

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

During the week of February 26 to March 2, 2007 a team of DSS staff from state office and surrounding counties conducted an onsite review of child welfare services in Marion County. A sample of open and closed foster care and treatment cases were reviewed. Also reviewed were screened-out intakes, foster home licensing records, and unfounded investigations. Stakeholders interviewed for this review included foster parents, Marion DSS supervisors, and representatives from the schools, Foster Care Review Board, Mental Health and Guardian Ad Litem Program.

Period included in Case Record Review: August 1, 2006 to January 31, 2007

Period included in Outcome Measures: December 1, 2005 to December 31, 2006

Purpose

The Department of Social Services engages in a review of child welfare services in each county to:

- a) Determine to what degree services are delivered in compliance with federal and state laws and agency policy; and
- b) Assess the outcomes for children and families engaged in the child welfare system.

State law (§43-1-115) states, in part:

The state department shall conduct, at least once every five years, a substantive quality review of the child protective services and foster care programs in each county and each adoption office in the State. The county's performance must be assessed with reference to specific outcome measures published in advance by the department.

The information obtained by the child welfare services review process will:

- a) Give county staff feedback on the effectiveness of their interventions.
- b) Direct state office technical assistance staff to assist county staff with their areas needing improvement.
- c) Inform agency administrators of which systemic factors impair county staff's ability to achieve specific outcomes.
- d) Direct training staff to provide training for county staff specific to their needs.

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Sources

The county-specific review of child welfare services is both quantitative and qualitative.

The review is **quantitative** because it begins with an analysis of every child welfare outcome report for that county for the period under review. The outcome reports reflect the performance of the county in all areas of the child welfare program: Child Protective Services (CPS) Intake, CPS Investigations, CPS In-Home Treatment, Foster Care, Managed Treatment Services (MTS), and Adoptions.

The review is **qualitative** because it assesses the quality of the services rendered and the effectiveness of those services. The review seeks to explain why a county's performance data looks the way it does.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Ratings

The standard that must be met for all items reviewed onsite is 90%. Each outcome report has its own standard. To be rated Strength an item must meet both the qualitative onsite review standard **and** the quantitative outcome report standard.

Section One

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

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S1.1: Timeliness of initiating investigations on reports of child maltreatment

Data Time Period: 02 /01/ 05 to 11 / 30 / 06

	Number of Reports Accepted	Number of Investigations Initiated Timely	Number of Investigations Objective 100%*	Number of Investigations Above (Below) Objective
State	16,714	16,267	100 %	0
Marion	193	193	100 %	0

*This standard is based on state law. It is not a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0
Treatment	4	100	0	0	6	0
Total Cases	5	100	0	0	15	0

Explanation of Item 1

This is an area of **Strength** for Marion DSS. State law requires that an investigation of all accepted reports of abuse and neglect be initiated within 24 hours of the intake. The outcome report indicates that for the 12 month period under review Marion initiated 100% of the investigations of alleged abuse and neglect within 24 hours of the accepted intakes.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Stakeholder Comment: Law Enforcement doesn't have any problem; our officers can reach the workers when needed, including at night and weekends. Marion County agencies work well together.

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S1.2: Recurrence of Maltreatment – Of all children who were victims of indicated reports of child abuse and/or neglect during the reporting period, the percent having another indicated report within a subsequent six month period.

Indicated Reports Between 12/01/05 to 11/30/06

	Number of Child Victims	Number of Child Victims In Another Founded Rept	Number of Children Objective <= 93.90%	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	10,137	57	9518.64	8.03
Marion	148	1	139	6.87

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings

Safety Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	10	100	0	0	0	0
Treatment	6	60	0	40	0	0
Total Cases	16	80	4	20	0	0

Explanation of Item 2

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The outcome report counts cases with additional founded reports within the period under review. By that quantitative measure, maltreatment rarely reoccurs among cases managed by the county. Onsite reviewers use information documented in the case file to determine if the children under agency care are experiencing additional abuse or neglect, whether that additional abuse results in another founded report or not. By that qualitative measure, 80% of the children do not experience additional maltreatment. However, 20% of the children do experience additional maltreatment. The children experiencing additional or ongoing maltreatment are in treatment cases, not foster care cases.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Stakeholder Comment: DSS responds quickly and communicates with their agency well. The Treatment team advisory meetings are very helpful. The agency is effective in reducing risk and treatment plans are individualized.

