

Minnesota Safety, Permanency and Well-being Performance Update November 2007

The state child welfare Quality Assurance Unit began issuing Safety, Permanency and Well-being Performance Updates in November 2006. This is the third Performance Update. It includes data generated from Minnesota Child and Family Services Reviews (MnCFSR) as well as data from internal county case reviews.

By July 31, 2007, 77 counties had completed MnCFSRs and approximately 60 counties had completed, or were in some stage of implementing Program Improvement Plans (PIP). These plans are designed to strengthen agency child welfare practice and systems identified as needing improvement. A principle method of measurement counties use to determine progress is an internal qualitative review of a sample of child welfare cases. These case reviews are completed on a quarterly basis and generate data across each of the MnCFSR performance items.

Case review results from some counties that have committed considerable time and energy into developing a consistent, high quality case review process are included in this Performance Update. As other counties become more familiar with the case review process, their results will be included in future Performance Updates.

Each Performance Update includes three tables and a Data Practice Memo. Table 1 includes 2007 (quarters one and two) data from the participating counties. Table 2 represents data from the six MnCFSR county reviews that were conducted between January and June 2007. Table 3 compares MnCFSR and internal county data across the same performance items, and also includes some comparative comments and performance observations.

A section of each Performance Update also includes a short discussion of a specific data practice. The intent of these memos is to support greater understanding of the performance items and their relationship to each other. This section is designed to assist supervisors in using data effectively in promoting quality improvement in their child welfare system.

Combining MnCFSR and county case review results provides a broader representation of statewide CFSR performance. Paying attention to these critical child welfare performance items is an important step in improving outcomes for children and families served through the state child welfare system.

Your feedback is encouraged. Contact your regional quality assurance consultant with any questions or comments.

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KEY:		% Strength - Percent of cases rated a strength		2007 County Case Review Ratings (13 Counties)										Table 1	
		N=Number of applicable cases		% Strength	N=	% Strength	N=	% Strength	N=	% Strength	N=	% Strength	N=	Year End	N=
Outcome or Performance Item		2006 % Strength	N=	% Strength Qtr. 1	N=	% Strength Qtr. 2	N=	% Strength Qtr. 3	N=	% Strength Qtr. 4	N=	Year End	N=		
Outcome S1	Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect														
Item 1	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	89.74%	117	93.48%	46	87.50%	48	NA	0	NA	0	90.43%	94		
MN Supplement	Screening and assessment	93.39%	121	93.48%	46	93.62%	47	NA	0	NA	0	93.55%	93		
Item 2	Repeat maltreatment	94.70%	151	87.23%	47	93.33%	45	NA	0	NA	0	90.22%	92		
Outcome S2	Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate														
Item 3	Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	99.25%	134	96.43%	56	98.18%	55	NA	0	NA	0	97.30%	111		
Item 4	Risk assessment and safety management	97.59%	166	83.08%	65	92.50%	80	NA	0	NA	0	88.28%	145		
Outcome P1	Children have permanency and stability in their living situations														
Item 5	Foster care re-entries	85.92%	71	80.00%	35	90.63%	32	NA	0	NA	0	85.07%	67		
Item 6	Stability of foster care placement	87.50%	104	75.51%	49	93.33%	45	NA	0	NA	0	84.04%	94		
Item 7	Permanency goal for child	88.00%	100	93.48%	46	97.78%	45	NA	0	NA	0	95.60%	91		
Item 8	Reunification or permanent transfer of legal and physical custody to a relative	85.71%	63	90.32%	31	100.00%	27	NA	0	NA	0	94.83%	58		
Item 9	Adoption	81.25%	16	71.43%	7	77.78%	9	NA	0	NA	0	75.00%	16		
Item 10	Long-term foster care	84.38%	32	78.57%	14	100.00%	12	NA	0	NA	0	88.46%	26		
Outcome P2	The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children														
Item 11	Proximity of foster care placement	98.94%	94	95.45%	44	97.37%	38	NA	0	NA	0	96.34%	82		
Item 12	Placement with siblings	87.50%	56	90.63%	32	95.83%	24	NA	0	NA	0	92.86%	56		
Item 13	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	89.47%	95	77.27%	44	92.50%	40	NA	0	NA	0	84.52%	84		
Item 14	Preserving connections	99.00%	100	91.49%	47	92.86%	42	NA	0	NA	0	92.13%	89		
Item 15	Relative placement	93.48%	92	72.73%	44	100.00%	35	NA	0	NA	0	84.81%	79		
Item 16	Relationship of child in care with parents	94.62%	93	80.95%	42	100.00%	38	NA	0	NA	0	90.00%	80		
Outcome WB1	Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs														
Item 17	Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	82.49%	217	64.20%	81	82.95%	88	NA	0	NA	0	73.96%	169		
Item 18	Child and family involvement in case planning	70.78%	219	62.96%	81	72.73%	88	NA	0	NA	0	68.05%	169		
Item 19	Worker visits with child	84.47%	219	82.72%	81	82.95%	88	NA	0	NA	0	82.84%	169		
Item 20	Worker visits with parent(s)	84.65%	202	66.20%	71	78.21%	78	NA	0	NA	0	72.48%	149		
Outcome WB2	Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs														
Item 21	Educational needs of the child	91.25%	173	92.19%	64	93.75%	64	NA	0	NA	0	92.97%	128		
Outcome WB3	Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs														
Item 22	Physical health of the child	82.10%	162	86.15%	65	91.94%	62	NA	0	NA	0	88.98%	127		
Item 23	Mental/behavioral health of the child	84.66%	189	66.67%	63	82.43%	74	NA	0	NA	0	75.18%	137		

