were currently, or had been, placed together, and if separated, whether the separation was necessary to meet the service or safety needs of one or more of the children. The results of the assessment of item 12 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 12 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	5	6	9	20	<b>91</b>
Area Needing Improvement	0	0	2	2	<b>9</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	5	4	9	18	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82%</b>		

Item 12 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the child was placed with siblings (eight cases), or that the separation of siblings was necessary because one of the siblings had special placement needs or because placement with siblings was not in the child's best interests (12 cases). Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in two cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to place siblings together. In one case rated as an Area Needing Improvement, five siblings were placed in three homes, and in the other case two siblings were placed separately.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 12 was assigned an overall rating of Strength. In 91 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency placed siblings together in foster care whenever appropriate. This percentage is greater than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 12 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, placement of siblings is a priority during the case planning process and an FST meeting must be held prior to the separation of a sibling group. When the FST determines that a sibling group cannot reside in the same household, the following placement options must be considered:

- Placement in the same town or community
- Placement that permits continuation in the same school setting
- Placement in the same geographic region
- Placement in a setting where the resource providers can facilitate frequent contact among siblings

The Statewide Assessment reports that one barrier to placing siblings together is the lack of resource providers able to take large sibling groups. Another barrier is the requirement under State law that, whenever possible, noncustodial parents must be considered as a placement resource for the child, and if there are two children with different noncustodial parents, the siblings may be separated unless the split is contrary to the children's welfare.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that, as of October 31, 2009, 73 percent of the 5,355 children in foster care with siblings in foster care were placed with at least one sibling. When siblings are separated, efforts must be made to reunite the sibling group as soon as possible, unless placement together is determined not to be in the best interests of one or more of the siblings. In cases where it is not in the best interests of the children to be placed together, the circuit manager and appropriate regional staff must conduct a sibling administrative review within 30 days of sibling separation, and every 30 days thereafter, to address sibling placement options and necessary steps. The recommendations of the sibling administrative review must be provided and/or discussed with the assigned caseworker and supervisor.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the applicable cases.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally makes concerted efforts to keep siblings together in foster care unless it is in the best interests of siblings to be separated. Many stakeholders indicated that placing siblings together is a priority for the CD, although stakeholders acknowledged that it can be difficult to find resource homes for large sibling groups. Some stakeholders reported that if siblings are separated, the CD makes concerted efforts to place the siblings in the same community to ensure frequent contact and regularly reviews placement options in an attempt to reunite the siblings as soon as possible. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that the CD uses relative and kinship homes to maintain siblings in the same placement.

### Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 13 was applicable for 34 (85 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable for an assessment of this item if the child had no siblings in foster care and if one of the following conditions was met with regard to the parents: TPR was established prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the child’s life or were deceased; or visitation with a parent was not considered in the best interests of the child. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to facilitate sufficient visitation between children in foster care and their parents and between children in foster care and their siblings also in foster care and whether the visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of children and families. The results of the assessment of item 13 are presented in the table below.

Item 13 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	4	4	13	21	62
Area Needing Improvement	4	3	6	13	38
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>34</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	2	3	1	6	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>68%</b>		

Item 13 was rated as a Strength in 21 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visitation with parents and siblings met the needs of the children. Item 13 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 13 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the mother (seven cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with the father (10 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote visitation with siblings in foster care (one case).

Additional information about visitation frequency is provided in the table below.

<b>Typical Frequency of Child's Visits During the Period Under Review</b>	<b>With Mother</b>	<b>With Father</b>	<b>With Siblings in Foster Care</b>
Visits occurred at least once a week	14 (47%)	7 (35%)	9 (69%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	4 (13%)	2 (10%)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	3 (10%)	0	3 (23%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	6 (20%)	4 (20%)	1 (8%)
There were no visits during the period under review	3 (10%)	7 (35%)	0
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>

The data indicate that children visited at least once per month with their mothers in 70 percent of the 30 applicable cases, with their fathers in 45 percent of the 20 applicable cases, and with their siblings in 92 percent of the 13 applicable cases.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 13 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 62 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to ensure that visitation was of sufficient frequency to meet the needs of the family. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 13 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD is required to arrange visits between children in foster care and their parents and siblings unless the court or the FST/PPR Team deems such visits to be contrary to the welfare of the child. The Statewide Assessment also reports that visitation plans specifying the frequency and other aspects of visitation must be developed, and that CD policy recommends that visits between parents and children occur once a month at a minimum, but preferably once a week or more often. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the requirements and recommendations pertaining to visits between parents and children apply to noncustodial as well as custodial parents, and if a noncustodial parent cannot be located, the CD is required to conduct a diligent search. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that supervised visits occur if the FST/PPR Team or the court determines that the safety of the child cannot be ensured during the visit.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, findings from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 67 percent of the applicable cases.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State is effective in ensuring sufficient visitation with parents and siblings in foster care and that visitation between parents and children generally occurs weekly or at least once a month. A few stakeholders reported that caseworkers attempt to maintain children’s contacts with incarcerated parents.

Some stakeholders also indicated that the frequency of visitation increases as the family progresses toward reunification. Some stakeholders also noted that foster parents sometimes facilitate or provide transportation and supervise parent-child visits.

Although some stakeholders reported that visitation regularly occurs between siblings in foster care, other stakeholders indicated that some children in foster care do not have the opportunity to maintain contact with their siblings.

### Item 14. Preserving connections

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

All 40 foster care cases were applicable for an assessment of item 14. In assessing item 14, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made, or was making, diligent efforts to preserve the child’s connections to neighborhood, community, heritage, extended family, faith, and friends while the child was in foster care. This item is not rated on the basis of visits or contacts with parents or siblings in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 14 are presented in the table below.

Item 14 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	10	9	14	33	82.5
Area Needing Improvement	0	1	6	7	17.5
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>70%</b>		

Item 14 was rated as a Strength in 33 cases when reviewers determined that the agency made concerted efforts to preserve the child’s connections with extended family members, religious or cultural heritage, schools, community, and friends. Item 14 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in seven cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to extended family (seven cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her neighborhood/community (two cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her school (one case).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to maintain the child’s connections to his or her friends (one case).

### **Rating Determination**

Item 14 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 82.5 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections with extended family, culture, religion, community, and school. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 14 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act and the Missouri Foster Care Education Bill of Rights require the CD to coordinate with school districts and/or school liaisons to improve educational stability for children in foster care. The Statewide Assessment reports that arrangements for a child to remain in his or her school must be discussed during the first FST meeting, which is held within 72 hours of the child's removal, and during any subsequent FST meeting when a placement change is being considered.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the CD has a brochure that informs families about their rights under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). As noted in the Statewide Assessment, when a child enters foster care, caseworkers are expected to use the ICWA checklist to determine Native American heritage and then are to provide this brochure to parents if Native American heritage has been identified. Also, if Native American heritage is identified, caseworkers must complete an Indian Ancestry Questionnaire to assist them in managing compliance with ICWA.

Data provided in the Statewide Assessment indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 56 percent of the applicable cases reviewed for the CFSR Mock Case Review. Additional data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that of the 9,322 children in foster care on October 31, 2009, 554 children were placed in kinship placements.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the CD makes concerted efforts to preserve connections for children in foster care. Some stakeholders reported that the CD attempts to maintain children in the same school and will provide or arrange transportation to school as needed. However, a few stakeholders reported that it is the schools' responsibility to arrange transportation for children placed in foster care out of their school districts.

Additionally, some stakeholders reported that the CD attempts to maintain connections by arranging visitation and other types of contact with siblings not in foster care, extended family, and appropriate friends. However, a few stakeholders reported that the CD does not assist children in maintaining a relationship with siblings not in foster care. A few stakeholders noted that the CD attempts to preserve connections by pursuing relative and kinship care.

A few stakeholders in the 35th District reported that CD inquiries regarding ICWA eligibility are required to be included in the letter presented to the court at each hearing.

## Item 15. Relative placement

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 15 was applicable for 37 (92.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if relative placement was not an option during the period under review because the child was in an adoptive placement at the start of the time period, or the child entered foster care needing specialized services that could not be provided in a relative placement. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency made diligent efforts to locate and assess both maternal and paternal relatives as potential placement resources for children in foster care. The results of the assessment of item 15 are presented in the table below.

Item 15 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	8	7	11	26	70
Area Needing Improvement	2	0	9	11	30
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>37</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Case	0	3	0	3	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55%</b>		

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

- The child was placed with relatives (11 cases).
- The child was not placed with relatives, but the agency made diligent efforts to search for both maternal and paternal relatives when applicable (15 cases).

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

- The agency had not made efforts to search for maternal relatives (eight cases).
- The agency had not made efforts to search for paternal relatives (eight cases).
- Although the child was placed with a relative, the placement was not stable (one case).

### Rating Determination

Item 15 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 70 percent of cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to locate and assess relatives as potential placement resources. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 15 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, State law requires that an immediate and diligent search to locate, contact, and place a child with grandparents be completed during the first 3 hours after custody or prior to custody. The statute also requires that a child be

placed with grandparents unless it is contrary to the welfare of the child. If the child's grandparent(s) cannot be located within the 3-hour period, the law requires the CD to continue diligent efforts, while the child is in foster care, to contact, locate, and place the child with a grandparent or other relative.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that if the whereabouts of one or both of the biological parents or other relatives is unknown, a diligent search must be made to locate both parents of the child or relatives as possible placement resources. As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, a complete and diligent search must be thoroughly documented in the case narrative and in the Child Assessment and Service Plan (CS-1) to verify that all reasonable efforts were made to find absent parents or relatives.

Data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that of the 9,322 children in foster care on October 31, 2009, 2,144 children were placed with relatives.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the CD generally makes concerted efforts to search for relatives when children enter foster care and throughout the child's placement in foster care. Additionally, many stakeholders reported that the CD often is successful in placing children with relatives. Some stakeholders reported that although the CD may not always find a placement resource, the search for relatives often helps establish permanent connections for children. Some stakeholders also reported that caseworkers are required by law to notify grandparents when children are placed in foster care.

### **Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents**

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

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 16 was applicable for 31 (77.5 percent) of the 40 foster care cases. Cases were not applicable if parental rights had been terminated before the period under review and parents were no longer involved with the child; a relationship with the parents was not considered in the child's best interests throughout the period under review; or both parents were deceased. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had made diligent efforts to support or maintain the bond between children in foster care and their mothers and fathers through efforts other than arranging visitation. The results of the assessment of item 16 are presented in the table that follows.



<b>Item 16 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	3	3	9	15	<b>48</b>
Area Needing Improvement	4	4	8	16	<b>52</b>
<b>Total Applicable Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>31</b>	
Not Applicable Foster Care Cases	3	3	3	9	
<b>Total Foster Care Cases</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>53%</b>		

Item 16 was rated as a Strength in 15 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support and/or strengthen the bond between parents and children through various activities. Item 16 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 16 cases when reviewers determined one or both of the following:

- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the mother when applicable (13 cases).
- The agency did not make concerted efforts to support the relationship with the father when applicable (nine cases).