Section Two

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

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Safety Item 3: Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	8	73	3	27	9	0

Explanation of Item 3

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. Most of the foster care cases were rated not applicable because the children entered care prior to the period under review. However, the decision to remove those children from their homes and place them in foster care was consistently correct.

In 70% of the treatment cases reviewed, the families were receiving the kinds of services needed to ensure the safety of the children who remained with their parents or relatives. However, 30% of the families were not receiving the services needed to ensure the safety of the children in the home. This was often due to the parent's failure to comply with treatment plan requirements.

Stakeholder Comment: Marion County is resource poor for children. Would like to see DSS take the lead. Programs needed include Mentoring, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys/Girls Clubs, Fatherhood Programs, etc. DSS needs to be more of a helping hand with preventive programs. Transportation is a huge problem. More foster homes are needed. Group Homes for teenagers are needed, desperately.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure S2.2: **Risk of harm to child** – Of all unfounded investigations during the reporting period, the percent receiving subsequent reports within six months of the initial report.

	Number Alleged Child Victims in an Unfounded Rept 3/01/05 to 2/28/06	Number With Another Rept Within 6 Months of Unfounded Determination	Number of Cases Met Objective $\geq 91.50\%$ *	Number of Cases Above (Below) Objective
State	14,298	1,039	13082.67	176.3
Marion	163	7	149	6.9

* This is a DSS established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Safety Item 4: Risk of harm.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	3	30	7	70	0	0
Total Cases	12	60	8	40	0	0

Explanation of Item 4

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. For the most part risk of harm has been significantly reduced for children in foster care. The one exception was a foster child with self-injuring behavior (head banging) whose caregiver could not manage the child's behavior. Seventy percent of the treatment cases were rated area needing improvement because the agency's interventions were not reducing the risk of harm to the children in those families. Those families had parents with chronic addictions and disabilities with poor prognoses for improvement, which rendered agency efforts ineffective.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Section Three

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

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.1: **Foster Care Re-entries** – Of all children who entered care during the year under review, the percent that re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

	Number Children Entering Care 09/01/05 to 08/31/06	Number That Were Returned Home Within The Past 12 Months From Previous Fos Care Episode	Number of Children Objective $\geq 91.40\%*$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,462	272	3164.25	8.60
Marion	69	2	63.01	4.9

*This is a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 5: Foster care re-entries.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	1	100	0	0	9	0

Explanation of Item 5

This is an area of **Strength** for Marion DSS. Both the outcome report and onsite review findings indicate that children re-entering foster care within a year of discharge is a rare occurrence in Marion County. Though Marion is a resource poor county the DSS staff directly provide a considerable amount of support to the families they serve.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.2: **Stability of Foster Care Placement** – Of all children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, the percent that had not more than 2 placement settings.

	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number of Children With No More Than 2 Placements	Number of Children Objective >= 86.70%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,930	3164	3407.31	-281.24
Marion	75	60	65.025	5.0

Note: This is a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 6: Stability of foster care placement.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	60	4	40	0	0

Explanation of Item 6

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The federal standard for stability measured by the outcome report applies only to children in care less than 12 months. Because the federal standard focuses on that sub-population, Marion County met the standard for stability. However, onsite reviewers assessed the stability of all children in foster care and found that the children in 40% of the cases reviewed had more than two placements in the past year. The children experiencing multiple moves had conduct disorders and were being managed by the county and by MTS.

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.5: **Permanency Goal for Child** – Of all children who have been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, the percent for which a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition has been filed.

	Children in Care At Least 15 of Last 22 Months 09/2005 –08/2006	Number Children With TPR Complaint	Number of Children Objective >= 53.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	3,624	1631	1920.72	289.7
Marion	49	18	26	8.0

*This is DSS established objective. The federal agency, Administration for Children and Families, gathers data on this measure, but has not established a numerical objective.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 7: Permanency goal for children.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	70	3	30	0	0

Explanation of Item 7

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The outcome report shows that TPR petitions are being filed on an acceptable percentage of children in foster care. That is a strong area. However, onsite reviewers judged this item by two criteria: (1) does the child in foster care have the correct permanency goal? and (2) did the agency take too long to determine that goal? Two of the cases rated area needing improvement involved children with the wrong goal. One of the cases rated area needing improvement involved a child whose plan remained return home for nearly 18 months before being changed to TPR/Adoption even though the family history indicated that returning home was highly unlikely.