KEY:		% Strength - Percent of cases rated a strength		Table 2 2007 MnCFSR Ratings (1st Quarter - 4 reviews; 2nd Quarter - 2 reviews)									
		N=Number of applicable cases		% Strength	N=	% Strength	N=	% Strength	N=	% Strength	N=	Year End	N=
Outcome or Performance Item		2006 % Strength	N=	% Strength Qtr. 1	N=	% Strength Qtr. 2	N=	% Strength Qtr. 3	N=	% Strength Qtr. 4	N=	Year End	N=
Outcome S1	Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect												
Item 1	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	69.80%	404	53.85%	13	66.67%	9	NA	0	NA	0	59.09%	22
MN Supplement	Screening and assessment	73.20%	291	61.54%	13	77.78%	9	NA	0	NA	0	68.18%	22
Item 2	Repeat maltreatment	91.61%	572	91.67%	12	88.89%	9	NA	0	NA	0	90.48%	21
Outcome S2	Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate												
Item 3	Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	88.40%	543	88.89%	18	90.91%	11	NA	0	NA	0	89.66%	29
Item 4	Risk assessment and safety management	79.38%	645	47.83%	23	75.00%	12	NA	0	NA	0	57.14%	35
Outcome P1	Children have permanency and stability in their living situations												
Item 5	Foster care re-entries	77.31%	216	75.00%	4	100.00%	4	NA	0	NA	0	87.50%	8
Item 6	Stability of foster care placement	84.24%	387	100.00%	10	66.67%	6	NA	0	NA	0	87.50%	16
Item 7	Permanency goal for child	86.49%	385	80.00%	10	83.33%	6	NA	0	NA	0	81.25%	16
Item 8	Reunification or permanent transfer of legal and physical custody to a relative	82.61%	230	80.00%	5	83.33%	6	NA	0	NA	0	81.82%	11
Item 9	Adoption	78.02%	91	75.00%	4	100.00%	2	NA	0	NA	0	83.33%	6
Item 10	Long-term foster care	69.88%	83	100.00%	2	NA	0	NA	0	NA	0	100.00%	2
Outcome P2	The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children												
Item 11	Proximity of foster care placement	96.54%	347	100.00%	8	100.00%	6	NA	0	NA	0	100.00%	14
Item 12	Placement with siblings	94.53%	201	100.00%	5	75.00%	4	NA	0	NA	0	88.89%	9
Item 13	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	79.22%	361	66.67%	9	66.67%	6	NA	0	NA	0	66.67%	15
Item 14	Preserving connections	84.94%	385	90.00%	10	83.33%	6	NA	0	NA	0	87.50%	16
Item 15	Relative placement	78.85%	364	88.89%	9	83.33%	6	NA	0	NA	0	86.67%	15
Item 16	Relationship of child in care with parents	81.71%	339	75.00%	8	83.33%	6	NA	0	NA	0	78.57%	14
Outcome WB1	Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs												
Item 17	Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	56.66%	676	30.43%	23	41.67%	12	NA	0	NA	0	34.29%	35
Item 18	Child and family involvement in case planning	58.52%	675	30.43%	23	66.67%	12	NA	0	NA	0	42.86%	35
Item 19	Worker visits with child	69.67%	676	39.13%	23	58.33%	12	NA	0	NA	0	45.71%	35
Item 20	Worker visits with parent(s)	66.09%	640	31.82%	22	41.67%	12	NA	0	NA	0	35.29%	34
Outcome WB2	Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs												
Item 21	Educational needs of the child	91.36%	440	92.86%	14	87.50%	8	NA	0	NA	0	90.91%	22
Outcome WB3	Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs												
Item 22	Physical health of the child	82.71%	480	100.00%	11	88.89%	9	NA	0	NA	0	95.00%	20
Item 23	Mental/behavioral health of the child	71.78%	528	45.00%	20	83.33%	12	NA	0	NA	0	59.38%	32

