

**South Carolina Department of Social Services**  
**Child Welfare Quality Assurance Review: Fairfield County**  
**Summary Report**

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This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Fairfield County Quality Assurance Review, conducted June 23 – 27, 2014. The period under review was June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014.

DSS Child Welfare Quality Assurance Reviews are conducted using the *Onsite Review Instrument* (OSRI) finalized by the federal Administration for Children & Families (ACF) in July 2008. This instrument is used to review foster care and family preservation services cases. Sixteen cases were reviewed including 9 foster care and 7 family preservation cases.

Note: This was all of the eligible foster care and family preservation cases for the county based upon the sample period or pre-established elimination protocols for the review.

The OSRI is divided into three sections: safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. There are two safety outcomes, two permanency outcomes, and three well-being outcomes. Reviewers collect information on a number of *items* related to each of the outcomes through case file review, the use of the Child and Adult Protective Services System (CAPSS), and case related interviews. CAPSS is South Carolina’s Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), which contains all case related information. This information is detailed on the OSRI as support for rating selection.

The ratings for each *item* are combined to determine the rating for the outcome. The *items* are rated as *strength*, *area needing improvement*, or not applicable. Outcomes are rated as being substantially achieved, partially achieved, not achieved, or not applicable. Ratings for each of the outcomes are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1. Child Welfare QA Onsite Reviews – Ratings by Outcome**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Substantially Achieved</b>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved</b>
<b>Safety 1</b> CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	100% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)
<b>Safety 2</b> CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE	56% (9)	6% (1)	38% (6)
<b>Permanency 1</b> CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	22% (2)	67% (6)	11% (1)
<b>Permanency 2</b> THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN	22% (2)	67% (6)	11% (1)
<b>Well-Being 1</b> FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS	38% (6)	56% (9)	6% (1)
<b>Well-Being 2</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	75% (6)	25% (2)	0% (0)
<b>Well-Being 3</b> CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS	31% (5)	44% (7)	25% (4)

Results for outcomes and *items* are reported by the number of cases and the percentage of total cases given each rating. In addition, the percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each *item*. This

percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *areas needing improvement*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the *percentage of strengths*. Appendix 1 provides more detailed analysis of issues impacting the ANI ratings.

**SECTION I: REVIEW FINDINGS**

***SAFETY OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT***

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 1. Ratings for the two *items* are shown in Table 2.

**Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether responses to all accepted child maltreatment reports received during the period under review were initiated and face-to-face contact with the child made, within the timeframes established by agency policies or State statute.

**Table 2.**

Rating	Item 1	Item 2
<i>Strength</i>	56% (9)	56% (9)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	0% (0)	0% (0)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	44% (7)	44% (7)
Total	100% (16)	100% (16)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>100% (9)</b>	<b>100% (9)</b>

**Item 2: Repeat maltreatment**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if any child in the family experienced repeat maltreatment within a 6-month period.

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

Two *items* are included under Safety Outcome 2. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 3.

**Item 3: Services to family**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to provide services to the family to prevent children’s entry into foster care or re-entry after a reunification.

**Table 3.**

Rating	Item 3	Item 4
<i>Strength</i>	25% (4)	56% (9)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	25% (4)	44% (7)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	50% (8)	0% (0)
Total	100% (16)	100% (16)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>50% (4)</b>	<b>56.3% (9)</b>

**Item 4: Risk assessment and safety management**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess and address the risk and safety concerns relating to the child(ren) in their own homes or while in foster care.

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

Six *items* are included under Permanency Outcome 1. Ratings for the *items* are shown in Table 4.

**Item 5: Foster Care reentries**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether children who entered foster care during the period under review were re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

**Item 6: Stability of foster care placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if the child in foster care is in a stable placement at the time of the onsite review and that any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review were in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s).

**Item 7: Permanency goal for child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether appropriate permanency goals were established for the child in a timely manner.

**Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether concerted efforts were made, or are being made, during the period under review, to achieve reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives in a timely manner.

**Item 9: Adoption**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made, or are being made, to achieve a finalized adoption in a timely manner.