Strategic Outcome Report Findings				
Measure P3.3: Length of Time to Achieve Reunification – Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caregiver, at the time of discharge from foster care, the percent reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home.				
	Number of Children Where Fos Care Services Closed. Last Plan Was Return Home 09/01/05– 08/31/06	Number of Children In Care Less Than 12 Months	Number Of Children Objective >= 76.20% *	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	2,130	1,731	1623.06	107.9
Marion	28	21	21.3	(0.3)

*This is a federally established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	2	100		0

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Explanation of Item 8

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The outcome report shows that 75% of the children who returned home last year, returned home within a year of entering foster care. That percentage was slightly lower than the federally established standard of 76.2%. Only two of the cases reviewed onsite involved children with plans of return home. In both cases it was found that the plan of return home was not appropriate because of the parents' history of noncompliance, and chronic addiction.

Stakeholder Comment: Children stay in care too long when parents are not making progress on their treatment plans. Why do parents get to continue visitation when they are not doing what they are supposed to do, and over extended periods of time?

<u>Strategic Outcome Report Findings</u>				
Measure P3.4: Length of Time to Achieve Adoption – Of all children who exited from foster care during the year under review to a finalized adoption, the percent that exited care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home.				
	Number of Children With Finalized Adoption W/in Past 12 Months	Number of Children Where Adoption Was Finalized Within 24 Months of Entering Care	Number of Children Objective $\geq 32.00\%*$	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	405	61	1296	68.6
Marion	5	0	2	0.6

Note: This is a federally established objective.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 9: Adoption.						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	0	0	5	100	5	0

Explanation of Item 9

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The outcome report shows that one third of the adoptions completed last year were done within 24 months of the child entering foster care. Onsite reviewers did not look at completed adoptions, but children with the plan of adoption, to determine if those adoptions might be completed within 24 months of the child entering care. This item was rated an area needing improvement for all five cases with the plan of adoption. There were delays in filing petitions, continued hearings, and waiting too long before changing the plan from return home to TPR/Adoption.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Stakeholder Comment: Adoption is not timely, the system is terrible. Foster Parents have to jump through hoops [to adopt the children in their home] and it takes forever. Termination of Parental Rights cases are not timely.

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P3.6: **Permanency Goal of “Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement”** – Of all children in foster care, the percent with a permanency goal of emancipation (Indep Liv Services) or a planned permanent living arrangement other than adoption, guardianship, or return to family.

	Number of Children In Care at Least One Day 09/01/05 – 08/31/06	Number of Children In Care With Permanent Plan “Other Planned Living Arrangement”	Number of Children Above Objective >= 85.00%*	Number of Children Below Objective
State	8,416	1,524	7,153.6	261.6
Marion	125	15	106.25	3.8

* This is a DSS established objective.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 10: Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement.

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	75	1	5	6	0

Explanation of Item 10

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The standard applied to the outcome report suggests that less than 15% of the children in foster care should have the plan of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). Marion met this standard because only 12% (15/125) of its children have the plan of APPLA.

Four of the cases reviewed onsite had a plan of APPLA. Three of those cases were rated strength because the plan was appropriate and the children were receiving independent living services. One case was rated area needing improvement because a child had the plan of APPLA, but was only 15 years old. Agency policy stipulates that a foster youth must be at least 16 years old to have this plan.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Section Four

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

Strategic Outcome Report Findings

Measure P4.1: **Proximity of Foster Care Placement** – Of all children in foster care during the reporting period (excluding MTS and Adoptions children), the percent placed within their county of origin.

	Number of Children In Care 09/01/05 – 08/31/06	Number of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Percent of Children Placed Within County of Origin	Number of Children Objective >= 70.00%*	Number of Children Above (Below) Objective
State	6,304	3,887	61.7	4412.8	525.8
Marion	126	82	65.1	88.2	(6.2)

*This is a DSS established objective.

Explanation Item 11

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. To meet this standard at least 70% of the children in care must be placed within the county. The outcome report shows that 65% of Marion County children are placed within the county. Although the county has 32 foster homes to care for its 90 children, many of those foster parents are unwilling to care for the type of children entering care.

Stakeholder Comment: Only two or three of our foster parents will take teens. Sometimes they don't give the children a chance. The least little thing they do, they [the foster parents] call us and tell us to get the children out of their home.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Permanency Item 12: Placement with siblings

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	100	0	0	5	0

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Explanation Item 12

This is an area of **Strength** for Marion DSS. Onsite reviewers found that siblings who were not placed together were separated for appropriate reasons, not simply because there was no placement willing to take all of them. Marion County does very good job of keeping sibling groups together.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	3	60	2	40	5	0

Explanation Item 13

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. In 60% of the cases reviewed the children in foster care visited with both parents when appropriate, and visited their siblings in other placements. In the cases rated area needing improvement there were unexplained periods during which visits with the siblings or parents did not occur.