KEY:		% Strength - Percent of cases rated a strength		Comparisons between 2007 1st & 2nd Quarter county reviews, 2007 1st & 2nd quarter MnCFSTRs, and all MnCFSTRs completed through 6/07					
		N=Number of applicable cases		2007 County Qtrs 1 & 2	N=	2007 MnCFSTR Qtrs 1 & 2	N=	Difference bet. County and MnCFSTR	MnCFSTR 1st Round (Through 6/07)
Outcome or Performance Item		2007 County Qtrs 1 & 2	N=	2007 MnCFSTR Qtrs 1 & 2	N=	Difference bet. County and MnCFSTR	MnCFSTR 1st Round (Through 6/07)	N=	
Outcome S1	Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect								
Item 1	Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	90.43%	94	59.09%	22	31.34%	69.25%	426	
MN Supplement	Screening and assessment	93.55%	93	68.18%	22	25.37%	72.84%	313	
Item 2	Repeat maltreatment	90.22%	92	90.48%	21	-0.26%	91.57%	593	
Outcome S2	Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate								
Item 3	Services to family to protect child(ren) in home and prevent removal or re-entry into foster care	97.30%	111	89.66%	29	7.64%	88.46%	572	
Item 4	Risk assessment and safety management	88.28%	145	57.14%	35	31.14%	78.24%	680	
Outcome P1	Children have permanency and stability in their living situations								
Item 5	Foster care re-entries	85.07%	67	87.50%	8	-2.43%	77.68%	224	
Item 6	Stability of foster care placement	84.04%	94	87.50%	16	-3.46%	84.37%	403	
Item 7	Permanency goal for child	95.60%	91	81.25%	16	14.35%	86.28%	401	
Item 8	Reunification or permanent transfer of legal and physical custody to a relative	94.83%	58	81.82%	11	13.01%	82.57%	241	
Item 9	Adoption	75.00%	16	83.33%	6	-8.33%	78.35%	97	
Item 10	Long-term foster care	88.46%	26	100.00%	2	-11.54%	70.59%	85	
Outcome P2	The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children								
Item 11	Proximity of foster care placement	96.34%	82	100.00%	14	-3.66%	96.68%	361	
Item 12	Placement with siblings	92.86%	56	88.89%	9	3.97%	94.26%	209	
Item 13	Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	84.52%	84	66.67%	15	17.85%	78.72%	376	
Item 14	Preserving connections	92.13%	89	87.50%	16	4.63%	85.04%	401	
Item 15	Relative placement	84.81%	79	86.67%	15	-1.86%	79.37%	378	
Item 16	Relationship of child in care with parents	90.00%	80	78.57%	14	11.43%	81.59%	353	
Outcome WB1	Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs								
Item 17	Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents	73.96%	169	34.29%	35	39.67%	55.56%	711	
Item 18	Child and family involvement in case planning	68.05%	169	42.86%	35	25.19%	57.75%	710	
Item 19	Worker visits with child	82.84%	169	45.71%	35	37.13%	68.64%	711	
Item 20	Worker visits with parent(s)	72.48%	149	35.29%	34	37.19%	64.54%	674	
Outcome WB2	Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs								
Item 21	Educational needs of the child	92.97%	128	90.91%	22	2.06%	91.34%	462	
Outcome WB3	Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs								
Item 22	Physical health of the child	88.98%	127	95.00%	20	-6.02%	83.20%	500	
Item 23	Mental/behavioral health of the child	75.18%	137	59.38%	32	15.80%	71.07%	560	