Specific findings pertaining to this item are shown in the table below.

<b>Efforts Made</b>	<b>With Mother (Number of Cases)</b>	<b>With Father (Number of Cases)</b>
Encouraging the parent's participation in school or after-school activities and attendance at medical appointments and special events	13	8
Providing transportation so that parents can participate in these events, activities, or appointments	5	3
Providing opportunities for family therapeutic situations	14	5
Encouraging foster parents to mentor biological parents and serve as parenting role models for them	7	5
Encouraging and facilitating contact with incarcerated parents (when appropriate) or with parents living far away from the child	1	1
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>

### **Rating Determination**

Item 16 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 48 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to support the parent-child relationships of children in foster care. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 16 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, FSTs are designed to promote and maintain the parent-child relationship and that the CD attempts to promote and maintain the parent-child relationship of the noncustodial parent in the same manner as the custodial parent.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that foster parents are expected to assist in maintaining a bond and positive relationship between the child and the parents by providing opportunities that allow the parents to participate in their child's normal day-to-day activities. For example, foster parents are expected to encourage parents to attend parent-teacher conferences, the child's extracurricular activities, and the child's doctor or dentist appointments.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the CD offered parent-child relationship training to caseworkers and foster parents to help them understand the need for improving the parent-child relationships of children in foster care.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that parents are invited to attend doctors' appointments with their children and that some families participate in family counseling. A few stakeholders reported that although foster parents are encouraged to work with birth parents and engage them to participate in their children's activities, this rarely occurs.

## III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

### Well-Being Outcome 1

<b>Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	7	11	11	29	<b>45.3</b>
Partially Achieved	9	5	12	26	<b>40.6</b>
Not Achieved	1	1	7	9	<b>14.1</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>37%</b>		

### Status of Well-Being Outcome 1

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 1. The outcome was substantially achieved in 45.3 percent of the cases reviewed. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 47.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 42 percent of the 24 in-home services cases. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

## **Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent in assessing and addressing the service needs of children, parents, or foster parents.
- The State was not consistent in involving parents and children in the case planning process.
- The frequency and quality of caseworker contacts with children and parents was not sufficient to ensure the children’s safety or well-being.

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

- Modified the family assessment and case plan tools to better link services to the needs of the family and to include a mechanism for family self-assessment, and identified areas specifically related to child safety and risk concerns
- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes, to maximize family participation in FST meetings, and to strengthen caseworker relationships with biological or adoptive parents
- Developed a list of “expert facilitators” for FST meetings, which require a higher level of expertise
- Used caseload equalization and monitored cases via PRRs to increase policy compliance with frequency of caseworker visits with children and parents, and developed policy and used PET to address the quality of caseworker visits with children and parents
- Enhanced the information system to track caseworker visitation

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

## **Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Well-Being Outcome 1 are presented and discussed below.

### **Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### **Case Review Findings**

Item 17 was applicable for all 64 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the agency had assessed adequately the needs of children, parents, and foster parents and provided the services necessary to meet those needs. This item excludes the assessment of children’s (but not parents’) needs pertaining to education, physical health, and mental health; those areas are addressed in later items. The results of the assessment of item 17 are presented in the table that follows.

<b>Item 17 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	9	13	12	34	<b>53</b>
Area Needing Improvement	8	4	18	30	<b>47</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>40%</b>		

Item 17 was rated as a Strength in 52.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 54 percent of the 24 in-home services cases. Item 17 was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that the needs of children, parents, and foster parents had been adequately assessed and that identified service needs had been met. Item 17 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- There was an inadequate assessment of children’s needs (eight cases: three foster care, five in-home).
- There was an inadequate assessment of mothers’ needs (12 cases: 7 foster care, 5 in-home).
- There was an inadequate assessment of fathers’ needs (17 cases: 11 foster care, 6 in-home).
- There was an inadequate assessment of foster parents’ needs (four cases).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address children’s needs (11 cases: 6 foster care, 5 in-home).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address mothers’ needs (15 cases: 9 foster care, 6 in-home).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address fathers’ needs (19 cases: 11 foster care, 8 in-home).
- The agency did not provide appropriate services to address foster parents’ needs (seven cases).

Additional case review findings pertaining to needs assessments and service provisions are shown in the table below.

<b>Target Person for Needs Assessment and Services</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases</b>		<b>In-Home Services Cases</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable</b>
Mother’s needs assessed and met	22 (71%)	31	17 (74%)	23
Father’s needs assessed and met	10 (48%)	21	10 (56%)	18
Foster parents’ needs assessed and met	27 (79%)	34	N/A	N/A
Child’s needs assessed and met	33 (82.5%)	40	19 (79%)	24

The data indicate that for the foster care cases, the children and foster parents were more likely to have their needs assessed and met than the mothers and fathers. For the in-home services cases, the children and mothers were more likely to have their needs assessed and met than were the fathers. In general, fathers were less likely than mothers, children, or foster parents to have their needs assessed and met.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 17 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 53 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that the agency had adequately assessed and addressed the service needs of children, parents, and foster parents. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 17 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are required to complete a comprehensive assessment of the family by completing a family assessment form (CD-14) and a family functioning assessment/reassessment form (CD-14A) for both in-home cases and out-of-home foster care cases. The assessment process and related tools are designed to facilitate a family-centered approach to assessing family structure, strengths, supports, and service needs, and taken together, provide a comprehensive assessment packet designed for ongoing family assessment and treatment.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that there are child-specific assessments for children in foster care, including the CS-1, which provides documentation of the caseworker's and FST's assessments of the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of each child, and gathers detailed information about the child's needs and basic family demographics. The CS-1 is updated every 6 months or more often as needed.

The following data relevant to assessing and meeting the needs of children, parents, and foster parents are reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 95 percent of the cases reviewed.
- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated a Strength in 49 percent of the cases reviewed.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that FST meetings are used to assess the needs of families and to identify and coordinate appropriate services for families. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that the CD attempts to locate noncustodial parents and assess the needs of the noncustodial parent. While some stakeholders indicated that caseworkers generally address the needs of foster parents, others expressed the opinion that caseworkers are not responsive to the needs of foster parents.

### **Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning**

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

### **Case Review Findings**

Item 18 was applicable for 63 (98 percent) of the 64 cases. One case was not applicable because the parents were not involved with the child in any way, and the child was too young to participate in case planning. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine

whether parents and children (when appropriate) had been involved in the case planning process, and, if not, whether their involvement was contrary to the child’s best interests. A determination of involvement in case planning required that a parent or child actively participated in identifying the services and goals included in the case plan. The results of the assessment of item 18 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 18 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	9	11	13	33	<b>52</b>
Area Needing Improvement	8	5	17	30	<b>48</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>63</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	0	1	0	1	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>43%</b>		

Item 18 was rated as a Strength in 51 percent of the 39 applicable foster care cases and 54 percent of the 24 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 33 cases when reviewers determined that all appropriate parties had actively participated in the case planning process or that the agency had made concerted efforts to involve them in the case planning process. The item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 30 cases when reviewers determined that the agency had not made concerted efforts to involve the mother, father, and/or child (when age appropriate) in the case planning process. Specific information about involving mothers, fathers, and children in case planning is provided in the table below.

<b>Person Involved in Case Planning</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases</b>		<b>In-Home Services Cases</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable Cases</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Applicable Cases</b>
Mother involved in case planning?	18 (58%)	31	15 (65%)	23
Father involved in case planning?	9 (43%)	21	11 (61%)	18
Children involved in case planning?	24 (92%)	26	9 (53%)	17

The data indicate that although the CD appears to make concerted efforts to involve children in foster care in case planning, it does not make concerted efforts to involve the mothers or fathers in either the foster care or in-home services cases or the children in the in-home services cases.

### **Rating Determination**

Item 18 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 52 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made diligent efforts to involve parents and/or children in the case planning process. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 18 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, FST meetings provide a mechanism for parents and children to be key participants in the case planning process. All youth 13 years of age and older are given the opportunity to participate in FST meetings, as well as some children younger than age 13, if appropriate and with supervisory approval. The Statewide Assessment reports that information provided by participants in the FST meetings is used in conjunction with the comprehensive assessment process to develop the case plan.

The Statewide Assessment notes that for in-home services cases, the CD works primarily with the custodial parent who allowed or requested the case to be opened. Although caseworkers are expected to encourage the participation of the non-residential or noncustodial parent in case planning, the caseworker cannot contact the noncustodial parent without consent from the custodial parent. However, caseworkers are required by law to seek non-residential or noncustodial parents of children in foster care and involve them in case planning. Additionally, the Statewide Assessment reports that each circuit developed a plan to improve diligent search for the noncustodial parent, and improve engagement of noncustodial parents in case planning by strengthening caseworker/supervisor skills in engaging families.

The following data relevant to the involvement of children and parents in the development of the case plan are reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 93 percent of the case reviewed.
- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 60 percent of the cases reviewed.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in engaging parents and children in case planning. Many stakeholders expressed the opinion that FST meetings facilitate meaningful engagement of families in case planning. A few stakeholders reported that some youth actually preside over and facilitate their FST meetings, a practice that ensures their involvement in case planning. A few stakeholders also reported that the agency involves incarcerated parents in case planning by having them attend FST meetings via conference call and/or sending incarcerated parents a copy of the case plan. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that caseworkers attempt to locate absent parents and to involve absent and/or noncustodial parents in case planning.

Despite these reported efforts to involve families in case planning, other stakeholders suggested that case plans are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents and children. Some stakeholders maintained that youth are not consistently involved in FST meetings. A few stakeholders also noted that when parents and/or children do attempt to provide input into the case plan, their input is not incorporated into the case plan.

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

**Item 19. Caseworker visits with child**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 19 was applicable for all 64 cases. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether the frequency of visits between the caseworkers and children was sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s safety and well-being, and whether visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment. The results of the assessment of item 19 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 19 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	16	15	22	53	<b>83</b>
Area Needing Improvement	1	2	8	11	<b>17</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>73%</b>		

Item was rated as a Strength in 92.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 67 percent of the 24 in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 53 cases when reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of visits between the caseworkers and children were sufficient to ensure adequate monitoring of the child’s well-being and promote attainment of case goals. Item 19 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

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

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

<b>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Child During the Period Under Review</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases (Number and Percent)</b>	<b>In-Home Services Cases (Number and Percent)</b>
Visits occurred at least once a week	3 (7.5 %)	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	23 (57.5%)	4 (17%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	13 (32.5%)	15 (62.5%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	1 (2.5%)	5 (21%)
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>24</b>



### **Rating Determination**

Item 19 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 83 percent of the cases, reviewers determined that caseworker visits with children were of sufficient frequency and quality. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 19 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, caseworkers are required to visit children in CD custody once a month in the placement, meet with each child individually and privately, and discuss issues relevant to the child's placement, safety, permanency goal, and well-being.

