

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

This summary report describes the results of the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) Laurens County Quality Assurance Review, conducted November 17-21, 2014. The period under review was November 1, 2013 to October 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. Twenty cases were reviewed including 10 foster care and 10 family preservation cases.

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

Outcome	Substantially Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved
Safety 1 CHILDREN ARE, FIRST AND FOREMOST, PROTECTED FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT	77% (10)	23% (3)	0% (0)
Safety 2 CHILDREN ARE SAFELY MAINTAINED IN THEIR HOMES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE	35% (7)	15% (3)	50% (10)
Permanency 1 CHILDREN HAVE PERMANENCY AND STABILITY IN THEIR LIVING SITUATIONS	30% (3)	60% (6)	10% (1)
Permanency 2 THE CONTINUITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS IS PRESERVED FOR CHILDREN	50% (5)	50% (5)	0% (0)
Well-Being 1 FAMILIES HAVE ENHANCED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR CHILDREN’S NEEDS	20% (4)	30% (6)	50% (10)
Well-Being 2 CHILDREN RECEIVE APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	56% (5)	22% (2)	22% (2)
Well-Being 3 CHILDREN RECEIVE ADEQUATE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS	26% (5)	32% (6)	42% (8)

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>	50% (10)	60% (12)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	15% (3)	0% (0)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	35% (7)	40% (8)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	76.9% (10)	100% (12)

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>	35% (7)	40% (8)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	45% (9)	60% (12)
<i>Not Applicable</i>	20% (4)	0% (0)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	43.8% (7)	40% (8)

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	20% (4)	30% (6)	20% (4)	10% (2)	10% (2)	0% (0)
Area needing improvement	0% (0)	20% (4)	30% (6)	10% (2)	20% (4)	5% (1)
Not Applicable	80% (16)	50% (10)	50% (10)	80% (16)	70% (14)	95% (19)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	100% (4)	60% (6)	40% (4)	50% (2)	33.3% (2)	0% (0)

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	20% (4)	20% (4)	15% (3)	40% (8)	35% (7)	10% (2)
Area needing improvement	15% (3)	10% (2)	25% (5)	10% (2)	15% (3)	30% (6)
Not Applicable	65% (13)	70% (14)	60% (12)	50% (10)	50% (10)	60% (12)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	57.1% (4)	66.7% (4)	37.5% (3)	80% (8)	70% (7)	25% (2)

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	20% (4)	20% (4)	40% (8)	10% (2)
Area needing improvement	80% (16)	75% (15)	60% (12)	80% (16)
Not Applicable	0% (0)	5% (1)	0% (0)	10% (2)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)	100% (20)
% Strengths	20% (4)	21.1% (4)	40% (8)	11.1% (2)

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	30% (6)
Area needing improvement	20% (4)
Not Applicable	50% (10)
Total	100% (20)
% Strengths	60% (6)

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.

Rating	Item 22	Item 23
<i>Strength</i>	25% (5)	40% (8)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	60% (12)	30% (6)
Not Applicable	15% (3)	30% (6)
Total	100% (20)	100% (20)
<i>% Strengths</i>	29.4% (5)	57.1% (8)

Table 9. Laurens County *Percentage of Strengths* on 23 Quality Assurance Items Across Two Reviews

Item	Feb. 2013 (PUR 2-1-2012 to 1-31-2013)	Nov. 2014 (PUR 11-1-2013 to 10-31-2014)
1. Timeliness of Initiating Investigations	100%	76.9%
2. Reoccurrence of Maltreatment	100%	100%
3. Services to Family	85.7%	43.8%
4. Risk Assessment and Safety Management	75%	40%
5. Foster Care Re-Entries	100%	100%
6. Stability of Foster Care Placement	90%	60%
7. Permanency Goal for Child	60%	40%
8. Reunification, Guardianship, or Perm. Placement with Relatives	83.3%	50%
9. Adoption	28.6%	33.3%
10. Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement	100%	0%
11. Proximity of Foster Care Placement	100%	57.1%
12. Placement with Siblings	85.7%	66.7%
13. Visiting with Parents and Siblings in Foster Care	55.6%	37.5%
14. Preserving Connections	90%	80%
15. Relative Placement	50%	70%
16. Relationship of Child in Care with Parent	62.5%	25%
17. Needs and Services for Child, Parents, and Caregivers	55%	20%
18. Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning	50%	21.1%
19. Worker Visits with Child	55%	40%
20. Worker Visits with Parents	44.4%	11.1%
21. Educational Needs of the Child	100%	60%
22. Physical Health of the Child	35.3%	29.4%
23. Mental Health of the Child	80%	57.1%

SECTION II: FOSTER HOME LICENSE REVIEW

As part of the Quality Assurance Review Process in Laurens 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
- Fire inspections
- 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
- 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 10.