**Item 10: Other planned permanent living arrangement (OPPLA)**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to ensure:

- That the child is adequately prepared to make the transition from foster care to independent living (if it is expected that the child will remain in foster care until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated).
- That the child, even though remaining in foster care, is in a “permanent” living arrangement with a foster parent or relative caregiver and that there is a commitment on the part of all parties involved that the child remain in that placement until he or she reaches the age of majority or is emancipated.
- That the child is in a long-term care facility and will remain in that facility until transition to an adult care facility.

Table 4.

Rating	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10
Strength	6% (1)	31% (5)	44% (7)	0% (0)	6% (1)	6% (1)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)	25% (4)	12% (2)	0% (0)	44% (7)	0% (0)
Not Applicable	94% (15)	44% (7)	44% (7)	100% (16)	50% (8)	94% (15)
Total	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)
% Strengths	100% (1)	55.6% (5)	77.8% (7)	N/A	12.5% (1)	100%(1)

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

Six items are included under Permanency Outcome 2. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 5.

**Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that the child’s foster care placement was close enough to the parent(s) to facilitate face-to-face contact between the child and the parent(s) while the child was in foster care.

**Item 12: Placement with siblings**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that siblings in foster care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the needs of one of the siblings.

**Item 13: Visiting with parents & siblings in foster care**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine if, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to ensure that visitation between a child in foster care and his or her mother, father, and siblings is of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child’s relationship with these close family members.

**Item 14: Preserving connections**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to maintain the child’s connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, tribe, school, and friends.

**Item 15: Relative placement**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to place the child with relatives when appropriate.

**Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in foster care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation.

Table 5.

Rating	Item 11	Item 12	Item 13	Item 14	Item 15	Item 16
Strength	6% (1)	6% (1)	19% (3)	13% (2)	31% (5)	6% (1)
Area needing improvement	13% (2)	19% (3)	25% (4)	31% (5)	25% (4)	25% (4)
Not Applicable	81% (13)	75% (12)	56% (9)	56% (9)	44% (7)	69% (11)
Total	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)
% Strengths	<b>33.3% (1)</b>	<b>25% (1)</b>	<b>42.9% (3)</b>	<b>28.6% (2)</b>	<b>55.6% (5)</b>	<b>20% (1)</b>

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

Four items are included under Well-Being Outcome 1. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 6.

**Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents (both at the child’s entry into foster care [if the child entered during the period under review] or on an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency’s involvement with the family, and provided the appropriate services.

**Item 18: Child & family involvement in case planning**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, concerted efforts were made (or are being made) to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis.

**Item 19: Caseworker visits with the child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the child(ren) in the case are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child and promote achievement of case goals.

**Item 20: Caseworker visits with parents**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the frequency and quality of visits between caseworkers and the mothers and fathers of the children are sufficient to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the children and promote achievement of case goals.

**Table 6.**

Rating	Item 17	Item 18	Item 19	Item 20
Strength	38% (6)	31% (5)	94% (15)	6% (1)
Area needing improvement	62% (10)	44% (7)	6% (1)	56% (9)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	25% (4)	0% (0)	38% (6)
Total	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)	100% (16)
% Strengths	<b>37.5% (6)</b>	<b>41.7% (5)</b>	<b>93.8% (15)</b>	<b>10% (1)</b>

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

One item is included under Well-Being Outcome 2. Ratings for the item are shown in Table 7.

**Item 21: Educational needs of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To assess whether, during the period under review, the agency made concerted efforts to assess children’s educational needs at the initial contact with the child (if the case was opened during the period under review) or on an ongoing basis (if the case was opened before the period under review), and whether identified needs were appropriately addressed in case planning and case management activities.

**Table 7.**

Rating	Item 21
Strength	38% (6)
Area needing improvement	12% (2)
Not Applicable	50% (8)
Total	100% (16)
% Strengths	<b>75% (6)</b>

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

Two items are included under Well-Being Outcome 3. Ratings for the items are shown in Table 8.

**Item 22: Physical health of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the physical health needs of the child, including dental health needs.

**Item 23: Mental/behavioral health of child**

Purpose of Assessment: To determine whether, during the period under review, the agency addressed the mental/behavioral health needs of the child(ren).