In September 2008, the State began utilizing a management report to track caseworker visits with children. The following data relevant to caseworker visits with children were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- In FY 2007, 56 percent of the children were visited at least once a month with 93 percent of those visits held in the child's placement.
- In FY 2009, 76 percent of children in foster care were visited at least once a month with 96 percent of those visits held in the child's placement.

The Statewide Assessment attributes this improvement to a combination of improved accuracy of data entry and the CD's focus on developing strategic plans for improving both the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children.

The Statewide Assessment reports that agency policy requires that the frequency of caseworker contacts with children who remain in their homes must be based on the risk level ascertained by the formal risk assessment and risk reassessment. It was noted that visitation frequency can range from one visit per month to three visits per month, and visits are expected to occur in the home.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, it sometimes can be difficult to schedule visits with children in foster care because the resource providers must be involved in the scheduling or because it may be difficult to ensure that the child in a residential living center or an IL setting is at home. The Statewide Assessment also indicates it can be challenging to plan visits with older youth because of their work and school schedules.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed different opinions regarding whether the frequency of caseworker contacts with children is sufficient to meet the needs of children. While some stakeholders expressed the opinion that caseworkers visit regularly with children and spend time alone with the children, a few suggested that caseworker visits with children are not occurring with sufficient frequency and regularity. A few Greene County stakeholders reported that although youth may see the "secondary caseworker" from the county in which they are placed quite often, the primary caseworker from the county where they entered foster care (the legal county), often does not contact the youth on a regular basis.

With regard to the quality of visits, a few stakeholders commented that caseworkers usually assess for safety during visits with children.

**Item 20. Caseworker visits with parent(s)**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

**Case Review Findings**

Item 20 was applicable for 56 (87.5 percent) of the 64 cases. Cases were not applicable for this assessment if parental rights had been terminated prior to the period under review and parents were no longer involved in the lives of their children. All cases that were not applicable are foster care cases. Reviewers were to assess whether the caseworker’s face-to-face contact with the children’s mothers and fathers was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote attainment of case goals and ensure the children’s safety and well-being. The results of the assessment of item 20 are presented in the table below.

<b>Item 20 Ratings</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strength	4	8	11	23	<b>41</b>
Area Needing Improvement	9	6	18	33	<b>59</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>56</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	4	3	1	8	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>38%</b>		

Item 20 was rated as a Strength in 44 percent of the 32 applicable foster care cases and 37.5 percent of the in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 23 cases when reviewers determined that visits occurred with sufficient frequency to meet the needs of parents and children and that visits focused on issues pertinent to case planning, service delivery, and goal attainment.

Item 20 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 33 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency or quality (14 cases).
- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency or quality (10 cases).
- Visits with the mother were of sufficient frequency but did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning or service delivery (two cases).
- Visits with the father were of sufficient frequency but did not focus on issues pertaining to case planning or service delivery (one case).
- Visits with the mother were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (two cases).

- Visits with the father were not of sufficient frequency, although when they did occur they were of sufficient quality (one case).
- There were no visits with the mother (four cases).
- There were no visits with the father (11 cases).

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

<b>Typical Frequency of Caseworker Visits With Parents During the Period Under Review</b>	<b>Foster Care Cases</b>		<b>In-Home Services</b>	
	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Father</b>
Visits occurred at least once a week	1 (3%)	0	0	0
Visits occurred less frequently than once a week but at least twice a month	5 (16%)	1 (5%)	3 (13%)	1 (6%)
Visits occurred less frequently than twice a month but at least once a month	14 (45%)	4 (20%)	13 (57%)	8 (44%)
Visits occurred less frequently than once a month	7 (23%)	8 (40%)	7 (30%)	5 (28%)
There were no visits during the period under review	4 (13%)	7 (35%)	0	4 (22%)
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>

### **Rating Determination**

Item 20 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 41 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with parents were sufficient to monitor the safety and well-being of the child or promote attainment of case goals. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 20 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, for families with children in foster care, the caseworker is required to visit the parents in the home once a week for the first 30 days and at least once a month thereafter. For in-home services cases, the caseworker is required to visit with the parents according to their established level of risk, which can range from one to three face-to-face visits a month. During these contacts, the caseworker is expected to discuss the safety and well-being of the children, barriers to permanency for the children in foster care, progress on the case plan, and upcoming court proceedings and FST/PPR Team meetings, as relevant.

Data reported in the Statewide Assessment indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 75 percent of the cases reviewed by both the 2009 SCR and the CFSR Mock Case Reviews.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

The few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that caseworkers generally have face-to-face contact with parents at least monthly. There were insufficient substantive comments from stakeholders on the quality of caseworker visits with parents.

## Well-Being Outcome 2

<b>Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	9	9	20	38	<b>88.4</b>
Partially Achieved	0	0	1	1	<b>2.3</b>
Not Achieved	2	1	1	4	<b>9.3</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>43</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	6	7	8	21	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>91%</b>		

### Status of Well-Being Outcome 2

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 2. The outcome was substantially achieved in 88.4 percent of the cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 91 percent of the 33 applicable foster care cases and 80 percent of the 10 applicable in-home services cases. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The key concern identified in the 2003 CFSR was that the State was not consistent in its efforts to meet children's educational needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases.

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

- Developed a protocol to include relevant Department of Elementary and Secondary Education personnel at FST meetings, designated an education liaison at the State level, and developed local and State-level plans to alleviate barriers and address educational disruptions for children in foster care
- Developed local protocols for children in foster care regarding permission of custodians to access records needed for enrollment, and incorporated accountability measures for transfer of educational records into residential facility contracts to improve the flow of educational records and reports when children transfer schools
- Consulted with National Resource Centers and other national education resources regarding early identification of educational neglect, truancy, and suspension of children in foster care, and incorporated the risk factors into the CD's family assessment tool and service plan

- Developed protocols for accessing early interventions for students at risk for educational neglect, truancy, and suspension and for children expelled due to the Safe School Act, and incorporated this information into new caseworker and foster parent training

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

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

#### Item 21. Educational needs of the child

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 21 was applicable for 43 (67 percent) of the 64 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if either of the following applied: Children were not of school age, or children in the in-home services cases did not have service needs pertaining to education-related issues. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children’s educational needs were appropriately assessed and whether services were provided to meet those needs. The results of the assessment of item 21 are presented in the table below.

Item 21 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	9	9	20	38	<b>88</b>
Area Needing Improvement	2	1	2	5	<b>12</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>43</b>	
Not Applicable	6	7	8	21	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>91%</b>		

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

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

#### Rating Determination

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

this item to be rated as a Strength. A 95-percent standard is established for this item because it is the only item assessed for this outcome. Item 21 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, for children receiving in-home services, educational needs are assessed through the family assessment process; for children in foster care, meeting educational needs begins with the FST, which ensures that each child has an educational plan. The FST discusses educational stability and the child's placement needs at every FST meeting. The Statewide Assessment reports that relevant school personnel often participate on a child's FST. Additionally, the CS-1 (completed for every child in foster care) requires educational information including the name of the current or most recent school, grade level, credit hours, number of school changes in the last 6 months, Individual Educational Plan information, and education-related comments.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the CD is required to coordinate with schools to improve educational stability for children in foster care. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, if transportation to the child's school of origin is not available through the school district, the resource parent is approached about possibly providing transportation. Additionally, the Foster Care Education Bill of Rights requires that each school district designates a staff person as the educational liaison for foster children.

The Statewide Assessment indicates that foster parents are expected to "act as the parent" in educational planning and placement if the student has disabilities. The CD provides foster parents with information about a foster child's past educational history and foster parents are required to keep the CD informed of new educational developments. Additionally, foster parents may share necessary information with school personnel in order to secure a safe and appropriate education for the child.

The following data relevant to meeting children's educational needs were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 66 percent of the applicable cases.
- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 88 percent of the applicable cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the CD generally is effective in meeting children's educational needs. Various stakeholders expressed the following strengths with regard to the agency's effectiveness in meeting children's educational needs:

- Caseworkers and foster parents generally are present at Individualized Education Plan meetings.
- The agency makes concerted efforts to maintain children in the same school.
- The CD provides or arranges for transportation when children move out of the school district.
- There generally are no issues with the transfer of educational records.

### Well-Being Outcome 3

<b>Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs</b>					
<b>Number of Cases Reviewed by the Team According to Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>					
<b>Degree of Outcome Achievement</b>	<b>35th Circuit</b>	<b>Greene County</b>	<b>St. Louis County</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Substantially Achieved	11	13	17	41	<b>68.3</b>
Partially Achieved	4	1	5	10	<b>16.7</b>
Not Achieved	1	1	7	9	<b>15.0</b>
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>60</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	1	2	1	4	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Substantially Achieved by Site</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>59%</b>		

### Status of Well-Being Outcome 3

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with Well-Being Outcome 3. The outcome was substantially achieved in 68.3 percent of the applicable cases. This percentage is less than the 95 percent required for a determination of substantial conformity. The outcome was substantially achieved in 70 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 65 percent of the 20 applicable in-home services cases. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this outcome in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address the outcome in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistently effective in meeting children’s physical health needs.
- The State was not consistently effective in assessing and meeting children’s mental health needs, particularly children in the in-home services cases.

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

- Revised the family assessment tool to include the assessment of medical and mental health needs for in-home services cases
- Assigned a dental coordinator to each region to identify barriers and facilitate access to dental providers
- Partnered with the Division of Medical Services (DMS) to decrease the administrative burden for Medicaid providers in an effort to increase the ability of CD staff and families to access dental resources
- Developed a statewide comprehensive children’s mental health plan to increase the level of cooperation among the courts, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the CD, and families

- Designated five regional mental health coordinators who established local teams to identify barriers, developed plans to overcome the barriers, and created partnerships to improve to accessibility to available mental health resources

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

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

#### Item 22. Physical health of the child

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

#### Case Review Findings

Item 22 was applicable for 49 (77 percent) of the 64 cases reviewed. Cases that were not applicable were in-home services cases in which physical health concerns were not an issue. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether children’s physical health needs (including dental needs) had been appropriately assessed, and the services designed to meet those needs had been, or were being, provided. The findings of the assessment of item 22 are presented in the table below.

Item 22 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	10	9	16	35	71
Area Needing Improvement	4	2	8	14	29
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>49</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	3	6	6	15	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>67%</b>		

Item 22 was rated as a Strength in 72.5 percent of the 40 foster care cases and 67 percent of 9 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength in 35 cases when reviewers determined that children’s medical and dental needs were routinely assessed and necessary services were provided. Item 22 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in 14 cases when reviewers determined one or more of the following:

- The child’s physical health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (six cases).
- The child’s physical health needs were adequately assessed but were not adequately addressed (one case).
- The child’s dental health needs were not adequately assessed or addressed (eight cases).
- There was a substantial delay in assessing the child’s dental health needs (two cases).
- There was a substantial delay in assessing the child’s physical health needs (one case).