Table 3

Observations regarding the data:

In the first two quarters of 2007, internal county case reviews reflected higher ratings than MnCFSTR case reviews in 16 of the 24 performance items.

Counties that are completing internal case reviews have participated in a MnCFSTR and are working on Program Improvement Plans. Counties that completed MnCFSTRs during the first two quarters of 2007 have not had the opportunity to implement strategies for improvement. Therefore, there is some expectation that county reviews would result in higher ratings than those recorded through a MnCFSTR.

Item 23 (Mental/behavioral health of the child) may be a good example. A major focus when evaluating Item 23 is whether required children's mental health screening tools (CMHST) were completed, and this is a common reason for ratings of Area Needing Improvement during a MnCFSTR. This is also a relatively simple thing to fix. Attention to completion of CMHST in county PIPs and case reviews would likely result in improved performance in this area, and is reflected in this data.

Additionally, there is a relatively high degree of consistency between county and MnCFSTR ratings in a majority of the Permanency Outcomes (items 5 through 16), Items 2 and 3 in the Safety Outcomes, and Items 21 and 22 in the Well-being Outcomes.

There are fairly large discrepancies between county and MnCFSTR ratings on Items 1, 4, and the Well-being Outcome 1 Items (17-20). These disparities may be more due to differences in interpretation of the items. Any feedback or thoughts on these variations would be appreciated.

CFSR Data Practice Memo

This Data Practice Memo focuses on providing supervisors/case reviewers with general considerations to assist in evaluating the effect non-custodial/absent parents may have on performance. Agency practices related to non-custodial/absent parents directly impacts ratings on six MnCFSR performance items:

Permanency Performance Items: Rated only in child placement cases

- Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care
- Item 15: Relative placement
- Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents

Well-being Performance Items: Rated in both child placement and in-home service cases

- Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents and foster parents
- Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning
- Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents

Making consistent ratings and providing useful documentation on these items is oftentimes challenging. When completing case reviews, clear, logical documentation explaining the reasons for rating items is important. When supervisors share this feedback with caseworkers it supports improved practices and enhances outcomes for children and families.

Consistent agency efforts to locate and engage non-custodial parents are critical in determining what role they can play in addressing the safety, permanency and well-being needs of their children. In the majority of cases, non-custodial parents are fathers. Case record documentation of efforts to locate and engage non-custodial parents is necessary. When a decision is made to end efforts to locate and/or engage non-custodial parents, caseworkers are advised to consult with their supervisors and clearly document the reasons why this decision was made. In Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) cases, the agency should inform the court of their efforts and decision to end efforts, and request approval from the court.