**Table 8.**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Item 22</b>	<b>Item 23</b>
<i>Strength</i>	44% (7)	31% (5)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	56% (9)	19% (3)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	50% (8)
Total	100% (16)	100% (16)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>43.8% (7)</b>	<b>62.5% (5)</b>

## SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

As part of the Quality Assurance Review Process in Fairfield County, ten Foster Home Licenses were randomly selected from the list of all licenses issued for the county during the period under review. These licenses are reviewed using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Foster Home License Review Instruments*. There is one instrument for issuance of initial licenses and another instrument for the renewal of licenses. Each instrument contains a section of deficiencies, namely agency oversight, data entry, and qualitative issues. Deficiencies noted in this section may not invalidate the license but still require attention and correction by county management. Each instrument includes the appropriate agency, state, and federal requirements.

Initial License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Information related to firearms and ammunition in the house
- Pet vaccination information
- Background checks
- Convictions
- Required trainings
- Medical reports
- Fire inspections/re-inspections
- DHEC/Lead inspections
- Central registry check on alternative caregiver, if applicable
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS
- Completion and issuance of the 1513 prior to the license being issued
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools

Renewal License review criteria include the following *items*:

- Convictions
- Training hours
- Medical reports if a new household member has been added or if there is a change in foster parent's medical status
- Updated home studies
- Fire inspections
- Quarterly home visits
- FBI checks, if applicable
- Guidelines regarding in-ground swimming pools
- 1513 completed prior to issuance of the license
- Any amendments to the license, if applicable
- Documentation regarding if there are more than five children in the home
- Annual firearms location update
- Information concerning the alternative caregivers
- Safety checks of alternative caregivers
- A review of child protective service allegations
- Pet vaccination information
- A review of any regulatory infractions
- A review of any conflicts noted between file documents and CAPSS

Possible *deficiencies* found in Initial and Renewal cases include:

- Updated home studies
- Discipline Agreements
- Fire drills
- Quarterly home visits
- Disaster Preparedness Plans
- Information concerning the alternative caregivers
- Alternative caregiver forms
- Applications
- Autobiography information
- Financial information
- Child factor's checklists
- Initial home assessment studies
- References



Areas noted as having occurred as required on the assessment are rated as *strengths*. Those *items* that were not met are rated as *area needing improvement (ANI)*. If the issue is not applicable, it is rated N/A.

Additionally, the percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for each *item*. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Results of the review are noted in Table 9.

### Foster Home Licensing Findings for Fairfield County

Note: Five of the ten cases reviewed were cases that are contracted to a private provider, who is responsible for the ratings instead of the county DSS office. These are included in the county report because the QA system is the present system for evaluating compliance for Foster Home License requirements with the samples pulled via the county in which the home is located to assure that all homes have the same opportunity to be in the random sample.

**Initial License Cases.** One foster care issuance for initial/standard license was reviewed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. The one case reviewed was rated as *strength* because all of the licensing requirements were met prior to authorization of the license issuance.

**Renewal License Cases.** Six cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* because all of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license renewal. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* for six cases include:

**Table 9. Summary of Ratings for Initial and Renewal Cases.**

Rating	Initial	Renewal
<i>Strength</i>	1 (100%)	3 (33.3%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	0 (0%)	6 (66.7%)
Total	1 (100%)	9 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>1 (100%)</b>	<b>3 (33.3%)</b>

**Background Checks:**

- There was not documentation in the case file to verify that central registry, CPS, SLED, and/or sex offender registry checks for all applicable individuals were completed in a timely manner or were completed at all.
- Documentation did not verify that the agency addressed the criminal record or a waiver for the arrest record of a designated alternative caregiver.

**Safety Concerns:**

- Documentation did not verify that the agency consulted with the county director regarding the criminal history of a foster mother.

**Pet Vaccination Records:**

- Documentation did not indicate whether or not a family owned pets, and, if so, did not verify whether their vaccinations were up-to-date.

**Deficiencies found in Renewal Cases.** Deficiencies were noted for eight of the ten files reviewed. Issues identified by the reviewers include:

**Alternative Caregivers:**

- Documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver/ babysitter.

**Documentation:**

- Signed and dated documentation for the Licensing Application was not located in the case file.

**Fire Drills:**

- Documentation verifying that fire drills were conducted within 24 hours of a child's placement was not located in the case file.
- Documentation verifying that quarterly fire drills were conducted while children were placed in foster homes was not located in the case file.

**Safety:**

- Documentation did not provide verification that quarterly home visits were either timely or completed at all.
- All Discipline Agreements were not located in the case file or were not signed and/or dated.
- All Disaster Plans were not located in the case file or were not signed and/or dated.