### **Rating Determination**

Item 22 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 71 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency was effective in assessing and meeting children's physical health needs. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 22 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, an initial health examination should occur within 24 hours of a child coming into foster care to ensure that any urgent health concerns are immediately addressed. When possible, this initial health examination should be completed by the child's current primary care physician; however, if a provider is not readily accessible, the initial health examination must occur within 72 hours of the initial placement. The Statewide Assessment reports that provider accessibility for the initial examination within 24 hours is difficult.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that a full Healthy Children and Youth examination, including eye examination, hearing examination, and dental assessment, should be completed no later than 30 days after the child is placed in foster care. The Statewide Assessment reports that, as of July 2007, youth who exit foster care on or after their 18th birthdays and are not yet 21 years old are automatically eligible for MO HealthNet coverage (Medicaid) without regard to their income or assets.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, FACES captures medical information for children in foster care, allowing easy access to this information if a child moves from one county to another. Additionally, health information is readily available to Quality Assurance Program (QAP) staff through Cyber Access, which captures data from medical providers and contains extensive medical information, including dates of treatment, diagnosis, and medication information. This allows the CD to have immediate access to current health information to monitor or supplement information obtained directly from providers.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Family Functioning Assessment/Reassessment tool assesses the physical health needs of the child and the family in the in-home services cases and requires that reassessments be conducted every 90 days.

The following data relevant to assessing and meeting children's physical and dental health were reported in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 82 percent of the applicable cases. It was noted, however, that the SCR inquires about the past 12 months and, therefore, if the case being reviewed has been opened longer than 12 months, the initial physical examination is not captured in the assessment.
- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 61 percent of the applicable cases.

The Statewide Assessment reports that because it is difficult to locate a dentist who will accept the State's Medicaid coverage, each circuit has developed a plan to increase access to dental resources.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Although a few stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that sometimes it is difficult to locate providers to complete the initial health assessments, most expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in routinely assessing and addressing the medical needs of children. However, some stakeholders indicated that it is difficult to find dental care providers who accept the State’s Medicaid plan, which makes it difficult to meet children’s dental needs.

### Item 23. Mental/behavioral health of the child

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

### Case Review Findings

Item 23 was applicable for 45 (70 percent) of the 64 cases reviewed. Cases were not applicable if the child was too young for an assessment of mental health needs or if there were no mental health concerns. In assessing this item, reviewers were to determine whether mental health needs had been appropriately assessed and appropriate services to address those needs had been offered or provided. The results of the assessment of item 23 are presented in the table below.

Item 23 Ratings	35th Circuit	Greene County	St. Louis County	Total	Percent
Strength	10	10	17	37	82
Area Needing Improvement	1	1	6	8	18
<b>Total Applicable Cases</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>45</b>	
Not Applicable Cases	6	6	7	19	
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>Strength by Site</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>74%</b>		

Item 23 was rated as a Strength in 92 percent of the 26 applicable foster care cases and 68 percent of the 19 applicable in-home services cases. The item was rated as a Strength when reviewers determined that children’s mental health needs were appropriately assessed and identified mental health needs were addressed. Item 23 was rated as an Area Needing Improvement when reviewers determined the following:

- Mental health needs were neither assessed nor addressed (six cases).
- Mental health needs were assessed but services were not provided to address identified needs (two cases).

### Rating Determination

Item 23 was assigned an overall rating of Area Needing Improvement. In 82 percent of the applicable cases, reviewers determined that the agency had made concerted efforts to address the mental health needs of children. This percentage is less than the 90 percent required for a rating of Strength. Item 23 also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, children should receive a mental health and/or developmental screening within 30 days of the child's entry into foster care. Additionally, policy requires that children from birth to 10 years of age have a mental and/or developmental screening every 6 months for as long as they are in foster care. Children older than 10 years of age are to have complete mental health evaluations at the discretion of their physicians.

The Statewide Assessment reports that it is the responsibility of the child's caseworker to ensure that a child with serious emotional and behavioral disturbances receives appropriate counseling, therapy, and/or medication and that the resource provider has the knowledge and skills necessary to provide appropriate care for the child. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, FACES has a medical information section that also captures the child's mental health information and allows a caseworker to see the most up-to-date information regarding the child's mental health, including appointments, diagnoses, and medications.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, DMH provides mental health services to children who are determined to be eligible for the services. Children in foster care who are in need of mental health services are referred to the appropriate DMH facility. When an out-of-home placement is recommended by DMH for a child with severe mental health needs, a voluntary placement agreement between the CD and the parent or legal guardian of the child allows DMH to determine the need for mental health services and to administer the placement and care of a child while the parent, legal guardian, or custodian of the child retains legal custody.

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Family Functioning Assessment/Reassessment tool is used to assess the mental health needs of the children and families in the in-home services cases, and a reassessment is required every 90 days.

The following data relevant to assessing and meeting children's physical and dental health are provided in the Statewide Assessment:

- Data from the 2009 SCR indicate that this item was rated as a Strength in 96 percent of the applicable cases. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, the SCR measures if the child's mental health needs were identified in a timely manner and treated appropriately.
- Data from CFSR Mock Case Reviews indicate that this item was rated a Strength in 87 percent of applicable cases.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item expressed different opinions on the effectiveness of the State meeting the mental health needs of children. While some stakeholders suggested that mental health services are available to children, other stakeholders indicated that the appropriate services are not always readily accessible.

## SECTION B: SYSTEMIC FACTORS

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

Each item included in a systemic factor reflects a key Federal program requirement relevant to the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) for that systemic factor. The overall rating for each systemic factor is based on the ratings for the individual items incorporated in the systemic factor. For any given systemic factor, a State is rated as being either “in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 3 or 4) or “not in substantial conformity” with that factor (a score of 1 or 2). Specific requirements for each rating are shown in the table below.

### Rating the Systemic Factor

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

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

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

## I. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

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

### Status of Statewide Information System

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

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

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

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

  X   Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 24 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that FACES, Missouri's statewide information system, can readily identify the legal status, demographics, location, and goals for all children in foster care. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, implementation of FACES began in 2004, and the final phase of FACES development was scheduled for implementation in July 2010. The Statewide Assessment notes that at the time of the Statewide Assessment preparation, FACES was able to identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child in foster care. The Statewide Assessment also notes that CD staff are expected to update the electronic case record in FACES in a timely manner in accordance with the following requirements:

- Changes in placement and legal status must be entered into FACES as soon as possible but no later than 2 business days after the change occurs.
- The permanency goal must be established and entered into FACES within the first 30 days of custody.
- Information about all other foster care activities must be entered within 30 days of the activity.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that FACES is effective in identifying the legal status, demographics, location, and goals of children in foster care. A few key State-level stakeholders noted that although there were issues with data accuracy during the conversion to FACES, the issues primarily have been resolved, and the CD has made and continues to make concerted efforts to ensure data accuracy. Some stakeholders also noted that FACES operates as a case management system requiring documentation of all case activities.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the ease of navigation within FACES. Many stakeholders reported that FACES can be difficult to navigate because data must be entered into multiple screens, the system does not populate other screens, and the system sometimes loses data. However, other stakeholders indicated that once the user is accustomed to FACES, it is easy to navigate.

## II. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

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

### Status of Case Review System

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

### Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- The State was not consistent in involving parents in the development of case plans.
- Administrative reviews were not consistently held in a timely manner and did not meet the Federal requirement that a third-party participant must be involved in the review.
- The State did not have a consistent process in place to ensure that each child in foster care had a permanency hearing every 12 months. In addition, many of the 12-month hearings involved only “paper” reviews, and a full hearing was not held unless one of the parties requested it.
- The State did not consistently comply with the statewide process for filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA.

- The State did not have a statewide process to ensure the consistent notification of caregivers about court hearings or to ensure that caregivers could be heard in those hearings.

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

- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in assessment, case planning, and case plan review processes
- Developed a standardized supervisory case review tool to improve supervisory capacity to monitor enhanced casework practice relating to case planning
- Established agreements with other State agencies and developed diligent search procedures to improve efforts to locate relatives and absent parents in order to maximize parental and family involvement in FST meetings and case planning
- Revised CD policy to clarify administrative review requirements and recruited third-party participants for administrative reviews
- Increased the ability to track 6-month administrative reviews and capture administrative review information separately from FST meetings by changing relevant forms and data entry requirements
- In an effort to improve the timeliness of 12-month hearings, collaborated with OSCA to ensure joint accountability for timely hearings, developed a Court Issues Workgroup, developed local protocols between the court and the local CD office, and revised FST policy to include discussion of the permanency hearing date
- Provided training to judges, court staff, guardians *ad litem*, and CD staff on ASFA and permanency hearings consistent with State and Federal regulations
- Conducted meetings with the courts regarding procedures for filing timely TPR petitions and developed policies clarifying caseworkers' and supervisors' responsibilities in documenting compelling reasons
- Collaborated with OSCA to amend a State statute to ensure consistency with ASFA requirements regarding filing of TPR petitions within 60 days of a judicial determination that the child is an abandoned infant or that no reasonable efforts are required
- Revised consumer surveys for foster parents to incorporate questions regarding hearing notifications and opportunities to be heard in court and completed comprehensive Child Welfare Training with OSCA in order to increase the ability of foster parents to be notified of and heard in court

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

### **Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Case Review System are presented and discussed below.

**Item 25. The State provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 25 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although information from stakeholder interviews suggests that children have case plans and that they are developed in a timely manner, there were differences among stakeholders regarding the involvement of parents in the development of the case plan, with several stakeholders suggesting that parents have minimal involvement in case planning. In addition, during the onsite CFSR, case reviewers determined that in the cases reviewed, the CD made diligent efforts to involve mothers in case planning in 61 percent of the applicable cases and to involve fathers in 51 percent of the applicable cases. The Statewide Assessment provided information about agency policy pertaining to the timelines for case plan development but did not provide data about the implementation of that policy or about parents' input into case plans.

This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, CD policy requires that case planning decisions be made through the FST process and within specified timeframes. Participants in the FST include but are not limited to the caseworker, parents/caregivers, child (if age appropriate), guardian *ad litem* and/or court-appointed special advocate, parents' attorneys, and placement provider. The Statewide Assessment notes that, prior to the initial FST meeting, which is conducted within 72 hours of the child coming into foster care, the caseworker is required to begin an assessment of the family and child. The entire assessment and case planning process must be completed within 30 days from the date that the child enters foster care. The case plan is reviewed and updated as needed for subsequent FST meetings, which are held at a minimum of every 30 days until court adjudication, and then every 6 months thereafter. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the case plan, called the CS-1, is designed to be a dynamic document to which information can be continuously added over the life a case.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review addressed the issues of the timeliness of case plans, the effectiveness of the agency in involving parents in case planning, and the quality of case plans. With regard to timeliness, many stakeholders expressed the opinion that case plans are routinely prepared in a timely manner and are reviewed and updated at the required intervals during FST meetings.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions regarding the State's effectiveness in engaging parents in case planning. Some stakeholders reported that FSTs facilitate meaningful engagement of parents in case planning. However, some stakeholders maintained that case plans are developed with minimal or no involvement of parents. A few stakeholders also noted that often when parents attempt to provide input, it is not used in developing the plan. Additionally, a few stakeholders reported that some parents choose not to be involved in case planning. Some stakeholders commented that because the case plan is developed in FACES prior to the FST meeting, it gives the impression to FST participants that the case plan was developed by the caseworker without family involvement.