Foster Home Licensing Findings for Laurens County

Note: These cases were 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 sampling.

Initial License Cases. Three foster home issuances for initial/standard license were reviewed. Information for ratings was obtained by reviewers through case file documentation, which includes the use of CAPSS. Two of the cases reviewed were rated as *ANI* because some pieces of the licensing requirements were not met prior to authorization of the license issuance.

- There was not documentation to verify that any firearms in the home were secured and that ammunition was stored separately. (2 cases)

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

Table 10. Summary of Ratings for Initial and Renewal Cases

Rating	Initial	Renewal
<i>Strength</i>	1 (33%)	2 (29%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	2 (67%)	5 (71%)
Total	3 (100%)	7 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	1 (33%)	2 (29%)

- There was not documentation in the case file to verify that central registry, SLED, and/or sex offender registry for all applicable individuals were completed in a timely manner, or were completed at all. (4 cases)
- Case documentation did not include a new medical statement for the children. (1 case)
- There was not documentation to verify that any firearms in the home were secured and that ammunition was stored separately. (1 case)

Deficiencies found in Renewal Cases. Deficiencies were noted for seven files reviewed. Issues identified by the reviewers include:

Fire Drills:

- Documentation verifying that fire drills were conducted within 24 hours of a child's placement was not located in the case file. (6 cases)
- Documentation verifying that quarterly fire drills were conducted while children were placed in foster homes was not located in the case file. (4 case)

Documentation:

- Documentation did not provide verification that quarterly home visits were either timely or completed at all. (3 cases)
- Documentation did not include identification of an alternative caregiver. (1 case)

Safety:

- All discipline agreements were not located in the case file or were not signed and/or dated. (3 cases)

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 11).

Table 11. 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	10	0	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	7	3	0	10
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	3	0	7	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	6	0	4	10
7a. Risk Matrix results included statements contradictory to allegation	8	0	2	10
7b. Risk Matrix results failed to include all statements that support allegation	7	1	2	10
8. Contact with necessary collaterals prior to screen-out decision	1	2	7	10
9. Another intake referral on same perpetrator and/or child within 12 months	3	7	0	10
10. Intake Supervisor ensured consultation with another supervisory-level authority	0	3	7	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 12.

Table 12. Summary of Ratings for No Action Reports Review

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	1 (10%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	9 (90%)
Total	10 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	1 (10%)

In nine 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. (8 cases)
- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix, and/or other documentation, did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (7 cases)

- The allegation documentation indicated that the reporter believed a lack of supervision of a minor child caused physical injury, but the agency provided a “No” response in the Maltreatment Tab documentation, which indicated that there was no legal risk of maltreatment, with no reconciliation of the facts documented. (1 case)
- The allegation stated that there were safety factors that existed at the time of the intake referral, but the agency did not document these safety factors in their intake documentation, with no reconciliation of the facts documented. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (2 cases)

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 13):

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

Table 13. Summary of Item Ratings for Unfounded Review

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

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

The percentage of *strengths* is calculated for each decision to unfound. 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 14.

Table 14. Summary of Ratings for Unfounded Review

Rating	Were agency policy and procedures followed?
<i>Strength</i>	2 (40%)
<i>Area needing improvement</i>	3 (60%)
Total	5 (100%)
<i>% Strengths</i>	2 (40%)

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

- Documentation did not include assessments of the parent’s home for risk prior to unounding the case. (1 case)
- Documentation did not include a psychological/mental health evaluation for a child who had an allegation of psychological abuse. (1 case)
- The agency did not make any referrals for the mother or father for a criminal domestic violence incident that occurred in the home. (1 case)

- The agency did not make any referrals for drug assessments for an older child or the father who were known for abusing illegal substances. (1 case)
- Documentation did not verify that all indicated and appropriate collateral contacts were made. (1 case)
- Case documentation did not verify that the agency made concerted efforts to address the initial allegation, which indicated that a minor child was eating baby powder, with no reconciliation of facts documented otherwise. (1 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 15).