### SECTION III: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICE NO ACTION REPORTS REVIEW

A review of ten no action reports was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports on which no action was taken by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review No Action Reports Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and fourteen questions regarding the no action decisions and processes (see Table 10).

**Table 10. Summary of Item Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	10	0	10
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	9	1	0	10
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	10	0	0	10
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	2	0	8	10
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	10	0	0	10
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	0	0	10	10
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	0	0	10	10
5. Safety factors documented on Intake Assessment not discovered by intake worker	1	9	0	10
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	9	0	1	10
7a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation	6	3	1	10
7b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation	4	5	1	10
8. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision	5	2	3	10
9. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months	2	8	0	10
10. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority	0	2	8	10

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 11.

**Table 11. Summary of Ratings for No Action Reports Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	3 (30%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	7 (70%)
Total	10 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>3 (30%)</b>

In seven cases, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- The agency did not include, in the Risk Matrix and/or other documentation, statements concerning some of the areas of concern that were noted in the documentation of the allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- An evaluation of available documentation and information reflected that all applicable safety factors were not identified in the documentation by the agency with no

reconciliation and/or justification documented of additional information gathered during the process. (1 case)

- There was no documentation to support that the agency made, or attempted to make, any direct contact with all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts. (2 cases)
- The agency included information in the Risk Matrix documentation that was not supported by the documentation of the allegations made by the reporter with no reconciliation documented. (1 case)

## SECTION IV: CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES UNFOUNDED REPORTS REVIEW

Five unfounded reports were reviewed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed. The five unfounded reports were randomly selected from the list of all reports unfounded by the county during the period under review. The review was conducted using the *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Unfounded Report Instrument*. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and items regarding three primary areas (see Table 12):

- Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment,
- Repeat maltreatment, and
- Risk assessment and safety management.

**Table 12. Summary of Item Ratings for Unfounded Review**

	Yes	No	N/A	Total
1A. Investigation not initiated in accordance with timeframes and requirements	0	5	0	5
1B. Face-to-face contact not made in accordance with timeframes and requirements	0	5	0	5
1C. Delays in investigation initiation or face-to-face contact beyond control of agency	0	0	5	5
2A. At least one substantiated or indicated maltreatment report	0	5	0	5
2B. One substantiated or indicated maltreatment report within six months before or after	0	0	5	5
2C. Repeat maltreatment involving the same or similar circumstances	0	0	5	5
3A. Initial assessment of risk to the children and family in the home	5	0	0	5
3B. Ongoing assessment(s) of risk to the children and family in the home	4	1	0	5
3C. Safety concerns that were not adequately or appropriately addressed by the agency	1	4	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each case reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 13.

**Table 13. Summary of Ratings for Unfounded Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	4 (80%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	1 (20%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>4 (80%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Reasons that one unfounded case reviewed violated pieces of agency policy and procedures include:

- Documentation did not verify sufficient ongoing risk and safety assessments with children in the home.
- Documentation did not verify that the agency followed-up with a caregiver concerning sexual abuse allegations.
- Documentation did not verify that the agency ensured that all individuals received/completed appropriate services prior to the decision to unfound the case.

## SECTION V: FAMILY STRENGTHENING SERVICES REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred to Family Strengthening Services (FSS). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and sixteen questions regarding the referral to the (FSS) Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 14).

**Table 14. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	5	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	4	1	0	5
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	0	0	5	5
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	4	1	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	1	0	4	5
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	0	0	5	5
5. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	0	5	0	5
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	5	0	0	5
7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	4	1	0	5
8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	2	2	1	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	2	3	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	1	1	3	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	0	4	1	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 15.

**Table 15. Summary of Ratings for FSS Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. In five cases reviewed, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:

- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify support of a noted finding that failure to provide adequate shelter caused physical or mental injury to a child with no reconciliation or additional information to justify the differences documented. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify that the agency thoroughly researched CAPSS and/or other agency systems for prior CPS involvement and/or did not reconcile the differences between the two in documentation. (1 case)
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to the documentations of the allegations made with no reconciliation of the facts documented. (5 cases)

## SECTION VI: VOLUNTARY CASE MANAGEMENT REVIEW

A review of five allegations was completed to determine whether agency policy and procedures were followed for reports referred to Voluntary Case Management (VCM). The reports were randomly selected from the list of reports referred to a Community-Based Prevention Services Provider by the county during the period under review. The *South Carolina Department of Social Services Quality Assurance Review Community-Based Prevention Services Assessment Instrument* was used to conduct the review. This instrument includes a description of the allegation and sixteen questions regarding the referral to the VCM Community-Based Prevention Services Provider and processes (see Table 16).