The following are some frequent case situations for consideration. This rating guidance was adapted from the Federal Children's Bureau CFSR 2007 "Tips for Reviewers."

- **Mother doesn't know who the father is:** Most likely the father will be rated Not Applicable (NA) in these situations. But it's recommended the reviewer explore if the agency had any way to verify the mother's statement, e.g., did the agency have contact with maternal relatives and inquire if they know who the father is.
- **Mother doesn't want the father involved because of a history of domestic violence or because he is involved in drugs and the family is not safe around him:** Most likely the father will be rated NA in these situations. But reviewers should explore if the agency had any way to confirm the mother's statements, and whether or not the father has contact with the children. If so, the agency should have tried to contact him and engage him in assessment and services.
- **The absent/non-custodial parent is in jail:** Being incarcerated is insufficient for a NA rating. Incarcerated parents may be able to support their children through various forms of communication, identify relatives or provide other information, such as medical history, that

is important to case planning and service delivery. Reviewers should explore why the parent is in jail, when s/he will be released, and if the agency has any concerns that would indicate that would not be in the best interest of the children to have contact with this parent. Reviewers should explore what efforts have been made to contact the incarcerated parent and, if applicable, the reasons why the agency has not made efforts to engage that parent before deciding if the rating is NA or Area Needing Improvement (ANI).

- **The caregiver parent does not know the whereabouts of the absent/non-custodial parent, or states that they have never really been involved:** This reason alone is insufficient for a NA rating. Reviewers should explore if all available resources were used to locate the absent parent. In cases open for several months, it is not expected that workers search every month, but there should be some evidence that the agency has continued its efforts with various sources to learn the whereabouts of the absent parent.
- **The agency states they located the parent but the parent would not engage in assessment or services:** If the agency contacts a parent who clearly refuses to engage or who, after repeated efforts fails to engage, this generally is sufficient reason to rate the agency's efforts as a strength in five of the six items, and NA for Item 20. However, reviewers should inquire about specific efforts the agency made to engage that parent and how recently the activity occurred. Again, if the parent is having contact with the children, the agency should make ongoing efforts to engage that parent. If only minimal efforts were made to engage the parent, this constitutes an ANI.
- **Identifying non-custodial parents in non-placement (in-home) cases:** Caseworkers are strongly encouraged to respectfully ask custodial parents if non-custodial parents have contact with their child/ren and have or had a role in their lives. If the agency is providing in-home services to the family on a voluntary basis and the custodial parent refuses to provide identifying information or consent, the involvement of the non-custodial parent would be NA. If the custodial parent provides the necessary information and consent, workers should make concerted efforts to contact the non-custodial parent and engage them in the case planning process. This includes assessing the non-custodial parent's needs and providing necessary services to help them support their children. Inadequate caseworker efforts would result in a rating of ANI.

If in-home services are court-ordered, the agency has a responsibility to identify non-custodial parents and provide that information to the court. Caseworkers must make concerted efforts to locate and engage non-custodial parents in case planning, assessments and services. Insufficient caseworker efforts would result in a rating of ANI. If the court determines that the involvement of non-custodial parents is contrary to the best interests of the child, the agency is no longer required to make efforts and involvement of the non-custodial parent would be NA.

In all cases, if the non-custodial parent cannot be located despite diligent efforts by the agency, the involvement of the non-custodial parent would be NA.

Diligent efforts to locate a non-custodial or absent parent includes evidence that the agency made sufficient inquiry into the parent's identity, location and status. Generally, this would extend

beyond simply asking a custodial parent once and not pursuing the matter further. Agencies can access viable sources of information, such as parent locator services through child support, case files, and/or central registries in efforts to locate non-custodial or absent parents. Some inquiry about relatives of the non-custodial parent should be made, as well as efforts to contact relatives if they are identified.

Supervisors may wish to review the [PIP TIP: Involving Fathers](#), dedicated to assessing and evaluating the role of fathers in child welfare cases: (Click on the link to access the PIP Tip.)