Stakeholders also expressed different opinions regarding the quality of case plans. Some stakeholders suggested that the assessment process and the FST meetings result in individualized plans that guide the parents and the agency in achieving case goals. In



comparison, other stakeholders said that the individualization and quality of the case plan vary across caseworkers as well as by the services that are accessible or available to the families. A few stakeholders reported that because the court tends to require the same services for all families, it is difficult to individualize case plans.

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

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 26 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although the State has a process in place to conduct 6-month periodic reviews of the status of each child, and stakeholders reported that the 6-month periodic reviews are occurring in a timely manner, data provided in the Statewide Assessment show that 6-month reviews do not occur consistently. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, Missouri's periodic review is an administrative review, or a PPR. A PPR Team meeting is conducted prior to the child being in foster care for 6 months and every 6 months thereafter as long as the CD has custody. The Statewide Assessment notes that to be considered a PPR Team meeting, the meeting must be open to the participation of the parents of the child and conducted by a panel of appropriate persons, at least one of whom is not responsible for the case management of, or the delivery of services to, either the child or the parents who are the subjects of the review. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the PPR Team meetings are to determine the following:

- The safety of the child
- The continuing necessity for and appropriateness of the placement
- The extent of compliance with the case plan
- The extent to which progress has been made in alleviating or mitigating the causes necessitating placement in foster care
- To project a likely date by which the child may be returned to and maintained in the home or placed for adoption or legal guardianship

Data from the CD's Child Welfare Outcomes Report on the timeliness of PPR for each quarter of 2009 indicate the following:

- 58.15 percent of the children in foster care during the first quarter of FY 2009 had a timely PPR.
- 73.53 percent of the children in foster care during the second quarter of FY 2009 had a timely PPR.
- 78.46 percent of the children in foster care during the third quarter of FY 2009 had a timely PPR.
- 85.28 percent of the children in foster care during the fourth quarter of FY 2009 had a timely PPR.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State ensures that a periodic review of the status of each child in foster care is held at least every 6 months. Stakeholders noted that reviews are conducted by the PPR Team, which is similar to the FST but includes a third-party individual who is not involved in the case. Most stakeholders indicated that the PPR Team reviews address relevant issues and assist in moving the case toward permanency. A few St. Louis County stakeholders reported that cases also may be reviewed by the court.

**Item 27. The State provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter**

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

Item 27 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State has a process in place to ensure that permanency hearings are held no later than 12 months from the child's entry into foster care and at least annually thereafter. Court data reported in the Statewide Assessment show that 98 percent of cases had timely permanency hearings in 2009. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the initial permanency hearing is required within 12 months of the date that the child is taken into protective custody or within 30 days of a finding that reasonable efforts to reunify are not required; subsequent permanency hearings are held at least annually thereafter. The Statewide Assessment notes that permanency hearings determine whether the child should continue to be in foster care or should be returned to a parent, guardian, or kinship caregiver. Permanency hearings also determine whether proceedings should be instituted to terminate parental rights and legally free the child for adoption.

The Statewide Assessment reports that in 2005 each court circuit developed a plan to increase the timeliness of 12-month permanency hearings by collaborating with the OSCA to ensure accountability for timely court hearings. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, data from the OSCA Quarterly Hearings Report indicate that the courts have greatly improved the timeliness of permanency hearings—from 92 percent in 2006 to 98 percent in 2009.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that permanency hearings generally are held in a timely manner. Additionally, many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the permanency hearings address issues relevant to permanency and examine the progress toward achieving permanency for the child.

**Item 28. The State provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 28 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although State statute provides a process for TPR in accordance with ASFA, this process is not implemented consistently as intended across the State. In addition, the findings of the onsite CFSR indicate that ASFA requirements for filing TPR were met in 61 percent of the 18 applicable cases. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the permanency plan for each child who has been in out-of-home care for 15 of the most recent 22 months is reviewed, and the State will file a TPR petition unless compelling reasons exist for not filing the petition. When the FST determines that it is in the child's best interests to pursue TPR, the caseworker is required to do the following:

- Advise the parents of the decision and explore with them the option of voluntary relinquishment of their parental rights
- Seek a staffing with local Juvenile Court officials to assess the case prior to submitting a formal written request for involuntary TPR
- Prepare a formal, detailed written request for involuntary TPR if a staffing cannot be arranged
- Notify parents in person, if possible, and by registered mail of the CD's recommendation to Juvenile Court to pursue involuntary TPR

According to the Statewide Assessment, the Juvenile Court responds to the caseworker in writing with the decision regarding its approval for a TPR petition to be filed.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, preparing for filing the TPR referral is a time-consuming process. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the caseworker does not always complete the TPR referral packets in a timely manner, and in turn, the juvenile office does not always submit TPR referrals in a timely manner. Both of these delays have an impact on the timeliness of filing a TPR petition.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that the court must approve the decision to file for TPR and that the juvenile officer, the CD via the Division of Legal Services, and the prospective adoptive parent have the legal authority to file for TPR.

Stakeholders expressed different opinions on the State's effectiveness in filing for TPR in accordance with the provisions of ASFA. Some stakeholders indicated that the State routinely files for TPR when children have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent

22 months. However, other stakeholders reported that the State is not filing for TPR in accordance with ASFA requirements. Some stakeholders reported that the court sometimes delays the filing for TPR and provides parents with extensions to continue to work toward reunification. A few stakeholders reported that the court will not allow TPR to be filed if there is not an identified adoptive resource for the child.

Some stakeholders reported that when the State does not file for TPR, compelling reasons must be approved by the court and are documented in the court order. Various stakeholders identified the following as frequent reasons for not filing for TPR:

- The child is placed with a relative.
- The child has a relationship with the biological family and does not wish to be adopted.

**Item 29. The State provides a process for foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 29 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although there is a process in place for notification of hearings and the opportunity for caregivers to be heard, the process is not being implemented consistently, particularly with regard to the opportunity for caregivers to be heard. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, CD policy requires that when the caseworker is notified of a court hearing, the caseworker must mail a notice of this hearing to the foster parent no later than 14 days prior to the hearing. Additionally, the caseworker is to follow up with a telephone call to the foster parent about the hearing. The written notice must be copied and placed in the legal section of the child's case record, and the follow-up telephone call must be documented in the narrative.

The Statewide Assessment also notes that Missouri law requires the court to provide foster parents, relative caregivers, or pre-adoptive parents with a notice of any hearing to be held with respect to a child in their care and of the caregivers' right to be heard in the hearing. The foster parent may provide information verbally in the courtroom or through a written format, called the Caregiver Court Information Form. This form is used to provide information to the court regarding the child's health, behavior, education, services, and progress in the placement. The Statewide Assessment also indicates that some courts set the next court date during the current court hearing so that all parties in attendance at one hearing know the subsequent hearing date in advance.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, 319 foster parents responded to the 2009 Annual Survey Report. They provided the following responses to the question asking whether foster parents are informed of court hearings (7 percent of the respondents did not provide a response to this question):

- 45 percent indicated that they are *always* notified.
- 27 percent indicated that they are *usually* notified.
- 11 percent indicated that they are *sometimes* notified.
- 10 percent indicated that they are *never* notified.

Additionally, the 319 respondents provided the following responses to the question asking whether foster parents have the opportunity to be heard in court (15 percent of the respondents did not provide a response to this question):

- 23 percent indicated that they *always* have the opportunity to be heard in court.
- 23 percent indicated that they *usually* have the opportunity to be heard in court.
- 21 percent indicated that they *sometimes* have the opportunity to be heard in court.
- 18 percent indicated that they *never* have the opportunity to be heard in court.

### Stakeholder Interview Information

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that foster caregivers generally receive written notice of hearings, PPR Team meetings, and FST meetings involving children in their care. Many stakeholders also reported that hearing dates generally are scheduled during the current court hearing so foster caregivers are aware of the hearing date in advance.

Although many stakeholders noted that foster caregivers are allowed to participate actively in PPR Team meetings, stakeholders expressed different opinions on whether caregivers are provided opportunities to be heard in court. Many stakeholders suggested that caregivers have the opportunity to be heard in hearings involving children in their care. Some stakeholders also noted that caregivers use the Caregiver Court Information Form and that the form is requested by the court and reviewed during hearings.

In comparison, other stakeholders indicated that caregivers do not have the opportunity to be heard in court on a routine basis, and a few key stakeholders were unaware of the existence of the Caregiver Court Information Form.

### III. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

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

## Status of Quality Assurance System

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Quality Assurance (QA) System. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

## Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under QA System are presented and discussed below.

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

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 30 is rated as a Strength. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the safety and health of children in private and public foster homes and residential centers are ensured through standards of licensure, rules, compliance reviews, and oversight by licensing caseworkers and/or the Residential Program Unit (RPU), depending on the type of home or facility. Case management activities also are in place to address child safety and health including requirements pertaining to caseworker visits.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the private Foster Care Case Management (FCCM) contract specifies standards for practice including qualifications and training requirements of staff. Additionally, the FCCM contract requires the following:

- QA processes, including consumer satisfaction evaluations
- Reporting requirements
- Compliance with the CD *Child Welfare Manual*
- Joint Peer Record Case Reviews with the CD

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the CD has specified contract oversight specialists who monitor specific outcomes to ensure quality service delivery. For example, caseworker visits and permanency planning meetings held by FCCM are monitored monthly by the oversight specialists.

As noted in the Statewide Assessment, in 2009 the CD was accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA), which has established standards designed to ensure quality services.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State has effective standards in place to address the quality of services provided to children in foster care. Stakeholders' understanding of the standards was generally consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment. Various stakeholders identified the following practices as ensuring children's safety and health while in foster care:

- Licensing/resource caseworkers make quarterly visits to foster homes, and caseworkers visit children monthly in their placements.
- Standards regarding quality of care also are applied to contracted services, and contracts for these services are performance based.
- If there is an issue with a placement, it is promptly addressed.
- Services to children in foster care are evaluated through the QA/quality improvement (QI) process.