**Table 16. Summary of Item Ratings for Assessment**

	Yes	No	NA	Total
1. Illegal substance use alleged AND reason for safety threatened with harm	0	5	0	5
2. Use of CAPSS and/or other systems for prior involvement	5	0	0	5
3a. Did the intake worker thoroughly complete the Sufficiency tab in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
3b. If question 1 or 2 is answered no, did worker provide explanation	0	0	5	5
4a. Maltreatment tab in CAPSS completed	5	0	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	3	0	2	5
4c. If yes to maltreatment, did supervisor provide additional information	1	0	4	5
5. Existing Safety Factors not seen by intake worker or documented	0	5	0	5
6. Assessment made utilizing SCDSS Risk Matrix	5	0	0	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	5	0	0	5
7b. Did results fail to include statements to support allegations made by reporter	5	0	0	5
8. Agency contacted collaterals for Community-Based Prevention Services	2	1	2	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	2	3	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	1	1	3	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	0	5	0	5

\*Note: A single case may have more than one issue identified.

The percentage of *strengths* is also calculated for the cases reviewed. This percentage is calculated by adding the number of *strengths* and the number of *ANIs*. The number of *strengths* is divided into this total to determine the percentage of *strengths*. Findings of these reviews are noted in Table 17.

**Table 17. Summary of Ratings for VCM Review**

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	0 (0%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	5 (100%)
Total	5 (100%)
% <i>Strengths</i>	<b>0 (0%)</b>

Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. In five cases reviewed, pieces of agency policy and procedures were not followed. Issues identified that led to the rating of *ANI* include:



- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (1 case)
- Through an evaluation of available documentation and information, it appears that the documented allegation would have met the definition of maltreatment; however, the referral was made to VCM without reconciliation and/or justification documented. (1 case)
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to the documentation of the allegations, with no documentation of reconciliation of facts to support decisions. (5 cases)

## **APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF ISSUES CAUSING AN AREA NEEDING IMPROVEMENT (ANI) RATING FOR APPLICABLE CASES**

The following is an overview of strengths and weaknesses that were found in the cases for Fairfield County conducted June 23-27, 2014. The period under review was June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014.

### **Positives:**

*Items 1 (Timeliness of initiating investigations), 2 (Repeat Maltreatment), 5 (Foster Care reentries), and 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement)* were identified as *strengths* of the agency; all applicable cases reviewed were rated as *strength* with no *area needing improvement (ANI)*.

### **Concerns:**

The following examines the *items* that had the highest *ANI* ratings.

- *Item 3 (Services to family)* - 4 of 8 (50%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to provide appropriate services to the family to prevent the child(ren) from entering foster care. (4 cases)  
Services were not provided to the following individuals:
    - Mother (4 cases)
    - Father (1 case)
    - Alternative caregiver (1 case)
  - The agency failed to document the completion of a thorough assessment of the alternative caregiver. (1 case)
  - The agency failed to seek court intervention when parents were noncompliant with treatment plans and goals that related to safety services and the possibility of future placement into Foster Care. (1 case)
  
- *Item 9 (Adoption)* – 7 of 8 (87.5%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve adoption in a timely manner. (7 cases) Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issues:
    - The agency failed to, when appropriate, file for TPR in a timely manner or at all. (4 cases)
    - A child was not appropriately matched with the first pre-adoptive placement. The child then moved to a foster home instead of another adoptive placement, resulting in a delay in achieving adoption. (1 case)