Table 15. 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	3	2	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	3	0	2	5
7a. Results of SCDSS Risk Matrix contradicted allegation made by reporter	4	0	1	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	0	1	4	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	1	4	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	0	1	4	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	2	2	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 16.

Table 16. 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>	0 (0%)

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

- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix, and/or other documentation, did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (4 cases)
- Based on the information found in CAPSS, the agency did not provide a sufficient narrative of the family's prior history in the Record Check Tab documentation. (1 case)
- The allegation documentation did not meet the legal definition of maltreatment nor did the results of the Risk Matrix reveal substantial risk of maltreatment to the family, but the agency documented that the allegation met the definition with no reconciliation of the facts documented. (1 case)

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 17).

Table 17. 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	4	1	0	5
4b. If yes to maltreatment, did worker provide an explanation	2	1	2	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	1	4	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	0	0	5	5
9. Additional intake referral made on same perpetrator AND/OR child	1	4	0	5
10. Family received community-based prevention services	0	1	4	5
11. Community-based provider entered an account in CAPSS	5	0	0	5
12. Family accepted services from Community-Based Prevention Services Provider	5	0	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 18.

Table 18. 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>	0 (0%)

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:

- Some of the areas in the Risk Matrix, and/or other documentation, did not include statements to address all documented allegations made by the reporter, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- Statements documented in the Risk Matrix were contradictory to documentation of the allegations, with no reconciliation of facts documented. (5 cases)
- The allegations stated that there were safety factors that existed at the time of the intake referral, but the agency did not document these safety factors in their intake documentation, with no reconciliation of the facts documented. (1 case)
- The allegation did not meet the legal definition of maltreatment, but the agency provided a “Yes” response in the Maltreatment Tab documentation which indicated that the report met the legal definition of maltreatment, with no reconciliation of facts documented.

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 Laurens County conducted December 2014. The period under review was November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2014.

Positives:

Items 2 (Repeat Maltreatment) and 5 (Foster Care reentries) 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)* - 9 of 16 (56.2%) applicable cases rated as ANI
 - The agency did not provide services for the following individuals: (9 cases)
 - Mother (3 cases)
 - Family (2 cases)
 - Parents (2 cases)
 - Step-parent(s) (2 cases)
 - Father (1 case)
 - Legal guardian (1 case)
 - Paramour (1 case)
 - The agency did not complete assessments for the following individuals: (2 cases)
 - Father (1 case)
 - Mother (1 case)
 - Legal guardian (1 case)

- *Item 4 (Risk assessment and safety management)* - 12 of 20 (60%) applicable cases rated as ANI
 - The agency did not complete assessments for the following individuals: (11 cases)
 - Child(ren) (9 cases)
 - Father (2 cases)
 - Legal guardian (1 case)
 - Sibling (1 case)
 - Family (1 case)

- Step-father (1 case)
 - Mother (1 case)
 - The agency did not assess the home for risk and safety. (2 cases)
 - The parent(s) were not provided services to reduce risk in the home. (2 cases)
 - The agency did not conduct all background checks for the following individuals: (2 cases)
 - Alternative caregivers (2 cases)
 - Extended family (1 case)
- *Item 7 (Permanency goal for child)* – 6 of 10 (60%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The permanency goal was not appropriate for the child. (1 case)
 - The agency was relieved of providing services to the parents before the PUR, but the goal remained reunification.
 - The permanency goal was not established in a timely manner. (5 cases)
- *Item 8 (Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives)* – 2 of 4 (50%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the permanency goal in a timely manner. (1 case)
 - The agency achieved the goal of permanent placement with the relatives in a timely manner, but it was done prematurely. The target child’s behavior was not stabilized, and the agency did not properly conduct the work to ensure the maternal aunt would be able to properly care for the target child. The child was brought back into foster care because the caregiver was unable to care for the target child. (1 case)
- *Item 9 (Adoption)* – 4 of 6 (66.7%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The agency did not make concerted efforts to achieve the goal of adoption in a timely manner. (4 cases) Specific issues that were provided include:
 - The child had potential placements, but the agency did not make concerted efforts to provide services to the placements to achieve the goal of adoption. (1 case)
 - The case was not accepted by the adoptions unit until nearly two months after establishing the goal of adoption. (1 case)
- *Item 10 (Other planned permanent living arrangement)* – 1 of 1 (100%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*