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

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

Item 31 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that a number of processes are in place to monitor the quality of services and identify the child welfare system's strengths and needs. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD's QAP incorporates the QA and QI units. Staff of the QA Unit monitor outcome measurements using data from FACES and other sources to determine program effectiveness. They also monitor and assess information from various case reviews, including PRRs, Practice Development Reviews, and SCRs, to assist staff in identifying trends and issues in practice. As noted in the Statewide Assessment, case reviews are discussed with the caseworker, and SCR and PRR findings are maintained on the CD intranet and distributed quarterly to all staff.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the QI Unit was established in June 2007 to assist circuit managers, supervisors, and caseworkers in planning and implementing change. QI staff assist agency personnel by providing specialized training, case readings, situational modeling, and employee shadowing.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, QA and QI staff work together to identify gaps between desired and actual performance, identify the causes of poor performance, and strategize on how to close the gap between actual service delivery and best practice.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that continuous quality improvement (CQI) is part of the QA process that involves all staff in the evaluation of the effectiveness of services provided by the CD and attempts to correct observed deficiencies. The Statewide

Assessment indicates that every person is part of a CQI Team, and a continuous feedback loop ensures the continuity of the process. Regional CQI information is posted to the CD intranet, and staff across the State as well as central office staff can review and learn from regional solutions to problems.

Additional statewide QA processes discussed in the Statewide Assessment include the following:

- The Performance Management Report is a monthly performance management report that includes quality, operational, customer satisfaction, and employee measures that are analyzed monthly by the QA Unit and are then discussed with CD leadership during monthly meetings.
- The Service Delivery Grievance Process allows families the opportunity to express their concerns regarding any perceived inequities, unfair treatment, or dissatisfaction with CD actions or behaviors.
- Consumer Surveys are sent to and received from resource parents, alternative care children, adoptive families, biological families receiving child abuse/neglect investigations, family assessments, FCS, or IIS. Individual surveys are returned to the Regional Directors. Survey responses are logged to identify and address concerning trends, posted on the CD intranet, and shared through the CQI *In Focus* newsletter, with Fostering Court Improvement Teams and through CD memoranda.

The Statewide Assessment reports that data is consistently used for monitoring practice effectiveness, ensuring quality services, providing management oversight, and driving case management decisions by field staff and supervisors.

Reports are produced regularly; some are published, and most are posted on the CD's intranet and/or the Internet for use by CD staff and stakeholders. QA specialists routinely create data tables and charts for circuit staff and the courts, highlighting practice areas needing improvement and showing progress made.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the QA/QI/CQI process, including case reviews, is effective, constructive, and recognizes the strengths and challenges within the State's child welfare system. Stakeholders' explanations and understanding of the processes and reviews were generally consistent with the information provided in the Statewide Assessment. Some stakeholders reported that staff have a lot of access to data and that case review and outcome data are published in the newsletter, on the intranet, and provided to stakeholders. Some stakeholders indicated that administrators and supervisors use reports to monitor case status and case activities. Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the results of case reviews are used to provide constructive feedback to frontline staff.

A few key State-level stakeholders reported that each circuit has a Program Improvement Plan that is monitored by the QA or QI specialist. Additionally, plans of change are developed as issues are identified through the QA process. A few key State-level stakeholders reported that the CD is currently contracting with the University of Kansas to develop Results-Oriented Management Reports, a digital dashboard for case-level access by staff at all levels for monitoring outcomes including, but not limited to, all CFSR safety and permanency items and caseworker visits with children.



#### IV. STAFF AND PROVIDER TRAINING

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

#### Status of Staff and Provider Training

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

#### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the specific items assessed under Staff and Provider Training are presented and discussed below.

**Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 32 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State is operating a child welfare training program that provides training for new caseworkers to prepare them for their jobs. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

#### Statewide Assessment Information

According to the Statewide Assessment, new caseworkers are required to attend Child Welfare Practice Training (CWPT) and Computer Systems classes prior to receiving cases. The Statewide Assessment indicates that the classroom trainer provides written feedback to the assigned supervisor regarding each employee’s performance.

The Statewide Assessment also indicates that to support classroom training, new caseworkers must complete on-the-job training (OJT) using a guide developed for both supervisors and caseworkers and identifying the activities that are to be completed during OJT. There is an Acknowledgment of Completion of OJT Assignments form that must be initialed and dated by the supervisor and the new caseworker following each activity. A final “sign-off” is required of the supervisor and the caseworker at the completion of the first 6 months of OJT. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, some circuits have a children’s service specialist complete OJT training with new caseworkers because of the time constraints of frontline supervisors.

The Statewide Assessment notes that completion of CWPT and OJT is tracked through the Employee Learning Center (ELC), an online system with a permanent link/icon on each employees' desk, that is used to track enrollments, wait lists, completion of training, assigned curricula, training plans, and lodging requests.

The Statewide Assessment reports that the training unit reviews training materials on an ongoing basis to ensure that training is reflecting policy updates, legal mandates, and best practice methods. The Statewide Assessment also reports that training is provided regionally in four training regions to best address the needs of CD staff.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the initial training provided to new caseworkers is effective in providing a good overview of the child welfare system. Many stakeholders also noted that shadowing veteran caseworkers and completing the OJT component of new-caseworker training is very beneficial to the caseworkers. Several stakeholders reported that new caseworkers generally do not assume a caseload until the completion of CWPT and OJT and then a caseload is assigned to them gradually. However, some stakeholders reported that new caseworkers have had to wait a while before attending pre-service training classes because training is only offered every few months. Some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the initial training does not prepare new staff adequately for their role as child welfare caseworkers.

Many stakeholders reported that all aspects of training are managed through the ELC.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 33 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that although investigators and supervisors are required to obtain a certain number of training hours annually, there is no requirement for other CD staff to take part in training that would address the skills and knowledge base necessary for them to carry out their duties with regard to services included in the CFSP. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the following required in-service trainings are based on assigned program area:

- Legal Aspects for Investigators (Investigator, following CWPT)
- Child Abuse/Neglect Investigation/Assessment/In-Service Training Parts 1-4 (Investigator, within 6 to 12 months of hire)
- FCS/Intact Families In-Service Training (FCS caseworker, within 6 to 12 months of hire)

- Older Youth Program Training (Family-Centered Out-of-Home Care [FCOOHC] caseworker, within 6 months of hire following CWPT)
- FCOOHC Training Parts 1 and 2 (FCOOHC caseworker, within 12 months of hire)
- Domestic Violence (within the first year)
- COA Adoption Training (adoption program staff)

The Statewide Assessment reports that initial training required for new frontline supervisors includes Clinical Supervision, parts 1 and 2. It incorporates an OJT component to assist with the transfer of learning from the classroom to practice application. At the completion of this training, supervisors and managers are required to perform 16 additional hours of training for the Management Training Rule requirements. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, supervisors are required to have 16 hours of training each year. Supervisors are encouraged to select training that will best address areas of needed skill development.

Additional optional trainings are listed in the ELC and are chosen based on the staff's identified learning needs. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, completion of training is tracked through the ELC.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that although there are certain trainings such as civil rights and diversity, code of ethics, and personnel health and safety training that all CD staff are required to complete on a regular basis, only investigators and supervisors are required to complete a requisite number of training hours annually. Investigators are mandated by State law to complete 20 hours of training a year, which is verified by the circuit manager. Supervisors are required to complete 16 hours of training annually. One key State-level stakeholder reported that each relevant CD employee receives notification of the training required and the training completed for the year through the ELC, which is accessible through his or her computer.

Although ongoing training is not required, some stakeholders reported that various training opportunities are available through the CD, State and local agencies, and community resources. According to some stakeholders, the ELC identifies available trainings and tracks training attendance.

Some stakeholders reported that training for new supervisors is beneficial. However, a few stakeholders reported that supervisors may have to wait several months to attend training.

Some St. Louis County stakeholders reported that St. Louis County has mandatory "brown-bag" training for CD staff every month on various topics relevant to child welfare. A few stakeholders noted that there is collaboration and coordination between the CD and contract agencies to ensure training is available to both contract and CD caseworkers.

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

  X   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Item 34 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State provides initial and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents, including relative and kinship providers, that addresses the skills needed to parent foster and adoptive children effectively. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, all traditional foster parents must complete a competency-based Specialized Training, Assessment, and Resource Support/Skills (STARS) pre-service curriculum prior to licensure; higher levels of foster care providers and adoptive parents receive the following additional pre-service training:

- Level A foster parents: 18 hours of behavioral training for elevated needs
- Level B foster parents: 18 hours of behavioral training and 9 hours of career training for elevated needs
- Pre-adoptive parents: 12 hours of Spaulding training

The Statewide Assessment also reports that relative and kinship providers are required to complete 9 hours of The Caregiver Who Knows the Child training within 90 days of the relative placement. The Statewide Assessment indicates that for a foster care provider to become licensed, the required training hours must be entered into the computer system.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in-service training is required for continued foster parent licensure and must be completed prior to relicensure. Traditional foster parents are required to complete 30 hours biennially of in-service training as identified on the Professional Family Development Plan. Level A and B foster parents are required to complete 32 hours of in-service training biennially. If the required hours are not completed by the time of relicensure, the provider is placed on administrative hold, which prevents additional children from being placed in the home until the required hours are completed. A time limit is established to rectify the deficit, and if it is not met, the agency may begin the process of revoking the license.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, Missouri's legacy system can capture and track training units for foster parents.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State provides initial training for foster and adoptive parents through a 27-hour curriculum, STARS, which is presented by CD staff, foster parents, and in some areas, contractors. Some stakeholders reported that additional pre-service training hours are required for higher level foster homes as described in the Statewide Assessment.

Many stakeholders indicated that the information provided in the initial training is beneficial, particularly the information provided by experienced foster parents who come to speak to the prospective foster parents. However, in the opinion of a few stakeholders, nothing can actually prepare someone for the reality of being a foster parent.

Most stakeholders reported that ongoing training is required, helpful, and readily available through an annual conference and various resources across the State. Foster parents, according to various stakeholders, are informed of training opportunities through the newsletter, e-mails, and services hotline. A few stakeholders noted that foster parents who do not complete the required number of ongoing training hours are put on administrative hold until they complete the requisite hours.

**V. SERVICE ARRAY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

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

**Status of Service Array and Resource Development**

Missouri is not in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Service Array and Resource Development. The State also was not in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was required to address this factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

**Key Concerns From the 2003 CFSR**

The following concerns were identified in the 2003 review:

- Although the State had an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families, the availability of services did not meet the demand and there were numerous gaps in services.
- Services were not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions in the State, particularly in rural areas.
- Services were not available to meet the individualized needs of children and families.