- The agency failed to offer a mother services, thus delaying the ability to file TPR. (1 case)
    - A child’s pre-adoptive home had an out-of-home abuse and neglect (OHAN) report during the PUR resulting in a disruption to the adoption timeline. (1 case)
- *Item 11 (Proximity of Foster Care Placement)* – 2 of 3 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - A child was placed outside of the county where the mother resided due to lack of capacity in the county. (1 case)
  - A child was placed in a group home in a county adjacent to where the father resided, which was approximately one hour away. The father was unable to visit with the child because of transportation issues. (1 case)
- *Item 12 (Placement with siblings)* – 3 of 4 (75%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to ensure siblings in foster care were placed together. (2 cases) Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issues:
    - The agency did not reassess the placement of a child who was not placed with his sister due to capacity issues and because the foster parents did not want to intermingle girls and boys in her home. (1 case)
    - The agency did not make efforts to find other relatives or reassess the current relative placement for a sibling pair when the current relative placement would not accept one sibling due to a pre-existing medical condition. (1 case)
  - There was no documentation to support that a child was separated from their sibling in order to meet the needs of one of the siblings or address safety concerns. (1 case)
- *Item 13 (Visiting with parent & siblings in foster care)* – 4 of 7 (57.1%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency of the visits was insufficient with the following family members: (3 cases)
    - Mother (3 cases)
    - Sibling(s) (2 cases)
    - Father (1 case)
  - A diligent search was not conducted when the whereabouts of a father were unknown. (1 case)
- *Item 14 (Preserving connections)* – 5 of 7 (71.4%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*

- The agency failed to make concerted efforts to maintain the child's connections to his/her extended family and/or community. (5 cases) Cases that provided specific reasoning noted the following issues:
  - No effort was made to continue a child's visit with the grandfather during the PUR. (1 case)
  - The agency did not promote visits with a maternal aunt, with whom the child was living before entering foster care, during the PUR. (1 case)
  
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – 4 of 5 (80%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child and family. (4 cases) Specific events that parents were not invited to included:
    - Medical/mental health appointments (3 cases)
    - School events/activities (2 cases)
  - A diligent search was not conducted when the whereabouts of a father were unknown. (1 case)
  
- *Item 17 (Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents)* – 10 of 16 (62.5%) applicable cases rated as ANI
  - Assessments were not provided for the following individuals: (6 cases)
    - Father (6 cases)
    - Mother (1 case)
    - Child (1 case)
    - Foster parent (1 case)
  - Specific reasons that the agency did not provide assessments include:
    - The mother and/or father were not referred to substance abuse and parenting classes. (1 cases)
    - An incarcerated father was contacted by the agency. (2 cases)
  - Services were not provided for the following individuals: (6 cases)
    - Mother (5 cases)
    - Father (4 cases)
    - Child (1 case)
  - Services noted by the agency that were not provided include:
    - The agency did not provide housing assistance for a father. (1 case)
    - The agency did not provide any transportation service for a mother to attend her treatment sessions. (1 case)

- *Item 18 (Child & family involvement in case planning)* – 7 of 12 (58.3%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to involve the following people in the case planning process: (7 cases)
    - Father(s) (5 cases)
    - Mother (5 cases)
  - Specific reasons provided as to why the members of the family were not involved in the case planning process include:
    - Treatment plans were not discussed and/or provided for the mother and/or father. (3 cases)
    - The agency did not involve the incarcerated father in the case planning process. (2 cases)
    - A mother was not involved in case planning because the plan was to reunify the child with the aunt. (1 case)
    - The agency did not actively engage a father because he only responded after business hours. (1 case)
  
- *Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parents)* – 9 of 10 (90%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - The frequency of visitation was insufficient between the agency and the following individuals: (9 cases)
    - Father(s) (8 cases)
    - Mother (2 cases)
    - Step-father (1 case)
    - Step-mother (1 case)
  - The quality of visitation was insufficient between the agency and the following individuals: (4 cases)
    - Father (3 cases)
    - Mother (2 cases)
  - Diligent searches were not conducted when the whereabouts of the following individuals were unknown: (1 case)
    - Father (1 case)
    - Mother (1 case)
  
- *Item 22 (Physical health of child)* – 9 of 16 (56.2%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
  - Records were not located in the case file: (7 cases)
    - Dental (7 cases)
    - Medical/physical health (4 cases)

- A BabyNet referral was not made by the agency when indicated and appropriate. (2 cases)
- The agency failed to provide appropriate medical services for a child. (2 cases)
- A dental assessment was not conducted when indicated and appropriate. (1 case)
- There was no documented direct contact with all appropriate health care collaterals to ensure the health and well-being of child(ren), where there was an absence of records in as Foster Care case. (1 case)