- The agency did not work on the concurrent goal of OPPLA during the PUR. (1 case)
- *Item 13 (Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care)* – 5 of 8 (62.5%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The frequency of the visits with the following family members was not sufficient: (5 cases)
 - Mother (4 cases)
 - Father (4 cases)
 - Paramour (1 case)
 - Siblings (1 case)
 - Step-father(1 case)
 - The quality of the visits with the following family members was not sufficient: (2 cases)
 - Father (1 case)
 - Mother (1 case)
 - Diligent searches were not conducted for missing parents, which prevented visitation between the child and family member. (1 case)
- *Item 16 (Relationship of child in care with parents)* – 6 of 8 (75%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The agency did not make concerted efforts to promote, support, and maintain positive relationships between the child and family. (6 cases)
Specific relationships affected include:
 - Child and mother (6 cases)
 - Child and father (6 cases)
 - Events that family members were not invited to include the following: (6 cases)
 - Medical appointment (4 cases)
 - Dental appointment (1 case)
 - IEP meeting (1 case)
 - School activities (1 case)
 - Diligent searches were not conducted for missing parents to invite them to activities scheduled for the child. (1 case)
- *Item 17 (Needs and services of child, parents, & foster parents)* – 16 of 20 (80%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - Assessments were not conducted for the following individuals: (15 cases)
 - Father (12 cases)

- Mother (9 cases)
 - Child (2 cases)
 - Legal guardian (1 case)
 - Legal guardian's paramour (1 case)
 - Step-mother (1 case)
 - Step-father (1 case)
 - Concerted efforts were not made to provide services for the following individuals: (9 cases)
 - Mother (7 cases)
 - Father (4 cases)
 - Foster parent (1 case)
 - Paramour (1 case)
 - Step-father (1 case)
 - The foster home was not assessed for needs services during the PUR. (1 case)
 - Diligent searches were not conducted for missing parents, which prevented the required visits with the caseworker. (2 cases)
- *Item 18 (Child & family involvement in case planning)* – 15 of 19 (78.9%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The agency failed to make concerted efforts to involve the following individuals in the case planning process: (14 cases)
 - Father (10 cases)
 - Mother (9 cases)
 - Children (1 case)
 - Legal guardian (1 case)
 - Legal guardian's paramour (1 case)
 - Step-parents (1 case)
 - Step-father (1 case)
 - Paramour (1 case)
 - A diligent search was not conducted to allow for the parent to be included in the case planning process. (1 case)
- *Item 19 (Caseworker visits with child)* – 12 of 20 (60%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*
 - The quality of visits with the child was insufficient. (9 cases)
 - The frequency of the visits with the child was insufficient. (5 cases)
- *Item 20 (Caseworker visits with parents)* – 16 of 18 (88.9%) applicable cases rated as *ANI*

- The frequency of the visits was insufficient with the following family members: (13 cases)
 - Father (10 cases)
 - Mother (5 cases)
 - Paramour (2 cases)
 - Step-father (2 cases)
 - Legal guardian (1 case)
 - Legal guardian's paramour (1 case)
 - The quality of visits was insufficient between the agency and the following individuals: (12 cases)
 - Mother (10 cases)
 - Father (7 cases)
 - Step-father (2 cases)
 - Paramour (1 case)
 - Diligent searches were not conducted for missing parents, which prevented the required visits with the caseworker. (2 cases)
- *Item 22 (Physical health of child)* – 12 of 17 (70.6%) applicable cases rated as ANI
 - There were no medical records in the foster care case file. (6 cases)
 - There were no dental records in the foster care case file. (5 cases)
 - The agency did not address the physical health needs of the child. (3 cases)
 - The agency did not address the dental health needs of the child. (1 case)
 - The agency did not have any direct contact with providers of dental or medical services for a child. (1 case)