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

- Assigned a dental coordinator to each region to identify barriers and facilitate access to dental providers
- Partnered with DMS to reduce administrative burdens on Medicaid providers in an effort to increase the ability of CD staff and families to access available dental resources

- Developed and implemented Family Drug and Safety Training to increase the ability of CD staff and families to access Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services
- The State's resource and recruitment contractors worked with circuits to identify needed resources
- Developed a recruitment and retention plan for foster homes serving older youth, implemented an AdoptUsKids campaign, and awarded performance-based recruitment contracts in an effort to increase the number of resource families
- Developed and implemented performance-based contracts for family/parent aides and parenting class services to increase the availability of these services
- Developed a recruitment plan for multi- and bilingual staff in circuits with an identified need and made CD forms available in Spanish to increase services to meet the needs of non-English speaking families
- Issued statewide transportation contracts to increase the availability of transportation services and recruited regional service organizations to provide transportation services
- Developed and implemented supplemental FST training and supplemental supervisory training to strengthen caseworker and supervisor skills in engaging families in the assessment, case planning, and case plan review process

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

### **Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR**

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Service Array and Resource Development are presented and discussed below.

**Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency**

  **X**   Strength             Area Needing Improvement

Item 35 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that Missouri has an array of services that addresses the safety, permanency, and well-being needs of children and families, although, as noted under item 36, this array is not consistently accessible to children and families across the State. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State does not have a comprehensive structured process for assessing service array issues in operation at this time. Although FACES provides a structure for capturing service information through the resource log, the screens

are not comprehensive enough to capture a complete picture of service delivery or the types of services that are needed by the State's service population.

In preparation for the Statewide Assessment, the CFSR Advisory Committee, with assistance from the University of Missouri School of Social Work, distributed a survey to help determine the available array of services, service accessibility, and service individualization in the State. A total of 285 surveys were distributed to all CD supervisors in the State, as well as supervisors of contracted services, with 54 percent responding. The results of the survey indicate that services are available in the State; however, accessibility and sufficiency of services, which are addressed in item 36, are an issue.

The survey findings indicated that Child Advocacy Center services and intensive family preservation services generally are available immediately on a statewide basis. In addition, some stakeholders interviewed as part of the Statewide Assessment expressed the opinion that IL services are available statewide, although due to different contractors providing the services, the types of services may vary by location.

One aspect of the State's IL program is the Transitional Living Advocate (TLA). When a youth completes the State-mandated training, the TLA ensures that the youth has a safe place to stay; participates in continued life skills training; receives encouragement and guidance in regard to employment, education and/or training; and preparation for successful transition from CD custody.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review did not indicate that there are any key services missing from the State's array. However, stakeholders did address the issue of service availability and accessibility varying across the State, which is addressed under item 36.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 36 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that many of the services in the State's service array are not accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions. There are waiting lists for such key services as affordable housing, dental services, substance abuse treatment, psychiatric services, and other behavioral and mental health services. Additionally, barriers such as transportation hinder accessibility in some areas. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, there are many rural areas of the State where service resources are limited and families have to travel a significant distance for services. The Statewide Assessment reports that several key services such as transportation services, dental services, in-home counseling, psychiatric services, parent aide services, and crisis nurseries were identified by the CFSR

Advisory Committee as not being readily accessible across the State, with psychiatric services being one of the least readily available services. The Statewide Assessment also reports that occasionally parents are put on waiting lists for therapists, substance abuse treatment, and other resources because of the limited availability of these services.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, transportation services are both a strength and challenge in the State. The State has 17 transportation contracts statewide. However, due to the lack of contractors, the transportation services are not available in all regions. In an effort to provide transportation in all areas of the State, the CD included transportation services, whenever possible, into contracts up for renewal, such as contracts with resource (foster care) providers, parent aide providers, residential treatment providers, transitional living providers, and Chafee service providers.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that to meet the dental needs for children in the State, MO HealthNet Division (MHD), the State's Medicaid program, now recognizes licensed dental hygienists to perform cleanings and preliminary screenings. The State also has small community dental clinics available to low income and needy families as well as several mobile dental services. However, as noted in the Statewide Assessment, there continues to be a shortage of dental services available for children in foster care.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the availability and accessibility of services has declined due to budget cuts and the economic situation in the State. The budget cuts result in families and children not receiving the services they need and, according to some stakeholders, will continue to have an impact on the array of services for several years. Additionally, some stakeholders expressed the opinion that the accessibility of services is better in urban areas of the State than in rural areas; however, stakeholders also noted that there are waiting lists for key services in St. Louis. Some stakeholders indicated that families living in rural areas frequently have to drive several hours to access needed services and that lack of transportation can prevent access to those services. Although a number of stakeholders mentioned the CD contracts for transportation, transportation was noted in all review sites as an issue in accessing needed services.

Various stakeholders across the three sites indicated that many services available in the State frequently have waiting lists, including the following:

- Dental providers who accept Medicaid
- Substance abuse treatment
- IIS
- Affordable housing
- Affordable child care
- Parent aide services
- Psychiatric services
- Behavioral/mental health services

In addition to the services with waiting lists and those indicated in the Statewide Assessment, stakeholders identified the following services as insufficient to meet the need:

- Parenting classes



- Support for children with high-end needs
- Respite care
- Foster homes, including homes for older youth and children with special needs
- Evaluation, treatment, and placement for adolescent sexual offenders
- Domestic violence support and shelters

A number of stakeholders commenting on this item indicated that when children enter foster care, mothers are no longer eligible for Medicaid, which, in their opinion, limits services accessible to this parent. Some stakeholders also noted that it is very difficult for families without Medicaid to obtain services such as mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and medication management. Several stakeholders said that because Medicaid rates have been cut, providers are less willing to serve Medicaid participants, and some stakeholders expressed the concern that some services, although accessible, are time- or visit-limited by Medicaid, which decreases the effectiveness of the service.

**Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency**

     Strength        X   Area Needing Improvement

Item 37 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although Missouri has the assessment and planning tools to identify individualized service needs to meet the unique needs of children and families, the State does not have the capacity to provide these services consistently to families statewide due to the lack of accessibility and availability of many of the key services in some parts of the State. This item was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri’s 2003 CFSR.

**Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD’s comprehensive assessment tools and FSTs encourage and promote the individualization of services and help plan for effective intervention.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the CD has procedures for working with deaf or non-English speaking consumers. When working with an individual who is deaf or hearing impaired, Relay Missouri and Text Telephone services are available to enhance communication. When working with individuals who have difficulty communicating in English or English is not their chosen language, contracted interpretation services are available.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed varying opinions on the State’s effectiveness in individualizing services to meet the needs of children and families. Some stakeholders reported that individualizing services is difficult due to the lack of services or the lack of available appropriate services in certain areas. Additionally, some stakeholders reported that the court has the final approval for the case plan, and the courts sometimes require the same services for each family,

which inhibits individualization. Some stakeholders also expressed the opinion that interpreters are not consistently available. Some key State-level stakeholders reported that there is a lack of Level A and B foster homes to serve children with elevated needs. Therefore, in some circumstances, children with elevated needs are reclassified to a lower level of care in order to be placed in a traditional foster home that is not equipped or trained to care for children with elevated needs.

However, some stakeholders indicated that the State generally is effective in individualizing services and that this is an area of improvement for the State.

## VI. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

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

### Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Agency Responsiveness to the Community. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

### Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Agency Responsiveness to the Community are presented and discussed below.

**Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with Tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 38 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that the State engages in ongoing consultation with a broad array of key stakeholders, is effective in soliciting their input with regard to the CD's overall goals and objectives, and is responsive to their recommendations. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD benefits from a large and diverse stakeholder community available for consultation and collaboration. Consultation occurs at both the central office and circuit levels through advisory groups, FST meetings, case reviews, program improvement planning meetings, and other collaboration meetings. Stakeholder groups involved in collaboration with the CD include the following:

- CFSR Advisory Committee: This group was initially created in 2005 to provide feedback for the Program Improvement Plan and since then has assisted in the evaluation of the service array and in the formulation of the CFSP.
- Adoption and Foster Care Coalition: This group meets with legislators to advocate for adoption and foster care issues and provides input to the CD on child welfare policy.
- Task Force on Children’s Justice: This group was established by the CD to make recommendations on improving child abuse and neglect laws, policies, programs, professional education, and public awareness, and to provide funding to support these recommendations.
- State Technical Assistance Team: This group assists in child abuse/neglect, child sexual abuse, child exploitation and pornography, child fatality, and other child-related investigations, and is responsible for managing the Child Fatality Review Program, including training and support for the program’s 115 county-based, multidisciplinary panels, as well as collecting data to identify trends, patterns, and spikes in the number of child deaths, to facilitate the development and implementation of prevention strategies.
- Native American Collaboration: Although the State does not have federally recognized Indian Tribes, three centers serve Native American children in the State and together they participate with the CD in training and consultation on policy development pertaining to Native children. One of the centers participates on the CFSR Advisory Board.
- State Foster Care Advisory Committee: This committee consists of foster parents and CD employees from each administrative area who meet quarterly to address concerns and provide recommendations on how the foster care program is administered locally.
- Fostering Court Improvement: This group uses CD and court data systems to improve case handling and outcomes through intensive data-focused interaction and training for personnel in judicial circuits.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the CD collaborates regularly at the State and local levels with courts, other agencies, and various stakeholder groups. Some stakeholders reported that the CFSR Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from across the State and various disciplines, collaborates with the CD on many issues and participated in the development of the CFSP.

**Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, Annual Progress and Services Reports delivered pursuant to the CFSP**

  X   Strength      \_\_\_\_\_ Area Needing Improvement

Item 39 is rated as a Strength. According to the Statewide Assessment and stakeholders, the State consults with a range of stakeholders when developing its Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSRs). This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, information relevant to the developing of the CFSP, as explained in item 38, also is relevant to the development of the APSR.

#### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Key State-level stakeholders reported that the CFSR Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from across the State and various disciplines, collaborates with the CD on many issues and participates in the development of the APSRs.

#### **Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 40 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and from stakeholder interviews indicates that the CD collaborates and coordinates activities with Federal or federally assisted agencies to address the needs of the children and families they serve. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

The Statewide Assessment contains the following examples of collaboration with other federally funded programs to improve child welfare outcomes:

- Inter-Departmental Initiative Unit: This unit is part of the CD central office and collaborates with DMH (including Developmental Disabilities and Comprehensive Psychiatric Services), Family Support Division (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), MHD, and Department of Youth Services (DYS).
- Project Protect Program: This project is funded through a Federal grant and accepts direct referrals from the CD, specifically for substance abuse services and services to the homeless.
- MHD Managed Care Advisory Committee: This committee was formed to advise the director of MHD on issues relating to enrollee participation in the MHD program. The committee consists of representatives from various managed care health plans, MHD, Family Support Division, the CD, medical centers, Head Start, Missouri Primary Care Association, and any other entity with an MHD interest.
- Education Advisory Team: This team was formed in 2008 to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children in foster care. The advisory team members represent a variety of disciplines including the educational system, foster parents, the CD, court-related child advocacy, juvenile justice, and youth in out-of-home care.