<u>Site Visit Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 14: Preserving connections						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	86	1	14	3	0

Explanation Item 14

This is an area of **Strength** for Marion DSS. Because of the agency's practice of conducting family meetings, various family members are involved in case planning. Those parents and relatives are included in visitation planning. The children in foster care are thus able to maintain relationships with the people who are important to them.

Stakeholder Comment: One of the best county systems, he sees is in Marion County. The team is very professional. The attorney is very good and has provided excellent continuity. DSS gives parents a fair chance to rehabilitate; they work diligently with parents. Relatives are diligently sought. Caseworkers are generally prepared and work well with Guardians ad Litem.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 15: Relative placement						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	70	3	30	0	0

Explanation Item 15

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. In 70% of the cases reviewed it was evident that all known paternal and maternal relatives were assessed as potential placements for the children in foster care. However, in 30% of the cases reviewed there were deficiencies. Some sibling groups had multiple fathers who did not live in South Carolina. In those cases the agency focused on finding and assessing those fathers, but not the other paternal relatives.

Stakeholder Comment: Diligent search for relatives is not conducted in some cases. Sometimes relatives “pop up” after placement, after some weeks or months, at times.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings						
Permanency Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	71	2	29	3	0

Explanation Item 16

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. Five of seven applicable cases were rated strength because parental involvement with the child in care was based on the child’s need rather than the two-visits-per-month agency requirement. Two cases were rated area needing improvement because the agency did not involve known fathers, or rule them out by some assessment.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Section Five

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

Site Visit Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	7	70	3	30	0	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	12	60	8	40	0	0

Explanation Item 17

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. For this item half of the treatment cases were rated an area needing improvement because the agency often focused on assessing and attending to the needs of the parents but did not attend to the needs of the caregivers when children were placed with relatives. Seventy percent of foster care cases were rated strength for this item. The unmet needs in the other 30% of foster care cases are described in the stakeholder comments below.

Stakeholder Comment: Many children in regular care have serious problems. The foster parents have to take care of these problems at regular board rates. These children should generate therapeutic foster care rates. DSS says it has no more funds, so the child's transportation, along with many other needs come out of the foster parent's pocket.

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	63	3	37	2	0
Treatment	2	20	8	80	0	0
Total Cases	7	39	11	61	2	0

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Explanation of Item 18

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. Caseworkers did not consistently involve age appropriate foster children in case planning. The most significant deficiencies were in treatment cases. Known fathers were not consistently involved in case planning. In the cases in which fathers were not involved, the agency did not consistently document efforts to find or engage the parents.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 19: Worker visits with child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	7	70	3	30	0	0
Total Cases	16	80	4	20	0	0

Explanation of Item 19

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. Workers generally conducted face-to-face visits with children in foster care according to agency policy. However, there were significant deficiencies in treatment cases that involved sibling groups. Workers would see some of the children each month, and not others.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	5	71	2	29	3	0
Treatment	5	50	5	50	0	0
Total Cases	10	59	7	41	3	0

Explanation of Item 20

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. Several cases were rated area needing improvement because of the agency's failure to document efforts to engage the fathers of the children under agency supervision. Some of the fathers lived in other states and some lived in other parts of South Carolina. Reviewers found that the agency located those fathers using diligent search techniques. However, reviewers did not consistently find letters to those fathers inviting them to participate in the agency's efforts to plan for their children.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Section Six

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

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 21: Educational needs of child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	6	100	0	0	4	0
Treatment	4	50	4	50	2	0
Total Cases	10	71	4	29	6	0

Explanation of item 21

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The educational needs of children in foster care were appropriately addressed. However, that was true of only 50% of the treatment cases. In several treatment cases, significant educational problems were identified, but there was no evidence of appropriate follow-up.

Section Seven

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

Onsite Review Findings Performance Item Ratings

Well Being Item 22: Physical health of the child

	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	9	90	1	10	0	0
Treatment	4	40	6	60	0	0
Total Cases	13	65	7	35	0	0

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Explanation of Item 22

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. Generally, the medical needs of children in foster care were being met. The medical needs of most of the children in treatment cases were either not assessed, or when assessed, not being met. For, example, in one case two psychological evaluations stated that a mother was incapable of properly administering the medications that three of her children needed. During home visits the worker observed that one of the children appeared overmedicated, but failed to act on this knowledge.

<u>Onsite Review Findings</u> Performance Item Ratings						
Well Being Item 23: Mental health of the child						
	Strength		Area Needing Improvement		Not Applicable	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foster Care	8	100	0	0	2	0
Treatment	2	33	4	67	4	0
Total Cases	10	71	4	29	6	0

Explanation of Item of 23

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. The mental health needs of children in foster care were properly managed. That was often the case because those children were in group care or therapeutic facilities in other counties and those facilities attended to the mental health needs of those children. However, the mental health needs of most (67%) of the children in treatment cases were not well managed. Children in treatment cases who had experienced traumatic conditions under their parents' care were placed with relatives, often grandparents, but those relatives were not consistently assisted in caring for those children's mental health needs. Reviewers could not consistently determine that the agency referred those children for mental health services.

Section Eight – Foster Home Licenses

This is an **Area Needing Improvement** for Marion DSS. Although reviewers did not find children in unlicensed foster homes, they did find minor to major deficiencies in most of the records.

- Licensing information in CAPSS was not current in 20% of the cases reviewed.
- Supervisory reviews of licensing records were not conducted in 80% of the cases reviewed.
- Licensing records did not have documentation to verify that foster parents are receiving the minimum training needed to maintain their license (28 hours every two years).
- Sex Offender checks were missing in several records.
- Foster parent quarterly licensing visits were not being conducted as required by policy.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Section Nine – Unfounded Investigations

	Yes	No
Was the investigation initiated timely?	5/5 = 100%	0
Was the assessment adequate?	5/5 = 100%	0
Was the decision appropriate?	5/5 = 100%	0

This is an area of **Strength** for Marion DSS. Five unfounded investigations were reviewed. Investigators did a good job of gathering information from all appropriate sources – law enforcement, schools, medical providers, etc. All decisions were well supported by the facts.

Section Ten – Screened Out Intakes

	Yes	No	Cannot Determine
	9	0	1
	Yes	No	Not Applicable
Were Necessary Collaterals Contacted?	7	1	2
Were Appropriate Referrals Made?	2	1	7

This is an area of **Strength** for Marion DSS. Documentation made it evident that the decisions to screen out 9 of the 10 cases reviewed were appropriate.

**Marion County DSS
Child Welfare Services Review
February 2007**

Onsite Review Rating Summary			
Performance Item or Outcome	Performance Item Ratings		
	Strength	Area Needing Improvement	N/A*
Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.			
Item 1: Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment	5/5 = 100%	0	15
Item 2: Repeat maltreatment	16/20 = 80%	4/20 = 20	0
Safety Outcome 2: 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	8/11 = 73	3/11 = 27	9
Item 4: Risk of harm to child(ren)	12/20 = 60%	8/20 = 40%	0
Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.			
Item 5: Foster care re-entries	1/1 = 100%	0	9
Item 6: Stability of foster care placement	6/10 = 60%	4/10 = 40%	0
Item 7: Permanency goal for child	7/10 = 80%	3/10 = 30%	0
Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives	0	2/2 = 100%	8
Item 9: Adoption	0	5/5 = 100%	5
Item 10: Permanency goal of Alternate Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)	3/4 = 75%	1/4 = 25	6
Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.			
Item 11: Proximity of foster care placement	8/8 = 100%	0	2
Item 12: Placement with siblings	5/5 = 100%	0	5
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	3/5 = 60%	2/5 = 40%	5
Item 14: Preserving connections	6/7 = 86	1/7 = 14	3
Item 15: Relative placement	7/10 = 70%	3/10 = 30%	0
Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents	5/7 = 71%	2/7 = 29%	3
Well Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.			
Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, caregiver	12/20 = 60%	8/20 = 40%	0
Item 18: Child and family involvement in case planning	11/16 = 69%	5/16 = 31%	4
Item 19: Worker visits with child	15/20 = 75%	5/20 = 25	0
Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)	6/15 = 40%	9/15 = 60%	5
Well Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.			
Item 21: Educational needs of the child	12/16 = 75%	4/16 = 25%	4
Well Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.			
Item 22: Physical health of the child	15/20 = 75%	5/20 = 25%	0
Item 23: Mental health of the child	13/19 = 68%	6/19 = 32%	1