- Missouri Prevention Partners: This is a collaborative group of public and private agencies that implement interventions statewide to address the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The agencies involved include, but are not limited to, the DSS, Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), DMH, Department of Corrections, Department of Public Safety, Children’s Trust Fund, Head Start State Collaboration Project, State Technical Assistance Team, and Missouri KidsFirst.
- The Missouri Alliance for Drug Endangered Children: This is a multidisciplinary group established in 2008 to address issues of children who are in environments where illicit substances are used, manufactured, or distributed. Members of the alliance include State-level agencies such as DSS, DMH, and the Department of Health; State, regional, and Federal law enforcement; the judicial system; and statewide private organizations concerned with children and family issues.
- Early Head Start and Child Care Programs: These two federally funded programs are managed by the CD.

**Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the agency generally is effective in coordinating services with other Federal and federally assisted programs serving similar children and families. Additionally, many stakeholders expressed the opinion that the current administration is open to collaboration.

Many stakeholders at the review sites also indicated that collaboration at the local level among the CD and community partners occurs on a regular basis through family team meetings, multidisciplinary team meetings, monthly case reviews, and local advisory boards.

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

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

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

Missouri is in substantial conformity with the systemic factor of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention. The State also was in substantial conformity with this factor in its 2003 CFSR and was not required to address the factor in its Program Improvement Plan.

## Key Findings of the 2010 CFSR

The findings pertaining to the items assessed under Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention are presented and discussed below.

### **Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards**

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 41 is rated as a Strength. According to information provided in the Statewide Assessment and by stakeholders, the State has standards for foster family homes, group homes, and residential child care facilities. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

#### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the CD is responsible for licensing foster homes, including group foster homes. The State's licensing rules include guidelines for the following:

- Number of children in the home
- The health of the foster family
- Training guidelines
- Physical standards of foster homes
- Sleeping arrangements
- Fire and safety requirements
- Care of foster children
- Recordkeeping

The Statewide Assessment notes that the agency uses the licensing requirements to establish new foster homes and maintain existing foster homes. The following requirements must be met for a foster family to be licensed:

- Foster parents must complete the required training and demonstrate five required competencies.
- All members of the household 17 years and older must submit to a criminal background check and a child abuse/neglect records check and have favorable results.
- A home assessment must be completed that generally includes four in-home consultations and approximately 10 hours of interviews with all household members.

As reported in the Statewide Assessment, foster homes are licensed for a 24-month period. The Statewide Assessment indicates that relative homes currently must meet all safety standards as required for non-relatives, but a relative provider only has to be 18 years of age, and they need to complete only 9 hours of The Caregiver Who Knows the Child training.

The Statewide Assessment also reports that the CD is responsible for the approval of adoptive homes. The process for adoption includes completion of requisite training and an adoptive home assessment. Relatives are strongly encouraged to participate in and complete the adoption training, but this training is not required of relatives for them to adopt.

As indicated in the Statewide Assessment, the CD provides regulatory oversight of residential child caring agency (RCCA) and child-placing agency (CPA) licensure. Licensed RCCA and CPA sites are supervised by the CD's RPU, where licensing consultants ensure compliance with RCCA and CPA rules. RCCA and CPA rules are comprehensive in that they address issues such as child safety, staff educational qualifications, pertinent experience, staff training, staff/child ratios, appropriate discipline, avoidance and reporting of child abuse/neglect, confidentiality of records, child and staff health issues, fire and safety issues, children's services assessment and planning issues, and recordkeeping. When noncompliance occurs, agencies are requested to provide RPU with corrective action plans.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review expressed the opinion that the State has standards for family foster homes and child care facilities that generally are effective and comprehensive. They noted that the standards the State has established include training, criminal history checks, Child Protective Services checks, as well as inspections of the home. A key State-level stakeholder reported that CPA foster homes must meet all the same requirements as a CD foster home. A few stakeholders expressed concern that standards are not always adhered to by licensed foster homes and indicated that more rigid approval standards are needed to ensure that foster homes have the resources to provide adequate care to children placed in the homes.

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

  X   Strength           Area Needing Improvement

Item 42 is rated as a Strength. Information from the Statewide Assessment and stakeholder interviews indicates that standards are applied to all licensed family foster homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, standards are applied to all licensed homes and child care institutions. The Statewide Assessment indicates that relative homes currently must meet all safety standards as required for non-relatives, but a relative provider only has to be 18 years of age and is required to complete only 9 hours of The Caregiver Who Knows the Child training; however, they may attend STARS if they choose.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Most stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State's standards for foster and adoptive placements generally are applied equally. A few stakeholders reported that relative foster caregivers are only required to attend The Caregiver Who Knows the Child training; however, they also have the option to attend STARS.

### **Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children**

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

Item 43 is rated as a Strength. The State provides for comprehensive background checks as a component of licensing for all foster and adoptive placements. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State non-relative foster homes background checks are completed during the licensure process, and no placements are made until the provider is fully licensed and contracted to provide foster care. The Statewide Assessment indicates that fingerprints are required of every individual residing in a foster home who is at least 17 years of age and any person younger than age 17 who has been certified as an adult.

The Statewide Assessment notes that each household member 17 years of age and older must register with the Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR). The registry is maintained by DHSS and will search the following systems:

- State criminal history records maintained by the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP)
- The Sex Offender Registry maintained by MSHP
- Child abuse/neglect records maintained by DSS
- The employee disqualification list maintained by DHSS
- The employee disqualification registry maintained by DMH
- Child care facility licensing records maintained by DHSS
- Foster parent licensing records maintained by DSS

For relative and kinship immediate placements and emergency placements, the CD will request that the law enforcement agency or juvenile officer immediately conduct a criminal history record check of each person older than age 17 residing in the home by using the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System (MULES) and the National Crime Information Center to access records maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. After the name-based search has been conducted and the child has been placed with the relative or kinship family, the caseworker must submit two sets of fingerprints of the relatives within 15 days of the MULES request to MSHP to be used to search the criminal history database. Any child placed in a relative or kinship home shall be removed immediately if any person residing in the home fails to provide fingerprints on request.



As reported in the Statewide Assessment, RCCA and CPA staff currently are not required to have fingerprint checks prior to employment, although the State has asked facilities to have employees submit to fingerprint checks voluntarily. Background checks are completed for RCCA and CPA staff through the FCSR, which is required on initial employment and conducted annually thereafter.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that background checks, including fingerprint checks, are required for all people 17 years old and older residing in the prospective foster home. A key State-level stakeholder confirmed that fingerprinting is not required for RCCA staff.

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

Strength       Area Needing Improvement

Item 44 is rated as an Area Needing Improvement. Although individual circuits and counties develop foster and adoptive home recruitment plans and some activities at the State level are in place for the purpose of foster home recruitment, there is no effective statewide process that recruits for general and specialized foster homes reflecting the ethnic and racial diversity of the population and/or children in foster care. This item also was rated as an Area Needing Improvement in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, individual circuits or counties develop, implement, and maintain year-round recruitment plans based on that circuit's or county's needs. The CD recruitment plan requires that certain recruitment activities be completed in each circuit or county. The Statewide Assessment indicates that through these activities, the CD desires to reach all potential families regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic status. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, the core activities of the recruitment plan are required to include but are not limited to the following:

- Use of the recruitment theme, "You won't believe what you have been missing"
- Public informational meetings to educate the community about foster care and adoption
- Distribution of informational packets as a result of potential foster/adoptive family inquiries through the toll-free telephone number
- Regular use of the media for recruitment through Wednesday's Child, A Place to Call Home, radio spots, and newspaper features
- Use of Home for the Holidays collaboration with the Dave Thomas Foundation
- The CD Internet webpage
- Use of the Missouri adoption photo-listing website

Other optional recruitment activities included in the Statewide Assessment were the following:

- Heart Gallery
- National Recruitment Saturday Celebration in St. Louis County
- Faith-based mini-conferences
- Movie ad campaign
- Advertisements in grocery stores
- Linking Hearts adoption event

In addition to circuit and county recruitment plans, the Statewide Assessment reports that recruitment for a permanent home for a child is to begin no later than the end of the first month following the decision that a child is available for adoption. The recruitment for a permanent home involves sequential activities designed to use all possible resources in Missouri, the region, and the nation in finding a permanent family for a child.

In 2008, the CD was awarded a grant from HHS to carry out Extreme Recruitment, a project designed to find and support a permanent resource for a child in a fraction of the time it would normally take. Extreme Recruitment, according to the Statewide Assessment, serves children who are hardest to place: ages 10 to 18; sibling groups; and youth with emotional, developmental, or behavioral concerns. As reported in the Statewide Assessment, in the pilot year, 70 percent of the youth served by this new practice were matched with adoptive families. The CD, according to the Statewide Assessment, has an ongoing collaboration with the faith and community partners through the Missouri Faith-Based Initiative. Meetings are held quarterly in Jefferson City to review Missouri's approach to identifying temporary or permanent resources for children needing foster care or adoptive placements. These meetings are attended by private CPA representatives, community partners, representatives from the clergy, CD staff, Family Support Division, and DYS.

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Some stakeholders commenting on this item during the Onsite Review reported that the majority of recruitment activities occur at the circuit or county level. A few stakeholders reported the use of foster care demographic data in determining the needs of the circuit or county, and a few stakeholders reported that St. Louis has currently been focusing its recruitment efforts on older African-American youth, including sibling groups.

Various stakeholders at the review sites indicated that recruitment efforts include media advertisements and presentations at community events and churches. Several stakeholders reported that among the best recruitment tools for new foster and adoptive parents are current foster parents. A few stakeholders noted that local offices also conduct targeted and child-specific recruitment and have really begun to focus on recruiting relatives. Stakeholders indicated that there is still a need for foster and adoptive homes for older youth, sibling groups, and children with special needs.

### **Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children**

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

Item 45 is rated as a Strength. The State uses a variety of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive and permanent placements for waiting children, including adoption exchanges, photo listings, and the ICPC. This item also was rated as a Strength in Missouri's 2003 CFSR.

### **Statewide Assessment Information**

According to the Statewide Assessment, the State uses ICPC to assess families living outside the State for placements. In 2009, the State made 814 ICPC referrals to other States. Additionally, the State uses the following resources to facilitate adoptive and permanent placements for waiting children:

- Wednesday's Child
- A Place to Call Home
- Missouri adoption photo-listing website
- AdoptUsKids
- Heart Gallery

### **Stakeholder Interview Information**

Many stakeholders commenting on this item during the onsite CFSR expressed the opinion that the State generally is effective in its use of cross-jurisdictional resources on behalf of children awaiting permanency. Some stakeholders reported that the State uses the ICPC to facilitate out-of-State placements, although some of these stakeholders expressed the opinion that the process is time-consuming. A few stakeholders reported that when an adoptive resource cannot be located within the county or circuit, a profile of the child is sent to the region and/or the entire State. Additionally, stakeholders noted that the State uses adoption fairs, AdoptUsKids, and the Heart Gallery to locate cross-jurisdictional placements for children who are free for adoption.